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*George F. McLean*

# **Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, Christianity and Chinese Cultures**

by  
*Tang Yijie*

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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*In Remembrance of  
Professor Tang Yijie*

# Preface

GEORGE F. McLEAN

It is both an honor and a challenge to draft the Preface for this volume of the English language writings of Professor Tang Yijie. The honor derives from the prestige of the author; the challenge lies in adequately expressing the importance of his work at this juncture in the history of Chinese thought and life.

Professor Tang Yijie was born on January 15, 1927, in Tranjing to a scholarly family of great distinction. His life has been deeply marked by the great changes in his country, from the time of the entry of the Japanese armies, through the great revolution, to the struggles of the continuing revolution, and more recently those of the last decade.

His personal drama during these years is graphically described in the book by his wife, Yue Daiyun, *To the Storm*, written with Carolyn Wakemen (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985). Here I shall focus rather on the steps in the scholarly work of Professor Tang, recognizing that they have been oriented by the needs of his people.

In 1951 Tang Yijie graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy of Peking University, where he was a professor of philosophy. In 1956 he took up the study of comparative metaphysics in the Wei-Jin periods, laying firm ground-work in such basic themes as substance and function. The deep learning of his Father, the foremost scholar in the field of Buddhist studies, provided unique professional access to the Buddhist scriptures. With a few other students, together they explored the "mysterious learning."

Later, in 1978, Professor Tang renewed these studies in a direction which was to be the continuing theme of his subsequent work. In its search for modernization China needed to assimilate ideas from abroad, and this needed to be done in a way that promoted rather than destroyed the people. In the Chinese experience one major example of this was the 1000 year long process of assimilating Buddhism. He set about studying this in detail with a view to discovering the conditions for effective cultural assimilation in general, and for Confucian culture in particular. During the mid eighties this was complemented by studies in Daoism (Taoism).

With these three components of Chinese culture: Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism) in hand, Professor Tang has turned

more recently to the way in which Western thought can make a proper contribution. This directed his attention to the work of Matteo Ricci and other scholars of that period. They pointed out the great achievement of Chinese culture regarding the inner moral life of the person, both within him or herself and in relation to others in the family, province or nation. But they note that the modern sense of the person depends upon an additional horizon, namely, an outer transcendent in whose image all is created. This gives firm grounds for human freedom, for the basis of personal identity is beyond anything man can grant or remove. Further this constitutes a dynamic combination of appreciation of creation as well as a lack of full satisfaction with whatever has been achieved thus far: this in turn generates the drive to explore new avenues in cooperation with others.

Matteo Ricci saw this vision as a necessary complement to Chinese culture, and delineated a mutually complementary relation between Confucianism and the Christian cultures of the West which responds to urgent present needs.

The chapters of the present work reflect in a structured manner this pattern of the research of Professor Tang. The introductory section treats the categorial structures of Chinese philosophy and the method for its study. Next he studies the root Confucian and Daoist dimensions of Chinese culture.

The introduction of Buddhism into China is then given special attention in order to bring out the ways in which it proved complementary and hence able to be assimilated. The final paper is the most recent; it treats the work of Matteo Ricci and his suggestions for the role which Christian insights could play.

These chapters are, of course, but a reflection of the extended Chinese writings of Professor Tang. These include *Guo Xiang and the Mysterious Learning of the Wei-Jin Period*, 1983; *Daoism (Taoism) in the Wei-Jin Period*, 1988; *Confucianism, Daoism (Taoism) and Buddhism in Traditional Chinese Culture*, 1988; and over a hundred articles.

Beyond all this Professor Tang founded the International Academy of Chinese Culture that plays an essential role of both looking back into the roots of Chinese identity and forward to the ways in which this can be lived more fully in new times. For his central contribution to bridging the past and the future, Professor Tang was awarded an honorary degree by MacMasters University in 1990.

It is particularly fitting then that his work should be published as part of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy series: "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change" in East Asia. Other volumes concern "Man and Nature," and "The foundation of Moral Education in the Chinese Tradition," while still further volumes are in preparation in parallel series from Eastern Europe, Africa, etc. In a real sense all face an analogous problem characteristic of the human condition in our days, namely, how to move with dignity into the future. This volume reflects Professor Tang's life of rich research and his deep concern to respond to its questions.



## Foreword-I

TANG YIJIE

Though I had never dreamed of publishing a collection of my papers in English, this volume, entitled *Chinese Culture and Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism (Taoism) and Christianity*, is now ready to go to press. The papers reflect the current trend to relate the different cultures of each nationality, country and region within a broader global culture. In such a situation an understanding of Chinese culture becomes especially important. Thus far, however, because mainly written in Chinese, very few works on Chinese culture by scholars from mainland China have been generally available. It is my hope that by making some of that work available in English this book can enable people outside China to know both the work done by Chinese scholars and specific aspects of Chinese culture.

The book is a collection of some of my papers published in China between 1982 and 1988 and some lectures delivered outside China during the same period. It consists of four parts: *Part I* reflects my general views regarding the structure of Chinese philosophy in terms of its categories and treatment of the true, the good and the beautiful, as well as its recent progress and future prospects. *Part II* is my evaluation of Confucianism. The article entitled "An Inquiry into the Possibility of the Third Phase Development of Confucianism" was originally a lecture at The Seventeenth World Congress of Philosophy, and on the whole, represents my viewpoint of recent years toward traditional Chinese philosophy. In "The Problem of Harmonious Communities in Ancient China," I try to sort out the positive and negative influence of Confucian philosophy upon Chinese society and to indicate that the ideal of a harmonious society can always heighten the spiritual level of people. *Part III* concerns the native religion of China, Daoism (Taoism), the study of which helps highlight certain characteristics of Chinese culture. *Part IV* concerns the introduction of Buddhism and Christianity into China. The two papers on the introduction of Buddhism attempt to describe the impact and dynamics of the introduction of a foreign culture. "The Attempt of Matteo Ricci to Link Chinese and Western Culture" concerns the introduction of Western culture into China. As China is still facing problematic tensions between foreign and traditional cultures these

studies of the introduction of Buddhism and Christianity into China may hold special interest. *The Appendices* are outlines of talks at the University of Oregon.

In sum, all my research is aimed at exploring the problem of cultural development at a time when traditional Chinese culture is moving towards modernization.

Because the papers and talks in this collection were written at different times and translated into English by different people there are inevitable variations on style and expression. Nevertheless, the text promises to convey well my original ideas.

I am extremely grateful to all the friends and colleagues who helped in the translation. My particular gratitude goes to Professor George McLean who took the trouble to edit the book with attention to English expression. I met Professor McLean in August, 1984, at the Conference on Asian and Comparative Philosophy in Hawaii. In Winter, 1986, Professor McLean visited Peking University where we planned a Joint Colloquium on "Man and Nature" which was held in Beijing in the Summer of 1987. This successful symposium has been published in both Chinese and English versions (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1990; Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and The University Press of America, 1989). Further colloquia: on "Man and Society" with the University of Peking; on "Traditional Attitudes and Modernization" with the Institute of Philosophy of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences; and on "Confucianism and Christianity" with the Academy of Chinese Culture are projected for the coming year and will constitute future volumes in the series. I wish all of these efforts great success.

*Stanford University, 1990*

## Foreword-II

TANG YIJIE

China has a continuing history over four to five thousand years. It has rich cultures, which include religion as an important part. As this plays a large role in human social life it is necessary to study religion.

Zhang Guangzhi, a professor at Harvard University of the United States, said in one of his article: "I predict that the social sciences of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are China's century." He thought that the past over one hundred years was a prosperous period for the Western social sciences, but all the theories and methods of the Western social sciences came from the Western historical experience, because the Western social scientists of the past did not know much of Eastern history. But from the perspective of human history, Chinese historical records are very plentiful, and the newly discovered materials in recent years are also very rich. Analyzing these historical materials based on a full study of the Western historical theories will enrich and develop modern historical theories and think through some new universally applicable rules of social sciences.

China has a large number of religious documents and archaeological materials. There are materials on ancient Chinese religion in inscriptions on bones or tortoise shells of the Shang Dynasty, and inscriptions on ancient bronze objects, and various classical documents of the pre-Qin Dynasty. Many new findings have been unearthed in recent years. Buddhism came from India, but we already have at least ten to twenty thousand volumes of Chinese materials on Buddhism and abundant Tibetan Buddhist materials. We collected over five thousand volumes of *Do Zang* 道藏 of religious Daoism (Taoism), native Chinese religion, and there are about one to two thousand more volumes of Daoist materials not yet calculated and compiled in *Dao Zhang* 道藏. There are also plenty of Catholic and Christian materials on China. Particularly, we have probed the religions of the minority nationalities and the folk religions of the Han nationality and have assembled many materials in recent years. We can create some more universally significant religious theories after deeply and systematically studying these materials with reference to the real social life.

It is necessary to study religious history and the current situation in order to create religious theory which has more universal meanings. If we can put forward some new systematic theory to study Chinese religions, it would, of course, be meaningful, but also very difficult. Yet this can be a beginning, a systematic and broad study, of the history and current situation of Chinese religions.

In order to think out a new religious theory with universal significance, we have to research the history and the current situation of religions. It should be possible to start this process, and then think out some new universally applicable theories from the systematic and broad study of the history and current state of Chinese religions.

To reach a good result regarding religion as a cultural phenomenon and an academic problem of study, an academic atmosphere of free thinking is required. The May Fourth Movement is an example. Around that time Chinese academia and theorists were very active and prosperous. Almost all kinds of thoughts were introduced into China at the time, such as anarchism, pragmatism, Kantianism, Babbit's New Humanism and Marxism. There were scholars to disseminate and promote all of these thoughts. At the same time, some scholars tried to reconcile the Eastern and Western cultures and some others strongly asked to preserve and promote the inherent quintessence of Chinese culture. All of these schools freely explored how to develop Chinese culture on an equal footing. The spirit of free discussion in the May Fourth Movement is in accordance with the general trend of pluralism and openness of the global cultural development after the breakdown of Eurocentrism. The work should be based on the spirit of pluralistic and open-minded free discussion in order to promote mutual understanding and friendship, and the development of academic work.

*Peking University, 2009*

## Foreword-III

YUE DAIYUN

Professor Tang Yijie was born in an intellectual family. His father Tang Yongtong graduated from Harvard University in 1922. Then he returned to China to serve as a professor of philosophy at Peking University. Later, he served as a deputy President of Peking University. His grandfather Tang Lin successfully passed the highest imperial examinations in 1890 and became a distinguished official and scholar.

Professor Tang Yijie and I were educated separately in the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Chinese Language and Literature of Peking University. We were married in 1952 after graduation. Professor Tang Yijie dedicated his life to the study of Chinese philosophy and comparative philosophy; my life has been dedicated to Chinese literature and comparative literature. Both of us believe in harmony with diversity. Rather than a clash of civilizations we always play an active role in international dialogue and teamwork among world scholars.

Professor Tang Yijie and Professor George F. McLean first met in 1984. From then on, they worked together to promote dialogue among international intellectuals in order to maintain world peace in a spiritual manner.

I wish to thank Professor McLean, Drs. Hu Yeping and Yan Xin for their efforts in the publication of Professor Tang Yijie's book and providing this window for understanding the frontiers of Chinese philosophy and comparative philosophy.

*Beijing, China, 2016*



**Part I**  
**The Structure and Study of**  
**Chinese Philosophy**



1.

## **A Reconsideration of the Question of “The True, the Good and the Beautiful” in Traditional Chinese Philosophy**

What is the highest ideal that man aspires to in his spiritual life? I believe that this ideal consists of the true, the good and the beautiful, which should be discussed in unity as a system. Of course, philosophers differ regarding what constitutes each of these three ideals and the unity of these three in a system. The problem is, a heightened example of “the virtuous seeing only virtue, and those with knowledge seeing only knowledge.” To this discussion no final conclusion can be found and indeed there is no need for one. But as long as people search for truth, goodness and beauty, thinkers would undoubtedly want to construct systems unifying the concepts. I once wrote an article entitled “The Question of the True, the Good and the Beautiful in Traditional Chinese Philosophy,” which was largely a historical discussion of the Confucian view of the question. The present article is, however, not confined to a discussion of the Confucians and is not historical in approach because such an approach would entail too unfocused and lengthy an article. This article will therefore analyze and discuss selected representative thinkers.

Influence on the development of Chinese philosophy has always been exerted by China’s pre-Qin philosophers, among whom Confucius, Lao Zi, and Zhuang Zi have been the most influential. If we regard these three as typical and through them discuss the question of the different human realms (*rensheng jingjie*) advanced by different traditional Chinese philosophies, we may perhaps be able to derive a unified understanding of *rensheng jingjie* held by traditional Chinese Philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Forty years ago, Shen Youding, who was engaged in research at Oxford University, wrote to friends in China saying:

The theories of value of Kant and of Hegel have one important difference which we can represent as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> In *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue* (1984), No. 4.

Kant: the good, the beautiful, the true; Hegel: the true, the beautiful, the good. From this we can see that Kant was perhaps closer to the Chinese, while Hegel was closer to the Indian or Greek.<sup>2</sup>

This conclusion of Shen is uncommonly insightful and innovative. From Confucian thought, which formed the mainstream in the development of Chinese traditional philosophy, we can see that this scheme holds, but if we examine the different schools of thought and philosophies which make up traditional Chinese philosophy we find that it does not. As I see it, traditional Chinese philosophy had in fact three different systems that integrated the true, the good and the beautiful. These systems are those of Confucius, Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, which are set out as follows:

Confucius: the good the beautiful the true  
Laozi: the true the good the beautiful  
Zhuang Zi: the beautiful the good the true

Drawing analogies from this diagram we can say in general that in terms of value regarding the question of the true, the good and the beautiful, Confucius approximates Kant, Lao Zi Hegel, and Zhuang Zi, in a limited way, approximates Schelling or Aristotle. Of course such analogies are limited and we cannot extrapolate them to all other aspects of the ideas of these thinkers, but they do serve to direct the lines along which we can think.

#### **Confucius' Demands of the Realm of Man**

In the section of *The Analects* entitled "Wei Zheng (Practicing Government) the following statement is attributed to Confucius:

When I was fifteen my ideal was study, at thirty I had established myself, at forty I was not subject to doubt. At fifty I came to know the commands of Heaven, at sixty I could immediately discriminate the truth or falsity of what others said, and at seventy I followed my heart's dictates, but did not transgress.

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<sup>2</sup> *Zhexue Pinglun*, Vol. 10, No. 6.

We know that Confucius and later Confucians believed that life and death or wealth and honor were not attained by mere individual efforts, but that the level of a person's morality or learning could differ because of the amount of individual effort. These words of Confucius are at one and the same time a description of the course of his life, an outline of the process of self-cultivation he pursued, and a summation of his quest for and understanding of the true, the good and the beautiful. The years from fifteen to forty can be seen as the preparatory stage for his assumption of sagehood, through a process revealed by such statements as "not subject to doubt" and that he could "follow" his "heart's dictates, and not transgress." The statement that he had come "to know the commands, of Heaven" explains how he acquired knowledge and understanding of "Heaven" (the ultimate questions of life and the universe), which may perhaps be considered to fall within the scope of the quest for the true. Here Confucius sees Heaven as a cognitive object and has not attained the stage where he is "one with Heaven," having not yet entered that realm of unity. In his "Preface to *Zhuang Zi*," Guo Xiang wrote:

Now Zhuang Zi can be said to have known the origin...although he said he did not have that understanding, he alone responded to it. To respond without understanding is, however, to have no need to apply effort.

To be able to respond to the noumenon of Heaven, Earth and the myriad things can be called knowing "the root," but this entails the cognitive subject being apart from the noumenon of Heaven, Earth and the myriad things and to see this noumenon as the object of cognition necessarily means that one has not yet attained oneness with that noumenon. While this noumenon exists on a higher realm, Zhuang Zi was not yet able to "follow" his "heart's dictates, but did not transgress."

Confucius' statement that at sixty he "could immediately discriminate the truth or falsity of what others said" (*liushi er ershun*) has, infact, been subject to varying interpretations over the ages. Yang Bojun, whose interpretation presented in *Lunyu Yizhu* (Analects, Vernacular Translation and Annotation; Beijing, Zhonghua Shuju, 1958) is used here, writes that the expression *ershun* "is extremely difficult to explain. Many have sought to do so, but I feel all their

explanations to be forced....” I believe that Yang’s interpretation is close to what Confucius intended by the statement. Yang’s interpretation is probably based on the explanation of Li Chong of the Jin Dynasty who wrote that *ershun* means “the heart and the ear follow each other” (心与耳相从). Sun Zhuo, also of the Jin Dynasty, provided a more metaphysical explanation when he wrote:

*Ershun* means to discard the logic which governs listening, to intuit the mystery of the meaning, and to not pursue but nevertheless obtain—what can be termed following the principle of the supreme one unconsciously and unknowingly.

This is the intuitive understanding which transcends experience of the entirety of the principles governing the universe, and is in the realm of “inner transcendence.” According to the views of modern hermeneutics all explanations of our predecessors’ ideas contain within them the ideas of the explicator; by definition, there must be connections between the person doing the explanation and what he is explaining. Most of the explanations of Confucius’ thought by thinkers throughout the ages reveal this to be the case. I would like to turn to Zhu Xi’s explanation of these words of Confucius. He wrote:

As the sounds enter, the heart communes with them, finding nothing in them to evade or oppose, thereby understanding their ultimate sense, acquired without any thought.

Zhu Xi’s “sounds” (*sheng*) relate to voice (*shengyin*) and they encompass both the “articulated sounds” (*yousheng zhi yin*) and the “unarticulated sounds” (*wushengzhi yin*). “Understanding their ultimate sense” should transcend the realm in which Confucius knew the commands of Heaven, and so this realm “acquired without any thought” transcends knowledge. I believe that this can be explained as an intuited aesthetic realm, and what is thereby acquired is an intuited image transcending experience. This can also be explained as an artistic realm, the realm of “beauty.” This explanation of Confucius’ statement may also be “forced,” but as Yang Bojun asserts that most explanations of this line have, throughout history, been forced I see no harm in building on this legacy. But I also believe that such an explanation does have a basis, particularly from the viewpoint of philosophy, in which it may have a new sense. We know that Confucius regarded music as a form of cultivation and that “when in

the Kingdom of Qi he heard the music of Shao" he was "unable, to savor the taste of meat for three months," a detail revealing that he had entered a sublime aesthetic realm "acquired without any thought." Confucius had his own explanation of this realm he had attained: "I had not anticipated that music could transport me to such a state." He thus unintentionally at, mined a realm in which he enjoyed a form of transcendental beauty.

Zhu Xi commented as follows on Confucius' statement that at seventy he "followed" his "heart's dictates, but did not transgress:" (*Ju*), the carpenter's square, is an instrument for measuring patterns, but here it refers generally to pattern or custom. While following his heart's dictates, Confucius did not transgress his pattern, and so he was at ease in his deeds and attained the mean without effort.

The passage from *The Analects* being commented on above therefore refers to the real, at one with Heaven, Earth and the myriad things, where one "knows truth" (*zhi zhen*), "acquires beauty" (*de mei*), and later arrives in a perfect realm of "ultimate goodness" (*zhishan*). Confucius believed that "perfect beauty" could not compare with "perfect beauty combined with perfect goodness." *The Analects* contains the following passage in "The Eight Yi:" Discussing the music of Shao, Confucius commented: "It possesses perfect beauty, as well as perfect goodness." Of the music of King Wu, he commented: "It has perfect beauty, but does not possess perfect goodness."

To say that something possesses perfect goodness is, to a certain extent (at least for the Confucians), connected with a judgment concerning ethical value. Mencius said: "Complete truthfulness is called beauty."

"Beauty" here contains the idea of ethical evaluation. Zhu Xi annotated this line as follows: When one has strenuously implemented goodness until it is filled to completion and has accumulated truth, then the beauty will reside within it, and will not depend on externals.

"Goodness" here is a form of internalized "beauty," the highest beauty of character. It can be seen that Zhu Xi believed that goodness in one respect can encompass "beauty." "Perfect goodness" was held to be superior to "perfect beauty" because "perfect goodness" was in fact both "perfect goodness and perfect beauty." We would now seem to be able to assert that Confucius' realm of man (or his realm of the sage) proceeds from "knowing truth" and "acquiring beauty" to a

realm of perfect goodness in which “one can be at ease in one’s deeds and attain the mean without effort.” In other words, from “truth” we proceed to “beauty” and then we finally attain “goodness.”

“The good the beautiful the true” was the special characteristic of Kant’s philosophy. As Kant saw it, practical reasoning was superior to speculative reasoning. In his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Critique of Pure Reason) the object of research was the phenomenal world and it was subject to the control of the laws of necessity of nature. In his *Critique of Practical Reasoning* the object of research was the noumenon of rational functioning, which was not subject to laws of necessity, and so was free. The former was nature, the latter morality. The former belonged to the realm of theoretical knowledge, the latter to the realm of ethical belief, and there was no direct channel connecting the two. The question, therefore, was how to build a bridge between theoretical knowledge (epistemology) and ethical belief (ethics); and to resolve the question of how to connect the two. Kant wrote his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Critique of Judgment), at the beginning of which he expressed his belief that it was the power of judgment which united reason (pure reason) and rationality (practical reasoning), yet while judgment had something of nature of each of these forms of reasoning, it was not the same thing as them.<sup>3</sup>

Kant divided man’s soul into intelligence, feeling and idea. The cognitive ability of intelligence was pure reason, the cognitive ability of idea was rationality or practical reasoning which transcended experience, and the cognitive ability of feeling was what Kant called “judgment.” Because feeling was the intermediary between intelligence and idea, it, like intelligence, was moved by external stimuli, and like idea it played its role regarding external things, and thus judgment functioned as an intermediary between reason and rationality.

In one respect, judgment, like reason, confronted incomplete phenomena. In another respect, like rationality, it aimed to reconcile incomplete aspects with a totality. Thus, the understanding of confronted incomplete phenomena and the rationality which addresses itself to a totality meet in judgment. Judgment seeks to include the parts within the whole and then subject them to reflection,

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<sup>3</sup> Kant, *Panduanli Pipan*, (*A Critique of Pure Reason*, Chinese edition) (Beijing: Shangwu Yin-shuguan, 1964), p. 13.

so judgment is able to act as a bridge between reason and rationality.<sup>4</sup> Thus Kant constructed his philosophical trilogy of “the good the beautiful the true.”

Of course, while there are similarities in value between the philosophies of Confucius and Kant, their aims in constructing their philosophies were dissimilar. Confucius established a philosophy of life, whereas Kant constructed a complete rational philosophical system. This is perhaps one of the differences between Chinese and Western philosophy. If we compare Confucius’ process which led him from knowing the commands of Heaven to being able to immediately discriminate the truth or falsity of what others said and then on to “following his heart’s dictates without transgression,” with the basic theme of the true, the good and the beautiful in traditional Chinese philosophy, then we can say that Confucius’ statement that “at fifty I came to know the commands of Heaven” represents the stage of seeking “the unity of Heaven and Man” (*tian ren heyi*). His statement that “at sixty I could immediately discriminate the truth or falsity of what others said” represents attaining the stage of “the unity of feeling and sense” (*qing jing heyi*), and his statement that “at seventy I followed my heart’s dictates, but did not transgress” represents the stage at which he was able to realize “the unity of knowledge and action” (*zhi xing heyi*).

The unity of Heaven and Man belongs to the domain of “intelligence” (knowledge). The unity of feeling and sense belongs to the domain of “appreciation” (feeling), and the unity of knowledge and action belongs to “praxis” (idea or intention). According to the Confucians, these three were inseparable. Being human entailed an understanding of the flow of the cosmos and creation, as well as an ability to appreciate the achievements of the cosmos and creation. Moreover, in one’s life practice one should re-manifest the perfect beauty and the perfect goodness of the cosmos. The process that Confucius outlined represented the demands made by the human in the realm of life. This was the summation of Confucius’ personal quest for the true, the beautiful, and the good.

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<sup>4</sup> Li Zehou, *Pipan Zhaxue de Pipan, (A Critique of Critical Philosophy)* (Renmin Chubanshe, 1984), pp. 368-370; Ouyang Kong, *Deguo Gudian Meixue (Classical German Aesthetics)* (Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1981), pp. 67-68.

### Lao Zi's Quest in the Realm of Human Life

Lao Zi seems to have upheld an attitude of denial regarding the demands of most people (including the Confucians) for the true, the good and the beautiful. His call to "deny the sages and discard knowledge" (*juesheng-qizhi*) would seem to be a denial of the quest for ordinary knowledge. His statement that "the five colors blind one's vision" (*wuse ling ren mu mang*) is in opposition to the general quest for beauty; and his assertion that "when the Great Way declines, compassion and righteousness come into existence" (*dadao fei, you ren yi*) is in opposition to the general moral concept of goodness. Does Lao Zi therefore not argue for any quest for the true, the good and the beautiful in the human realm? I disagree with this proposition. He called for a quest after such ideals which would transcend the banal, a quest that for him was within a realm "equal with the Way" (*tong yu dao*). We can see that Lao Zi regarded "the Way" as the unity of the true, the good and the beautiful.

The 27th chapter of *Dao De Jing* (The Classic of the Way and Power) contains the following passage: "The model for man is the earth, the model for earth is heaven, the model for heaven is the Way, and the model for the Way is Nature."

This is a description of Lao Zi's view of the quest of the human realm. He believed that man's highest ideal was imitation of the Way, while the Way itself was natural and spontaneous. What was the Way he discussed? The *Dao De Jing* contains a number of definitions, but the most basic is of a transcendental highest criterion.<sup>5</sup> Chapter 14 of that classic reads:

Viewing it, it cannot be seen and so it is described as "beyond color;" listening to it, it cannot be heard and so it is described as "beyond sound;" grasping for it, it cannot be grasped and so it is described as "formless." These three are beyond imagination, all being aspects of the one chaotic whole. Upwardly, it emits no light; downwardly, no darkness. It is endless, so that words can describe it, and it returns to nothingness. This is formless form, shape without matter, and is called "seemingness." Meeting it, it has no front; pursuing it, it has no rear.

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<sup>5</sup> Tang Yijie, *Wei-jin Nanbeichao Shiqi de Daojiao* (Taoism in the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties Period) (Shanxi: Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1988), pp. 56-57.

Cleave to the eternal Way, to govern what exists in the present; if one can understand its ancient origin, one finds the laws governing the Way.

Examining this we find it contains three levels of meaning:

(1) "The Way" transcends sensory experience and this transcendence is described as "beyond color," "beyond sound" and "beyond form." Monk Deqing in the Ming Dynasty wrote in his *Dao De Jing Jie* (Explanation of *The Classic of the Way and the Power*): "The one chaotic which cannot be imagined is the Way."

(2) While the Way is transcendental, it is nevertheless based on the existence of real things, i.e. "formless form, shape without matter." Wang Bi comments on this line:

One may want to say that it is nothingness, but it is formed from things; one wants to say that it exists, but one cannot see its form...

That which is without form and without name is the basic principle of the myriad things.

"The seemingness" which is formless form and shape without matter can constitute the basic principle underlying the existence of all forms and shapes. Wang Bi comments that "seemingness" means "one cannot grasp and define it."

In other words, the Way has no specificity. All things which possess specificity fall within the realm of experience and that which lacks specificity transcends experience. In Chapter 21 of *Dao De Jing* we read:

This Way is seemingness, but within this seemingness forms can be discerned and real things do exist. In this darkness there is essence. This essence is exceptionally real and can be authenticated.

Therefore while the Way lacks specificity, from it all "things" possessing specificity can be formed, and so it constitutes the most real existence, being the noumenon of things.

(3) The Way is the basis of the existence of all things and is the highest criterion of transcendence. "The laws governing the Way" are

said to be “principles.”<sup>6</sup> “The laws governing the Way” are then the Way as the highest criterion of the myriad things from ancient times to the present.

The above three points show that Lao Zi’s philosophy was a quest for the origin of Heaven, Earth and the myriad things and for the basis of their existence, from which he created a philosophical system in which the Way was the highest criterion of transcendence. Lao Zi’s discussion of the noumenon of the cosmos, in fact, falls within the scope of the quest for truth.

Lao Zi made the Way the highest category in his philosophical system. If man grasped the Way then he grasped the truth, and this was in fact the aim of life. Thus for Lao Zi “being one with the Way,” was the highest aim in life. He said: “Serving the Way is being one with the Way.”

Wang Bi commented:

The Way relies on non-form and non-action to form the myriad things and so if, in serving the Way, one relies on non-action, then one will be a superior man and teach without words. In the continuity of seeming existence things will follow their reality, and the Way will be one with the body. This is called being one with the Way.

“Being one with the Way” is thus equivalent to being of one body with the Way. It can be seen that Lao Zi believed that the relationship between man and the Way did not entail man regarding the Way as an ordinary object of cognition (because the Way lacked name and form). Rather it involved man becoming one with the Way. Therefore being one with the Way was merely the highest realm man’s life could assume, a realm in which man could transcend the mundane and “acquire the Way” (*de Dao*). This was the supreme realm after which Lao Zi sought.

How then did Lao Zi regard the good and the beautiful? We know that Lao Zi regarded the basic character of the Way as “nature and non-action” (*ziran wuwei*), and this then was his criterion for goodness and beauty. He said: “When the Great Way declines, compassion and righteousness arise.” Because moral concepts such as compassion and righteousness, are man-made, not only are they incompatible with the

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<sup>6</sup> “Sangang Wuji,” in *Baihu Tong*.

principles of “nature and non-action,” but they also destroy the Way. Only when these man-made things are discarded can man acquire true “goodness.” Therefore he said: “Only when compassion is terminated and righteousness is discarded...can people return to genuine filial piety and kindness.” Only when all man-made moral concepts are discarded can people return to their natural relationships. Chapter 8 of *Dao De Jing* contains the following passage: “Those who possess supreme goodness are like water. Water serves to nourish the myriad things and does not harm them; if one remains in the lowest place that people most loathe, one is closest to the Way.”

Ethical persons have nature of water. Water may benefit the myriad things, but it does not strive for high places. It is content to remain in the lowest place and therefore it approaches the Way. In Chapter 66 we read: “The rivers and oceans are the kings of the waterways, because they choose the lowest places. Because everything flows into them, the oceans and mighty rivers are called the rulers of the valleys.” This is Lao Zi’s explanation of how persons possessing morality are close to the realm of the Way, while not yet being one with the Way. To use Feng Youlan’s exposition, of “the four realms” in his *Xin Yuanren* (A New Exposition of Man), those who possess the highest goodness belong only to “the realm of morality,” while those who are one with the Way belong to “the realm of Heaven and Earth.” Thus, in terms of value, the good is on a lower level than the true.

In Chapter 12 of *Dao De Jing* we read:

The five colors dazzle and blind the eyes; the five sounds deafen the ears; the five flavors numb the palate; indulgence in hunting them leads to dissipation and craziness.

Wang Bi comments:

The eyes, mouths and hearts all follow their own nature; one acts not to follow their nature, then, one harms nature, and blindness, deafness, numbness and madness result.

In other words, the five colors, the five sounds and the five flavors are all “man-made” and have lost the original character of Nature. Lao

Zi regarded plain simplicity as beauty (*jian su bao pu*).<sup>7</sup> One should heed what is natural. Artifice results in a loss of the beauty of original nature and a lack of artifice preserves natural beauty. Thus in Chapter 41 of *Dao De Jing* the following passage occurs:

The supreme note has no sound, the supreme image has no form, the Way loses itself in anonymity, yet it alone excels in starting and completing

Wang Bi commented:

One listens to the supreme note, but cannot hear it, because it has no sound. A note that has sound will fall, necessarily, into either the second note on the pentatonic scale or the first. When it is thus discriminated, it cannot assemble a crowd. Therefore a note that has sound is not the supreme note.

And:

If an image has form then there will be discrimination, and if there is discrimination then it will either be warm or burning. If not burning, it will be cold. And so an image that has form is not the supreme image.

And:

All these good things are completed by the Way. In terms of image, it is the supreme image among all images, and is image without form. In terms of note, it is the supreme note among notes, and is the note of silence.

The music which is one with the Way is supreme music and the image which is one with the Way is supreme image. The supreme music encompasses all music, while the supreme image encompasses all forms. Music is dependent on sound and painting is dependent on form, but for Lao Zi the supreme music is without sound and the supreme painting lacks all forms. Because lack of sound or form harmonizes with the principles of "nature and non-action," they constitute true beauty. From this we can see that for Lao Zi the good

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<sup>7</sup> "Tiandao," in Zhuang Zi, contains the following passage: "With pure simplicity, the world cannot compete in beauty." This passage serves to explain the expression *jiansu baopu*.

and the beautiful derive from the true (the Way) and are specific manifestations of the Way.

In the final chapter of the *Dao De Jing*, Chapter 81, the following passage occurs:

Fealty words are not beautiful,  
Beautiful words are not about fealty.  
Good persons do not argue,  
Those who argue are not good.  
Men of knowledge are without depth,  
Those who have depth do not (seek) knowledge.

I believe that this passage expresses Lao Zi's hierarchy of the good, the true and the beautiful. "The beautiful" is spoken of in terms of speech (which can stand for literature), "goodness" is spoken of in the context of deeds or actions, and "knowing" is spoken of in terms of intelligent, "True knowing" is superior to "true goodness," which in turn is superior to "true beauty," thereby creating a hierarchical series of criteria. This is the model of Lao Zi's quest in the realm of man.

When we say that Lao Zi's view of "the good, the true and the beautiful" has certain points in common with Hegel's philosophy, we are only saying that there are certain similarities in the arrangement of these three criteria of value orientation. In Hegel's philosophical system, "morality," "art" and "philosophy" all belong to the realm of spiritual philosophy. Spiritual philosophy is the third part of Hegel's philosophical system; it constitutes the third great stage of self-development in the direction of pure spirit—the description of the spiritual stage. The spiritual stage is the unity of the logical and natural stages, and it is self-existing and self-acting.

### **Zhuang Zi's Quest in the Realm of Man**

Like Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi made the Way the highest category in his philosophy, but Zhuang Zi's philosophy did not concentrate on proving the limitlessness, absoluteness and eternity of the Way (even though he devoted quite a bit of space in his writings to these questions), but rather on proving the spiritual limitlessness, absoluteness and eternity of those persons, such as perfected men, spirits and sages, who had acquired the Way.

The first chapter of his *Zhuang Zi* is entitled "Roaming Free" (*Xiaoyao You*) and the theme of this chapter is a discussion of the

question of how man can attain absolute spiritual freedom. According to Zhuang Zi, while the *peng* creature had a wing span of three thousand *li* and could rise to a height of ninety thousand *li* and Lie Zi could ride on the wind over eight hundred *li* in a day, actions which would seem sufficiently free, they did not in fact constitute true freedom. For the rock to fly ninety thousand *li* a vast expanse of space was required; to travel those eight hundred *li*, Lie Zi had to rely on the force of the wind. These actions were "conditional" (*youdai*), and only the "unconditional" (*wudai*) can be described as the attainment of true freedom. Thus he said: "If one is able to follow the laws of nature and grasp the transformations of the six breaths and roam freely in a limitless domain, what does one need to rely on?!" Relying on nothing, this "roaming free" was "unconditional." It constituted absolute freedom. But how could one attain this realm? Zhuang Zi believed that ordinary mortals could not attain this realm. Only perfected men, spirits and sages could do so, because "perfected men have no self, deities exert no effort and sages know no name." To have no self (*wu ji*) is to "extinguish the self" (*sang wo*) and in "Discussion of the Equality of Things" (*Qiwu Lun*) Zhuang Zi wrote: "Now I have extinguished myself." In the chapter entitled "Great Master" (*Da Zongshi*) there is a passage which describes "sitting in forgetfulness" (*zuowang*), which can be called a description of "having no self" in this realm of absolute freedom:

"I have made progress," Yan Hui said.

"How have you progressed?" Confucius asked.

"I have forgotten benevolence and righteousness," Yan Hui replied.

"Fine, but that's not enough," Confucius said.

Several days later Yan Hui again saw Confucius, and said,

"I have made progress."

"How have you progressed?" Confucius asked.

"I sat in forgetfulness," Yan Hui replied.

"What do you mean by saying you sat in forgetfulness?" Confucius asked in alarm.

Yan Hui replied, "My limbs fell away, I cast aside my intelligence, I left behind my body, and I forgot all that I merged with the Great Way. That is what I meant by saying that I sat in forgetfulness."

To be of one body with the myriad things and to have no preferences, and to participate in the transformations of the myriad things and to depend on no thing – this means you have become a sage! I wish to follow in your footsteps...

The realm to which Zhuang Zi's "sitting in forgetfulness" belongs is the realm in which he describes one as "transcending self" or "having extinguished the self." In the text quoted above, Yan Hui sets out from a denial of mundane morality, then enters a state in which the various fetters imposed on the spirit by the body and knowledge which befuddles the spirit are all eliminated. He then finally attains a mental realm in which "his body is like desiccated timber and his mind is like cold ashes," a realm which transcends material gain, morality, life and death, and in which there are no restrictions from internal and external truths, untruths, likes, hatreds, beauty, and ugliness. That realm was, moreover, typified by "the oneness of Heaven and Earth" and "unity with the Way." The most significant feature of that realm was "the rejection of knowledge," which was the elimination of all discriminatory and conceptual cognitive activities, what Zhuang Zi elsewhere called "mental fasting," or "following the inner channels of the ear and eye, yet being beyond the knowledge of the mind."

"The perfected men, deities and sages" *Zhuang Zi* describes had all transcended the mundane world in this way and had achieved an absolute spiritual freedom conferred by "sitting in forgetfulness" and "mental fasting." In the chapter entitled "Tian Zifang" we read: "The perfected man looks down from the blue sky above, conceals himself in the Yellow Springs below, and soars in every direction, his expression remaining unchanged." The "deities" are described in the chapter entitled "Heaven and Earth:" "The supreme deities ride on the light and their form vanishes. This is called abandoning space. To exhaust life and scatter the emotions, to share in the delight of Heaven and Earth and to be unencumbered by the myriad things so that the myriad things return to their true feelings-this is called merging with the dark mystery." In the chapter "Curbing the Mind" we read: "The sage in life moves with Heaven and in death blends with external matter...he rejects all knowledge and deceit and follows the constant laws of nature...he is empty and indifferent to gain, and is one with

the power of Heaven." The ability of perfected men, deities and sages to transcend time and space and roam freely beyond the coordinates of space was the result of their ability to "leave their bodies and discard knowledge," to rely in everything on nature and non-action, and to make no demands of the real world. Thus they were able to roam freely in "a land of nothingness." Such roaming could, of course, only take place in the spirit. This spiritual realm of absolute freedom could only be an aesthetic realm of art.

In the section entitled "Zhi's Journey to the North" (*Zhi Bei You*) we read:

Heaven and Earth possess great beauty, but speak no language. The seasons move in accordance with clear laws which they do not discuss. The myriad creatures have reasons for their lives but do not speak. The sages can go to the source of the great beauty of Heaven and Earth and commune with the reasons of the myriad creatures, and thus do the perfected men possess non-action. The great sages do not act, and so are said to partake of the reasons of Heaven and Earth.

And in *Tian Zifang*: "To attain that realm is to gain supreme beauty and supreme joy. The gaining of supreme beauty and roaming in supreme joy define the sage."

The attaining of "truth" in the above passage admits the sage into the realm where "one can wander in the heart to the beginnings of things." This is the realm of nature's inarticulate non-action. The highest form of beauty is "the supreme beauty of Heaven and Earth." "Sages, the perfected and the divines" are waiting to "go to the source of the beauty of Heaven and Earth" (or "prepared for the beauty of Heaven and Earth"). Because of the very existence of Nature and non-action "the abandonment of form and the rejection of knowledge," one can gain "ultimate beauty and roam in the midst of ultimate pleasure," this realm of "ultimate beauty and ultimate pleasure" also constituting the highest aesthetic realm of art.

In the philosophy of Zhuang Zi the relationship between "truth" and "beauty" is also discussed. There is a passage in "Autumn Floodwaters:"

Horses and oxen have four hooves, which are from Heaven. Bridle the horse's head, and pierce the bull's nostrils, this is the work of a human being. So we say: do not use human powers to destroy Heaven, do not use reason to destroy a good name, and do not use gain to

harm the people. If one diligently keeps this rule and does not lose it, this is to return to the Dao.

Zhuang Zi's emphasis on "imitating Heaven and respecting truth" (*fatian guizhen*) was opposition to all "human actions" (*renwei*), which ran counter to original nature. The authenticity of the horse is its "chewing the pasture and drinking water, raising its hooves and shaking them," but if the horse's head is bridled and the bull's nostrils are pierced, then horses and bulls lose their original nature (authenticity), and lose their freedom, thereby losing beauty and their truth. Truth and beauty are one and the same in Zhuang Zi's philosophy, but truth must be "follow the way (*Dao*) of nature." "Truth" is defined in the chapter entitled "The Venerable Fisherman" as "the acme of the spirit, and that which is not spirit is not sincere, and so cannot influence man's feelings." The ability to "influence man's feelings" exists when there are true feelings which cause man to gain an appreciation of beauty. "Accomplished beauty is not uniform in its traces," but the most accomplished beauty is not contrived and is able to freely manifest its authenticity. Therefore Zhuang Zi's "quest for truth" was also in order to "seek beauty." If there is no beauty, then there is also no truth to speak of. "The quest for truth" is a quest for a spiritual realm of untrammelled freedom.

Zhuang Zi rarely affirmed morality and his thought was characterized by an anti-ethical trend. He believed that all ethical restraints were "man-made" and that they destroyed man's authenticity. Therefore he opposed "using humaneness and righteousness to transform man's nature." Zhuang Zi believed that the realization of the freedom of the individual personality was not only "great beauty" (*da mei*) but the highest form of "morality" (*de*) and supreme goodness (*shan*). In the chapter entitled "Curbing the Mind" (*Ke Yi*) we read: "If we do not hone the intellect but are noble, if we do not practice humaneness and righteousness but are self-cultivated, if we have no great achievements but rule, if we have no rivers and oceans to roam among but roam as if we did, if we practice no breath techniques but possess longevity, we forget everything and possess nothing, then we have no limits and all beauty follows us. This is the Way of Heaven and Earth and the complete virtue of the sage."

Cheng Xuanying explains: "When the heart is not impeded by a single obstacle, and the traces of darkness complement the Five

Elements, then we have unlimited peace, are empty and expansive and arrive at the Way that cannot be exhausted. The beauty of true virtue follows and resides in the self." By this he means that when the mind is not trapped, follows and practices non-action, then one sits in forgetfulness, and in total freedom. Thus one attains the ultimate whereby every beauty gathers about and follows the self. This is the movement of natural spontaneity of Heaven and Earth, as well as being the path by which the sage perfects his goodness. According to this interpretation, the "good" for Zhuang Zi encompasses the highest beauty ("great beauty") within it.

From the above discussion we can see that in Zhuang Zi's philosophy, "the true," "the good" and "the beautiful" are a unity and they are unified in an aesthetic realm of spiritual freedom. Zhuang Zi, like Lao Zi, sought "oneness with the Way," like Lao Zi's unity with the Way entailed understanding and realizing the Way, which were both epistemological concerns, as well as being a form of philosophical enlightenment. For Zhuang Zi, however, "unity with the Way" was an appreciation of, and reflection on the Way, which involved direct aesthetic perception. From this we can see that the question of "the true, the good and the beautiful" in the philosophy of Zhuang Zi differed from that in the philosophy of Lao Zi and for Zhuang Zi "the beautiful" was paramount.

The quest for the good, the true and the beautiful in the philosophical axiology of Western philosophy can be seen to have some points in common with the views of Zhuang Zi. The philosophy of Aristotle, and more especially that of Schelling, would seem to be similar to that of Zhuang Zi regarding this question.

Regarding the quest for the unity of truth, goodness and beauty, Aristotle stated: "Beauty is goodness, and the keen perception it imparts is in fact because it is goodness." But the manifestation of good conduct and beautiful art requires the cognition, of things as its basis. From the perspective of values (axiology), Aristotle did not impart the same significance to goodness, truth and beauty. In demarcating human activities, he believed that of the three activities of cognition, practice and creation, cognition was the highest form of activity, because it was only on the basis of this particular activity that man could confront highest truths. But from the perspective of the products resulting from these three activities, Aristotle believed that the fruits of "the quest for truth" were theoretical sciences (such as

mathematics, physics and metaphysics), knowledge for the sake of knowledge; the quests for goodness and beauty yielded the practical sciences (including politics and ethics) and the creative sciences (including poetics and rhetoric), all of which have higher external goals. The former direct action, the latter direct creation. Aristotle believed that the basic nature of art was creation. He said: "The arts are a form of creative ability, which encompasses the true process of inference." Here, creative activities become those activities most able to realize man's basic nature, which is logical reasoning (Aristotle once defined the parameters of man's nature as rationality). Accordingly, it would seem that we could say that in Aristotle's philosophy artistic creation which can manifest beauty itself attains the highest value, followed by actions with an external aim (such as moral practice, which belongs to the realm of the "good"), and then followed by knowledge for knowledge's sake which constitutes an activity involving "the quest for truth."<sup>8</sup>

Schelling proposed the philosophical problem of "absolute unity." According to his view, "absolute unity" was neither subject nor object, but "the absolute undifferentiated unity of both subject and object." This "unity" can only be realized within an "intellectual direct perception, ion." "Intellectual direct perception" is the activity producing the directly perceived object. The unity of the two (subject and object) is, in fact, an activity of direct perception. By means of direct perception, the ego unites the self with the cosmic spirit which has unconsciously produced the natural world. Schelling believed that even the activity of "intellectual direct perception," which is possible only with a philosophical genius, but not with just any one, cannot be regarded as achieving an absolute unity of subject and object because a discrepancy still exists between the direct perceiver and the directly perceived object (although this directly perceived object is produced by the free action of the direct perceiver). Thus, Schelling also believed that only within "the direct perception of art" could a truly undifferentiated absolute unity between subject and object be realized.

This "truly undifferentiated absolute unity" is analogous in some aspects to Zhuang Zi's concept of the realm entered through "mental

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<sup>8</sup> Zhu Guangqian, *Xifang Meixue Shi* (History of Western Aesthetics) (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1963), pp. 55-56.

fasting” and “sitting in forgetfulness.” Schelling believed that “the direct perception of art” is derived from inspiration and from an intense yearning of great internal power within the inner spirit. This can only be described as a mysterious spiritual realm of direct perception. Thus, for Schelling, art constitutes a supreme undifferentiated ideal world. On the basis of the view that “the direct perception of art” is a higher “intellectual direct perception,” Schelling regarded “beauty” as the highest value. As he saw it, “truth” was a question of necessity, “goodness” was a question of freedom, and “beauty” was the synthesis of the two. “Beauty” synthesized in art the scientific knowledge of “truth” and the ethical behavior of “goodness.” Schelling said: “I believe that the highest ideal activity encompasses all idealized aesthetic activities. Truth and goodness can only be brought into proximity within beauty. Philosophers, like poets, must have aesthetic powers.” Thus, from the perspective of the theory of value, “the beautiful” for Schelling constitutes a higher value than “the true” or “the good.”<sup>9</sup> This schema reveals some similarities with Zhuang Zi’s view of these values.

### Brief Conclusion

In the world of man Confucius, Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi pursued three different quests, and their philosophies manifest three different value orientations. I believe that in philosophical systems embodying any value we find a quest for the unity of truth, goodness and beauty, but philosophers have different views on how to effect and attain this unity. From the perspective of the development of mankind’s culture, we cannot demand that philosophies are similar. In China’s pre-Qin period, philosophy richly flowered because of this very diversity of value orientation. Philosophers at that time were able to approach the ultimate questions of life from an unusually broad perspective and realm, and this enabled Chinese philosophy to take its place beside that of other great contemporary cultures, such as Indian and Greek.

(Translated by Bruce Doer from *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue*, 1990, No. 3)

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<sup>9</sup> See Chen Xiuzhai and Yang Zutao, op. cit., pp. 481, 488; Ouyang Kong, op. cit., pp. 140-142.

## **Prospects for the Study of the History of Chinese Philosophy and the Issue of the True, the Good and the Beautiful in China's Traditional Philosophy**

We now confront the problem of prospects for the study of Chinese philosophy, that is, the problem of how to evaluate the traditional philosophy of China.

China is a great country with a long history and cultural tradition. The traditional philosophy of China is rich in content and displays originality. Because society has moved forward and China has been in a backward position for more than one hundred years, and also because we failed to adopt a scientific attitude toward the study of China's traditional thought and culture, we have been unable, over a long period of time, to acquire a true understanding of the value of China's traditional philosophy or to find out wherein its shortcomings and problems lie. However, things have been changing dramatically in this area in recent years.

In addressing the commemoration of the one-hundredth anniversary of Marx's death, Hu Yaobang, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, said: "The mistaken tendency to split Marxism from the cultural achievements of mankind and pit the one against the other must be opposed; we must acquire a standpoint of respecting the knowledge of science and culture." Note that in recent years a very important phenomenon has appeared in China's newspapers and periodicals, namely, large numbers of articles on problems in real life all quoting philosophical remarks made in ancient China.

For example, *Guangming ribao* (Bright Daily) carried two short articles, one of them entitled, "Remain Tenacious after a Thousand Whettings and Ten Thousand Thrashings." It was a line from Zheng Banqiao's poem "On Bamboo," which the article used to encourage an indomitable behavior among the people. Another article, entitled "King of Wei Killed Those Who Knew Him and the Fake King of Wei," dwelt on the suspicious character of Cao. The article quoted from the

*Chronicle of the Reign of Zhengguan* what Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty said to Feng Deyi: "Whether a flowing water is clear or muddy hinges on its source. An emperor is the source of government and the common people are like the water. If the emperor plays tricks himself and expects his ministers to behave honestly, it is like a muddy source expecting its flow to be clear; it is unreasonable." The same goes for quite a few literary works. Take, for example, "A Wreath at the Foot of a High Mountain," a controversial short story, which describes how a PLA commander criticized a high-ranking cadre's wife. As an admonition, the commander quoted from Du Mu's "Epic of E-Pang Palace" by saying: "People of Qin had no time to lament and were lamented by people after Qin. If the people after Qin lamented but did not take warning, then they would be lamented by those after them."

There are many examples like this which can be found everywhere in newspapers and periodicals. All this has raised a question: Since so many ancient sayings in China still bear great significance for us today and serve as an indispensable guide to our behavior in real life, what value does the traditional philosophy of China have in its entirety? A re-evaluation of China's traditional philosophy seems called for.

If we say that philosophical ideas may embody the problems of the true, the good, and the beautiful, then does not the traditional Chinese philosophy have something valuable or unique in this regard? I think it does, and very remarkably so. We can approach this issue from two aspects, one is the content of its thinking, another is its attitude toward life, both of which aspects are closely related.

### **Chinese Philosophy as a Threefold Integration**

Regarding the issue of the true, the good, and the beautiful, traditional Chinese philosophy has had three propositions exerting an extended influence over Chinese thinking: namely, the "integration of heaven with man," which inquires into the unity of the world; the "integration of knowledge with practice," the problem of an ethical norm; and the "integration of feeling with scenery," involving the creation and appreciation of artistic works.

#### *Integration of Heaven with Man: the True*

How to define the two concepts of "heaven" and "man" varies with different philosophers. Nevertheless, the "Way of Heaven" refers to

the basics of the universe or the universe as a whole. The “way of man” often refers to the society of man or man himself. The relationship between heaven and man has always been the fundamental issue studied by Chinese thinkers.

Sima Qian called his *Historical Records* a book that “probes into the relations between heaven and man.” Dong Zhongshu described what he said as a branch of learning that “studies how man is related to heaven.” He Yan, one of the founders of the metaphysics of the Wei and Jin dynasties, called another founder, Wang Bi, a philosopher “qualified to discuss the relations between heaven and man.” Tao Hongjing, the true founder of the Maoshan sect of China’s Daoism (Taoism), said only Yan Huan, another Daoist leader, understood that “what he had in mind” was the problem “between heaven and man.” The “relationship between heaven and man” has been explained by different theories in traditional Chinese philosophy. For example, Zhuang Zi required that a “distinction be made between heaven and man,” and Zhuang Zi theorized that “those who are ignorant of heaven know nothing about man.” Furthermore, the question of “relations between heaven and man” often has found expression in the discussion about the relation between “nature” and the “Confucian ethical code.” Nevertheless, the mainstream of traditional Chinese philosophy has taken as its main task the demonstration or explanation of how “heaven is integrated with man.”

Confucius said more about “human affairs” and less about “the Mandate of Heaven.” Nonetheless, he also believed that “what the saint says” is in keeping with “the Mandate of Heaven.” Mencius, it can be said, is the philosopher who first proposed the idea of “integration of heaven with man” in a complete sense. For example, he said: “Do with all your heart, know your lot, and understand heaven;” “keep up with heaven and earth above and below.” Even though Xun Zi advocated that a “distinction be made between heaven and man,” his fundamental goal was to “bend the will of Heaven to our use” so that “Heaven” would be integrated with man. Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) of the Daoist School urged: “Man follows earth, earth follows Heaven, Heaven follows the Way, and the Way follows nature.”

Even Zhuang Zi who was “ignorant of heaven and knows nothing about man” had this to say: “Heaven and earth live side by side with me, and all things on earth are identified with me.” He also said that the superior man can “communicate with heaven, earth, and spirit.”

Dong Zhongshu preached the idea that “heaven and man respond to each other” and his argument was that the two were integrated. The metaphysics of the Wei and Jin dynasties focused its discussion on the relationship between “nature” and “the Confucian ethical code.” Even though Ji Kang (Chi Kang) and Yuan Ji advocated that the “ethical code be overstepped and nature followed,” the mainstream of the metaphysics school stressed that the “ethical code” be reconciled with “nature.” As Wang Bi embraced the idea that “the intrinsic and the extrinsic are like one,” he urged that “the essentials (Nature and the Way of Heaven) be upheld to rule the non-essentials (ethical code and mundane affairs).” In stressing that “the intrinsic and the extrinsic are like one,” Guo Xiang believed “there is no intrinsic beyond the extrinsic” and therefore concluded that “heaven is the general term for all things on earth.”

By the time of the Song Dynasty, the Confucian philosopher Zhou Dunyi noted in more explicit terms: “A saint shares virtue with heaven and earth,” and “a saint aspires to heaven.” Zhang Zai stated in his *West Inscription*: “That which blocks heaven and earth is my intrinsic; that which commands heaven and earth is my character.” The two Cheng theorized that “the intrinsic and the extrinsic come from the same source” and stated: “In heaven it is destiny, in man it is character, and it is the heart that commands the body. They are actually one and the same.” Zhu Xi stated that: “Heaven is man, and man is heaven. The beginning of man is derived from heaven. Since this man is born, heaven rests in him.” And he added: “A saint...is integrated with heaven.” Wang Yangming said: “The heart is heaven. Stressing the importance of the heart upholds heaven, earth, and all things.” “Man is actually one with heaven, earth and all things.” “The heart has no intrinsic but takes the response of heaven, earth, and all things as the intrinsic.” Later Wang Fuzhi advanced the idea that man moves along with the vaporization of heaven to explain why heaven is integrated with man. Said he: “Destiny is realized by days and character is formed by days.” “There is not a day that heaven stops thinking of destiny, and there is not a day that man does not submit his destiny to heaven.”

As far as traditional Chinese philosophy is concerned, the major philosophers, either materialist or idealist, all talked about the problem of the “integration of heaven with man.” By analyzing their theories, we can roughly arrive at the following conclusions: First, in

traditional Chinese philosophy, the concept of “integration of heaven with man” gives expression to the idea of observing things in their entirety. It is a direct description rather than a detailed analysis; we can call it a directly perceived “overall concept.” Second, in traditional Chinese philosophy, the basic argument for the idea of “integration of heaven with man” is, “The intrinsic and the extrinsic are like one:” unity of the ways of Heaven and man is “both the intrinsic and the extrinsic,” the Way of Heaven serving as the intrinsic and the way of man the extrinsic. This can be termed as an “‘absolute’ concept of unity.” Third, traditional Chinese philosophy does not see the “way of man” as something rigid; what is more, it also sees in the “Way of Heaven” liveliness and unending vitality. “Heaven moves along a healthy track, and a gentleman should make unremitting efforts to improve himself.” That human society should move forward and man should improve himself is due to the necessity of keeping up with the development of the “Way of Heaven.” This can be called the unlimited “concept of development.” Fourth, in traditional Chinese philosophy, “Heaven” is objective and the “way of man” must be brought in line with the “Way of Heaven.” However, “man” is the heart of heaven and earth; he should install a heart for heaven and earth. Without “man,” heaven and earth would have no vitality, rationality or morality. This can be called the “humanistic concept” of ethics. The above-mentioned four concepts comprise the total implication of the idea of “integration of heaven with man” in traditional Chinese philosophy.

*Integration of Knowledge with Practice: the Good*

The problem of “knowledge and practice” is an issue of the theory of knowledge; in traditional Chinese philosophy, however, it poses even more a problem of ethics and morality. If, in traditional Chinese philosophy, a question of the theory of knowledge had not been linked to the question of ethics, it would have been difficult for it to be passed down as a part of traditional philosophy. Therefore the problem of a theory of knowledge is often also the problem of ethics. This is why the philosophers advocated that man not only should seek “knowledge” but must also pay special attention to “conduct” (practice).

What is the “good?” The criterion for the “good” can vary, but, according to traditional Chinese philosophy, unity of “knowledge”

and “practice” must be regarded as a prerequisite. From the history of Chinese philosophy we come across many different explanations about the relationship between knowledge and conduct. In *History Classic* (Chapter 1, “On Destiny”) it was said long ago that “it is not difficult to know but difficult to put it in practice.” Later the two Cheng advocated: “Knowledge precedes practice.” Zhu Xi was of the opinion that “knowledge and practice each give rise to the other.” Wang Fuzhi theorized that “practice precedes knowledge,” and Sun Zhongshan advanced the idea that “to know about a thing is more difficult than to do it,” and so forth. Taking things as a whole, however, the concept of an “integration of knowledge with practice” actually has run through traditional Chinese philosophy from beginning to end.

Starting from the time of Confucius, the “agreement of one’s words with one’s deeds” has always been used as an ethical criterion to differentiate a gentleman from a villain. Confucius said: “A gentleman feels it a shame not to be able to match his words with actions.” Mencius stressed “intuitive knowledge” and “intuitive ability.” Even though he regarded the four factors including the “sense of pity” as inherent, he thought it necessary to “foster and enhance” benevolence, righteousness, rite, and wisdom, which had already become moral codes. As they could be acquired only through moral practice, he advocated that “a noble spirit be cultivated.” Zhuang Zi stressed “practice” as the purpose of seeking “knowledge;” at the same time, he also admitted the guidance “knowledge” provided for “practice.” He said: “One who practices it knows it. One who knows it is a saint.” As a saint, therefore, one must “integrate knowledge with practice.”

By the Song Dynasty, the Confucian philosopher Cheng Yi, regardless of his opinion that “knowledge precedes practice,” argued in terms of morality and self-cultivation that “one who knows but cannot practice is one who does not truly know.” Therefore Huang Zongxi noted: “Mr. Cheng already had the idea of integrating knowledge with practice” (*Academic Files of the Song and Yuan dynasties*, Volume 75). Zhu Xi inherited Cheng Yi’s theory that “knowledge precedes practice,” but he stressed in particular that “knowledge and practice are mutually dependent” and “efforts on knowledge and practice should be pushed forward side by side.” He reasoned: “In terms of sequence, knowledge precedes; in terms of importance, practice is more important.” Therefore some people

described Cheng and Zhu's as "a theory of integration of knowledge with practice with emphasis on the latter." Even though "knowledge" is the foundation of "practice," "knowledge is shallow when knowledge has just been acquired and yet to be put into practice." "When one personally experiences it, his knowledge will be deeper, different from what he knew before." Zhu Xi stressed "practice" because basically he regarded "knowledge" and "practice" as an issue of morality. This is why he remarked: "Wherever the good is, one must practice it. Having practiced it for a long time, it will become identified with oneself. Having identified with it, it will become a part of oneself. Failing to practice it, the good remains the good, and oneself remains oneself; they have nothing to do with each other."

Traditional Chinese philosophy often advocated "practicing the Way (Dao)." This idea perhaps had a twofold implication: One was to "take the Way as the intrinsic," another was to practice the "intrinsic way," namely, to earnestly practice the "intrinsic way" one advocated. Therefore this is not merely an issue of understanding. As for Wang Yangming's theory of "integration of knowledge with practice," naturally we all know about it; however, our understanding about it seems not to be totally correct. By quoting his remark, "practice begins once an idea is hit upon," people often describe him as "ascribing practice to knowledge" and "taking knowledge to be practice." In fact, Wang Yangming did not equate "knowledge" with "practice" completely. The remark that "practice begins once an idea is struck upon" was made in the context of morality and self-cultivation. Immediately after that, he added: "If the idea is no good, we have to overcome it. We have to overcome it thoroughly and thoroughly so that the no-good idea will not lay hidden in our hearts." He also said: "A close and solid knowledge is where practice lies, and a conscious and precise practice is where knowledge lies. Efforts on knowledge and practice were originally inseparable. Only scholars in later ages split them into two and lost the essence of knowledge and practice."

In regard to the relations between knowledge and practice, Wang explained clearly: "Knowledge gives the idea to practice, and practice is the efforts made of knowledge. Knowledge is the beginning of practice and practice is the end result of knowledge." From the angle of the theory of knowledge, Wang Yangming could be suspected of "including practice in knowledge." In the perspective of morality and

self-cultivation, however, emphasis on “integration of knowledge with practice” had a positive significance.

By the time between the Ming and Qing dynasties, Wang Fuzhi advanced the idea that “practice precedes knowledge” and “practice can also gain knowledge.” However, he still stressed “integration of knowledge with practice” when addressing the issue of ethics. He opined that “knowledge and practice complementing each other is use and the two progressing alongside is achievement.” He criticized Wang Yangming’s idea of “integration of knowledge with practice” and called Wang “ignorant of the fact that they each have their own use and complement each other.” Nevertheless, Wang Fuzhi, too, was an advocator of “integration of knowledge with practice.” He said:

In saying that someone is engaged in pursuing knowledge and practice we mean he devotes himself to the pursuit of knowledge and makes every effort to practice. Because of his devotion and efforts, achievements can be made and divided, whereby an order of succession can be established. Since an order of succession can be established, the antecedent and the subsequent can complement each other. From knowledge one knows what is being practiced, and from practice one practices what is being known. Thus it can be said the two progress alongside and therefore make achievements.”

That knowledge and practice can progress alongside arises because the two, in the final analysis, are a moral issue. According to Wang Fuzhi’s opinion: “A wise man is one who knows the rites: a man of ritual is one who practices knowledge. In practicing knowledge, all rituals will be properly performed; in knowing the rites all essentials will go to the mind. Thus one will improve oneself with each passing day and there will be no end to it.” A saint “combines his intelligence with sincerity. He practices what he knows and what he practices becomes his knowledge.” This is how traditional Chinese philosophy envisages that a man should behave himself.

Now prevailing in the study of traditional Chinese philosophy is a viewpoint which asserts that “since the Song and Ming dynasties the neo-Confucianists, when discussing knowledge and practice, often mixed up this issue of theory of knowledge with the issue of ethics.” It insists that this is where the limitations and mistakes of Chinese ancient philosophers lay. In this regard two questions deserve to be discussed.

First, neo-Confucianists, since the Song and Ming dynasties, as a matter of fact, did not regard knowledge and practice merely as an issue of the theory of knowledge. They thought the issue important precisely because it was related to morality and self-cultivation. The final purpose of their discussion of relations between knowledge and practice was to improve moral cultivation. Therefore it is out of the question to assert that the neo-Confucians confused the issue of the theory of knowledge with that of morality. Second, as an issue of morality and self-cultivation, the theory of integration of knowledge with practice and the viewpoint of unity between knowledge and practice cannot be said to be without positive significance. Ethically, knowledge and practice cannot be separated into two ends; what is necessary is that “knowledge be integrated with practice.” The remark made by Wang Yangming that “knowledge is the purpose of practice and practice is the work of knowledge; knowledge is the beginning of practice and practice is the end result of knowledge” can be seen as the best summary the Chinese ancient philosophers ever made about this issue.

*Integration of Feeling with Scenery: the Beautiful*

This is an aesthetic issue of which Wang Guowei made a thorough discussion in his *Random Talks about Poetry*. He said: “Realm is the top quality in poetry writing. Having realm, a poem is naturally of a high quality and carries famous lines.”

What does “realm” mean? Wang explained that “realm does not refer to scenery alone. Delight, anger, sorrow, and joy are also a realm in man’s heart. Therefore a poem that can depict true scenery and true feelings can be said to have realm. Otherwise it should be said to have no realm.” Obviously the term “realm” refers not only to scenery but to “sentiments” as well. In *Jialing Manuscripts Discussing Poetry* Ye Jiaying made a very perceptive explanation about Wang Guowei’s “realm theory.” According to Ye:

The generation of realm depends entirely on our sense of perception. The existence of realm depends entirely on what our sense of perception can reach. Therefore the outside world cannot be called realm before we can reproduce it through the function of our perceptive sense.

Judging by such a conclusion, the theory of realm as advocated by Wang, as a matter of fact, can be traced to the same origin as the theory of interest by Canglang and the theory of romantic charm by Yuan Tingzhi.

Bu Yentu, after Wang Guowei, also said in his *Questions and Answers on the Methods of Painting*: "Landscape painting is no more than portraying feeling and scenery, and feeling and scenery is realm." This is why Wang Guowei remarked: "When people in the past discussed poetry, they divided the verses into those describing scenery and those depicting feeling. They did not know all verses describing scenery depict feeling." Obviously, Wang Guowei regarded as top-grade creative writings literary pieces that "integrate feeling with scenery." However, this aesthetic viewpoint of "integration of feeling with scenery" did not start with Wang Guowei.

Generally speaking, it was in the period of the Wei and Jin dynasties that the theory of China's literature and art truly became independent as a branch of learning, and by that time the idea of "integrating feeling with theory" had already emerged. In *Introduction to the Grades of Poetry* Zhong Rong states:

The four-characters-to-a-line poems can be useful if they imply more in fewer words and model on works of literary excellence. However, the problem is that they often involve a lot of words but connote little contents. Therefore few people learn to write them. The five-characters-to-a-line poems occupy the primary position in writing and stand out as the most savory among a variety of genres, thus winning the praise of being popular. Is not it because they are the most detailed and truthful in narrating events, conjuring images, expressing feelings, and portraying things? Therefore there are three approaches to writing poetry: First, implication; second, comparison; third, narration. The idea that there is more to the poem than the words state is what we call implication. Citing things to indicate one's intention is comparison. A direct account of the happening, thus embodying the idea, is narration. Take the three approaches into consideration and choose the most appropriate, enhancing it with charm and force and polishing it with color so that those who read it will find

unlimited savor and those who listen to it will be stirred.  
This will be a poem of the top grade.

A “masterpiece,” a “superb work,” should “express feelings and portray things.” This was the forerunner of the idea of “integration of feeling with scenery.” Xie Zhen, one of the later seven scholars of the Ming Dynasty, said in *Four Seas Poetic Discussions*: “Writing poetry rests on feeling and scenery. Neither can work without the other or conflict with the other.” He also said: “poetry is the tool for the portrayal of feeling and scenery. Feeling melts inside, running deep and long; scenery shines on the outside, stretching far and wide.” In *Poetic Discussions from the Ginger Studio*, Wang Fuzhi put it in an even clearer way: “In name feeling and scenery are two things, but in fact they are inseparable.”

Those skillful in writing poems have unlimited chances to hit upon good ones. In an ingenious piece there is “scenery in feeling and feeling in scenery.” “Feeling is generated from amid scenery and scenery is generated from amid feeling. This is why we say scenery is the scenery of feeling, and feeling is the feeling of scenery.” “Once feeling is integrated with scenery, witty expressions are readily available.” This last sentence perhaps constitutes the basic proposition for China’s traditional theory of art and literature, manifesting its basic view on “beauty.” In the traditional thinking in China, what is beautiful has always been linked to what is good. “The substantial is called the beautiful” refers to a spiritual realm in which one has noble enjoyment. Having listened to the music of “Wu” (nothing, e.g. the silence that follows sound), Confucius commented: “It has all the beautiful but not all the good,” and after listening to the music of “Shao” (few), he remarked: “It has all the good and also all the beautiful.” Only music that “has all the good and also all the beautiful” can be regarded as the highest and most ideal music. This applies to music and should apply to other arts as well. An art that “has all the good and also all the beautiful” is designed to elevate man’s spiritual realm and help him derive therefrom the highest enjoyment of beauty. Because of this, the creator of artistic and literary works must be one who has “realm” and his works must “integrate feeling with scenery.”

### **The Study of Chinese Philosophy and the Reason for Being Human**

With regard to the true, the good, and the beautiful, why does traditional Chinese philosophy consistently pursue the three “integrations?” In my opinion, it is because the basic spirit of Chinese philosophy is to teach how one should behave like a human. To be “human” one must have set for oneself a demand, must have an ideal realm of the true, the good, and the beautiful. One who has attained such an ideal realm in which “heaven is integrated with man,” “knowledge is integrated with practice” and “feeling is integrated with scenery” is a saint. Therefore the prospects for traditional Chinese philosophy lie in bringing this demand to be a “man” in line with the need of the modernization program and thus realizing it. One’s ideal may find expression in an immense variety of ways; nevertheless, one must have an ideal and noble spiritual realm. The three integrations advocated by traditional Chinese philosophy are in fact a unified realm for one to be a “man.” They cannot be separated, at least theoretically.

The proposition of “integration of heaven with man,” though designed to illustrate the relations between man and the entire universe, was made in view of the human as being the center of the universe. *The Golden Mean* states: “Honesty is the Way of Heaven; to be honest is the way of man.” “An honest man who hits the target without difficulty, arrives at the right idea without brain-racking, and conforms to the Way without hurry is a saint.” The role of a saint is to “foster a heart for heaven and earth, create a life for living creatures, carry forward peak learnings for posterity, and open up peace for thousands of generations to come.” Therefore a “man” (mainly, the saint) must behave in accord with the requirements of the Way of Heaven and should assume it his responsibility to fulfill them. Being alive in the world, one must not take a passive attitude; rather, one should “make unremitting efforts to improve oneself” so as to embody the evolution of the immense universe. In this way, one will set oneself a demand, find a reason for one’s being, and foster a noble spiritual realm. Since one has set a demand for oneself and has a reason for one’s being, the most important thing is for one to “integrate his knowledge with his practice.” One must have an ethical standpoint unifying the two. The three programs and the eight items listed in the *Great Learnings* tell us the exact reason for this. It says:

The Way of the great learning lies in shedding light on the bright principles, being close to the people, and stopping at nothing but the utmost good. Those in ancient times who wanted to shed light on the bright principles for the world had to first bring order to their own kingdoms. To bring order to their kingdoms they had to first bring their own houses to order. To bring their houses to order they had to first cultivate their own moral character. To cultivate their own moral character they had to first set their minds straight. To set their minds straight they had to first foster a sincere desire. To foster a sincere desire they had to first carry knowledge to the utmost degree. To carry knowledge to the utmost degree they had to first inquire into the properties of things. Having inquired into the properties of things, they were able to carry knowledge to the utmost degree. Having carried knowledge to the utmost degree, they were able to foster a sincere desire. Having fostered a sincere desire, they were able to set their minds straight. Having set their minds straight, they were able to cultivate their own moral character. Having cultivated their own moral character, they were able to bring their houses to order. Having brought their houses to order, they were able to bring order to their kingdoms. Having brought order to their kingdoms, the whole world would be at peace.

“Knowledge” must be integrated with “practice.” From “inquiring into the properties of things to carry knowledge to the utmost degree” to “bringing order to their kingdoms and peace to the world” is a process of cognition and, more important, a process of moral practice. Man must have an ideal. The highest ideal is to “achieve peace” and thus enable human society to attain a realm of “Great Harmony.” The basic demand of a society of “great harmony” is that everyone should impose upon himself a demand, find a reason for his “being,” and “not do to others what he does not wish done to himself.” Said Confucius: “My way is consistent; it is nothing more than honesty and forbearance.” Leading a life in this world, one should behave like a “man” and must enjoy the pleasure of “being human” and appreciate the creation of the universe.

In order to have a genuine appreciation of the creation of the universe, one should have the ability to display human creativity through the reproduction of “the creation of the universe.” One should display the spiritual realm of man, the why and how for a man to exist as a man: this makes it possible to render a piece of writing into a “masterpiece,” a painting into a “superb work,” and music into the “sound of nature.” Therefore art requires “integration of feeling with scenery” so that “feeling is generated amid scenery and scenery is generated amid feeling.” In the realm of creation one reaches a situation in which the true, the good, and the beautiful are integrated; there lies the meaning of life and the human’s highest ideal. Confucius professed: “At the age of seventy, I can do everything as my heart pleases without violating the rule.” What he described was probably such a realm in which all one did and said was in harmony with the universe, human society, others, and oneself—both body and mind, inside and without. This realm of life is, of course, that of the saint.

Traditional Chinese philosophy still bears existential value precisely because it tells us the reason for being a man. To be human is by no means easy, and it is even more difficult to have harmony with nature, society, other people, and oneself in both body and mind, inside and outside. But is this not necessary for today’s world? Therefore we cannot underestimate traditional Chinese philosophy and ignore its proper value. Precisely because traditional Chinese philosophy tells us only the reason for being a man, it is inappropriate to set undue demands upon it in other regards, and it should come as no surprise to us that it is inadequate in certain areas. For example, it does not emphasize issues of logic and the theory of knowledge, nor provide a well-conceived demonstration of the structure of its own theory; we should not be overcritical of this. Under such circumstances, can we further develop traditional Chinese philosophy while engaged in studying its value? We should and we can. Note that, aside from the *Book of Change*, the pre-Qin Dynasty Confucians, seldom touched upon problems of ontology. Under the impact of Buddhism, however, neo-Confucians of the Song and Ming dynasties founded a very significant theory of ontology which made great progress and became neo-Confucianism. As the mainstream of China’s traditional philosophy, thinking and culture, the Confucian philosophy has sustained today an even heavier impact than in the past. Having made a profound criticism of it, we are now reexamining

its value. Is it inconceivable that we can develop it again, or impossible under the new impact to establish a new logic and theory of knowledge proper to it? Traditional Chinese philosophy should have a third-phase development because "one must have a reason for being human." Whether or not it can be developed depends on whether or not it can establish for itself a new system of logic and theory of knowledge. "Man can enhance the Way, but the Way cannot enhance man." The outcome depends upon our efforts.



3.

## **Questions Concerning the Categorical System of Traditional Chinese Philosophy**

Aristotle's *Categories* outlined the philosophical categories of ancient Greece, putting forward and thoroughly analyzing ten categories. Hegel's *Logik* outlined contemporary Western philosophical categories in a comparatively complete categorical system. Did China's traditional philosophy (China's ancient philosophy) have a categorical system? Why and how should we study the question of traditional Chinese philosophy's concepts and categories? This essay attempts to contribute to the discussion of these questions.

### **The Significance of Studying the Categorical System of Traditional Chinese Philosophy**

1. The study of the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy has its general and particular significance. Its general significance can be expounded in at least the following three aspects:

First, while the study of the history of philosophy necessarily requires the study of the historical function of philosophers and philosophical schools, the ultimate value of such a study is to reveal the necessary logic that determined the specific development of certain philosophical thinking in history. For instance, what is the necessary logic of the development of the pre-Qin philosophical thinking from Confucius to Mencius to Xun Zi? A scientific history of philosophy with Marxism as its guiding thought should reveal not only the developmental causes of philosophical thought but also the inner logic of the growth of such thought. Since philosophy is a science of the most general laws of nature, society and human thought presented in the form of abstractions, the development of the content of philosophical thought is therefore a history of the continuous advancement of concepts and categories and of their continuous clarification, enrichment and growth. We should study how concepts and categories were advanced in the history of philosophy, how their contents became clearer, richer and more systematic, and how the categorical system became more complicated, more comprehensive

and more systematic; we should conduct a concrete analysis of the development of concepts and categories. This will enable us to discover the laws governing the development of philosophical thought and reveal its inner logic.

Second, when we say that the history of philosophy is one of the struggle between materialism and idealism we do not mean to imply that this struggle and the development of man's cognition are two separate processes. It was the one and same process through which man's knowledge of the world has been developing in the struggle between materialism and idealism which manifests the law of the development of man's knowledge. As the process of knowledge calls for the use of concepts and categories, every stage of development in the history of philosophy is marked by differing explanations of certain basic concepts and categories out of which emerged materialism and idealism. In the history of Chinese philosophy, for example, the struggle between materialism and idealism before the Qin Dynasty generally centered around the differing explanations of the Heavenly way and the human way, name and content, knowledge and conduct, and the variable and the constant. During the Wei and Jin Dynasties it centered around such pairs of concepts as being and non-being, essence and function, word and idea, ethical code and spontaneity. During the Song and Ming Dynasties it focused on principle and force, mind and matter, mind and nature, subject and object. A study of the development of concepts and categories is a key to the exposure of the law governing the struggle between materialism and idealism.

What is more, this study will enable us to understand the necessity of the emergence of certain concepts and categories in the history of cognition and to overcome the shortcomings of maintaining an oversimplified negative attitude toward idealism which can be found in the past studies of the history of philosophy. Wang Bi was an idealist philosopher, but it was he who advanced some categories such as essence and function, the one and the many, word and idea "which help us recognize and master the focal point in the web of natural phenomena." Despite his incorrect presentation of these categories, his advancement of them marked a step forward in man's knowledge, which deserves recognition for its position in the history of philosophy. Only after Wang Bi first posed the concepts of "taking nonbeing as essence" and "forget the words having grasped the

concept" did there appear Ouyang Jian's later theory of "The Word Expresses the Concept" (*Yan jin yi lun*) and Pei Wei's "On the Exaltation of Being" (*Chong you lun*). Therefore the study of the concepts and categories in the history of philosophy and their development constitutes an indispensable link in correctly appraising materialism and idealism in the history of philosophy.

Third, Engels believed that the study of philosophies of the past was the only way to temper one's theoretical thinking. A scientific history of philosophy can certainly play such a role, and a scientific history of man's knowledge essentially would be the history of the development of concepts and categories. Since concepts and categories in the history of philosophy reflect man's deepening knowledge, when we study its development we are rethinking in our own thought the process of man's coming to know the world. Of course we discard the accidental and secondary factors and grasp the essential, normative content. This process of rethinking inevitably deepens our own thought. In our study of the development of concepts and categories, we not only relive the process of mankind using concepts and categories to understand the world, but invariably use certain methods to revisualize them. That method can only be one of making a theoretical analysis of the contents of the concepts and categories and the relationships between them and the logical relationships in their development. Such a process of analysis itself is a kind of theoretical thinking. In this sense, this study can help us improve our ability for theoretical thinking.

2. The above-mentioned three points give only the general significance of studying philosophical concepts and categories, for that significance exists in the study of the history of any philosophy (e.g., the Western or Indian). However, the study of the study of the categories of traditional Chinese philosophy and its history of development has also its particular significance; namely, it will enable us to understand the characteristics and level of development of traditional Chinese philosophy. Western philosophy has its own categorical system; its characteristics and the different levels of development of its philosophical thinking at different historical stages are reflected in the development from Aristotle's *Categories* to Hegel's *Logik*. The categories used in the primitive Indian Buddhism and the categories of the Kunya and Bhava sects of Mahayana, more or less in succession and each with its striking features, represent the fairly high

level Indian Buddhism attained in logical thought and categorical analysis. Traditional Chinese philosophy has its own concepts and categories which gradually formed a fairly comprehensive system. Because of this it will not do just to take them in terms of the concepts and categories of Western philosophy, nor will it do to take them in terms of the Marxist philosophical concepts and categories.

Except for a few concepts taken from Indian Buddhism, the concepts and categories which have taken form in the long history of Chinese philosophy basically developed independently, hence their striking features. For example, the Heavenly way (*Tian dao*) and the human way (*ren dao*) as a pair of categories were very important in the history of Chinese philosophy. Therefore traditional Chinese philosophy not only paid considerable attention to the study of the relationship between the Heaven and man, but paid special attention to the study of the relationships between man and man (society). Another example is the pair of categories *ti* and *yong* which contain the meanings of not only noumenon and phenomenon, but also base and function, whole and part, and abstract and concrete. Such series of pairs of concepts and categories reflect not only the characteristics of traditional Chinese philosophy, but also the level of theoretical thinking at a certain stage of historical development. To make a not completely apt comparison: traditional Chinese medicine certainly has its own particular tradition with its own particular theoretical system, particular medical terms and concepts. Despite the fact that we have not found clear scientific explanations for some of the theories and achievements, since it does achieve good results in medical treatment it must reflect certain aspects of objective reality and contain fairly profound truths. Since concepts and categories are necessary conditions for the formation of knowledge and play a pivotal role in linking the subjective to the objective, definite concepts and categories reflect definite achievements made by man in recognizing certain aspects of objective reality through his theoretical practice; hence, different concepts and categories mark different depths of man's cognition. Therefore, when we study the concepts and categories at different stages of the development of traditional Chinese philosophy, we can see the level of theoretical thinking at the different stages of development of Chinese history.

In the history of Chinese philosophy, there are three periods during which schools made major contributions to the formation of the

categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy, namely, the various pre-Qin schools, the metaphysical school (*Xuanxue*) of the Wei and Jin, and the Neo-Confucianism (*Lixue*) of the Song and Ming Dynasties. When we compare the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy in the three stages with those of the Western philosophy, we are impressed by its distinct features and fairly high level. This comparison between the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy and those of other countries, nations and regions constitutes an important subject in comparative philosophy.

### **How to Study the Concepts and Categories of Traditional Chinese Philosophy**

Fundamentally speaking, the study of the concepts and categories of traditional Chinese philosophy requires the scientific analytical method of Marxism. Merely to pose the concepts and categories used in the history of Chinese philosophy is contrary to the goal of our study. For that will not uncover the laws governing the development of philosophical thought, nor will it help us to better understand the laws of the struggle between materialism and idealism, or to improve our theoretical thinking; in particular, we will be unable to recognize the characteristics and level of traditional Chinese philosophy. To achieve our goal, it is necessary to use the scientific analytical method of Marxism to: 1) analyze the meaning of the concepts and categories, 2) investigate the development of those meanings, 3) analyze the systems of concepts and categories of philosophers or philosophical schools, and 4) study the similarities and differences between the concepts and categories of Chinese and foreign philosophies. It is only on the basis of such an analysis that it is possible to advance the study of the history of Chinese philosophy along a scientific path.

#### *Analysis of the Meaning of Concepts and Categories*

The advancement of one or of a pair of concepts (categories) marks the level of understanding of the world, yet it is up to us to make an analysis of the meaning of such a concept or pair of concepts. When ancient philosophers advanced a new concept they did not have as clear and scientific an understanding of its meaning as we do today; this is particularly true of the concepts they used to explain the origin of the world. For instance, Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) was the first to advance the “way” (*dao*) as the paramount category in his philosophical

system. This concept of the “way” he advanced as an antithesis to the contemporary concept of “respecting Heaven.” By taking the “way” as the origin of the world, Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) certainly raised the level of ancient Chinese philosophical thinking. But what was the meaning of the “way?” Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) himself found it difficult to give a clear definition. He said: “I do not know its name; I call it Dao. If forced to give it a name, I shall call it Great.” Therefore he used quite a number of adjectives to describe the “way,” such as “soundless and formless,” “eluding and vague,” and “deep and obscure.” Obviously, with the limitations of the objective conditions and their level of knowledge, the ancient philosophers found it difficult to give lucid definitions of the concept of the origin of the world.

Thus it is necessary for us to investigate the meaning of the concept of the “way” in the light of the book *Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)*.<sup>1</sup> The term “spontaneity” (*ziran*) was widely used by ancient Chinese philosophers but each had his own definition. It was Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), too, who was the first to use “spontaneity” as a philosophical concept, by which he generally meant non-activity. Wang Chong of the Han Dynasty continued this usage when he wrote: “The Heavenly way is spontaneous non-activity.” By the time of the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the proponents of non-activity such as Wang Bi and Xiahou Xuan practically took “spontaneity” for the “way” — that is, the primal stuff of the universe. Xiahou Xuan wrote: “Heaven and earth operate with spontaneity and the sage functions following spontaneity. Spontaneity is the way, which originally had no name and Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) was forced to give it a name.”

Even the same philosopher had different definitions for “spontaneity.” We can use Guo Xiang’s definitions of “spontaneity” as an example for analysis. He identified at least five connotations for “spontaneity.” First, the actions of Heaven and man are “spontaneous.” In his *Annotations of Zhuang Zi* (the chapter, *The Great Teacher*) he wrote: “He who knows the deeds of both Heaven and man is a sage, means knowing the deeds of Heaven and man is spontaneity.” Thus, Guo Xiang looked not only at the natural phenomena but also at man’s deeds as in a sense spontaneous; in what sense could this be so? Second, “working for oneself” (*ziwei*) is

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<sup>1</sup> See “Early Daoist Theories of Life and Death, and Spirit and Form,” *Zhexue Yanjiu*, 1 (1981).

“spontaneity.” Guo Xiang said: “To say that matter is spontaneous means non-activity.” He also wrote: “We value this non-activity and matter’s working for itself.” Then why is “working for itself” a kind of “non-activity?” Third, “being self-willed” is “spontaneity.” Guo Xiang held that “working for oneself” is “spontaneity,” but “working for oneself” does not mean acting wilfully, but “acting by one’s nature,” namely, “acting in accordance with one’s nature, that is spontaneity, thus called nature (*xing*).” “According to spontaneity” means “according to one’s nature,” that is, neither making others succumb to oneself nor allowing oneself succumb to another. Fourth, “inevitability” is “spontaneity.” Guo Xiang wrote: “Knowing the reality of destiny one will not seek what lies beyond it, but just to fulfill one’s nature.” One who “knows his destiny” will not ask for what cannot be done—this is called “spontaneity.” Destiny here means “inevitability.” Fifth, “chance is spontaneity.” Guo Xiang wrote: “Things are all spontaneous, acting without knowing why or how it should be so.” By not knowing the reason of action, “spontaneity” implies “chance.” Therefore, when the philosophers were trying to explain “self-generation” they often employed such terms as “suddenly” or “abruptly”—all meaning that things exist without reason, the causality being beyond explanation.

According to Guo Xiang, “spontaneity” has the above-mentioned five inter-connected meanings, of which the last two are most important, that is, “spontaneity” has the meaning of both “inevitability” and “chance.” Actually, they are a pair of antagonistic concepts and, from the dialectical point of view, are mutually connected and transform themselves into each other, with inevitability manifesting itself through chance. Guo Xiang used the term “spontaneity” to explain both “inevitability” and “change,” precisely because he saw the relationship of mutual dependence between them: that a matter so exists is “inevitable” in one respect because “things emerge by themselves abruptly.” In Guo Xiang’s philosophical system, things must have these two aspects. From this analysis of Guo Xiang’s definition of the concept of “spontaneity” we can see the general characteristics and level of the philosophy of Guo Xiang.

*Analysis of the Development of the Meanings of Concepts and Categories*

Not only do the meanings of concepts and categories differ from one philosopher to another, at different times they also differ in meaning. Nevertheless, if philosophical thoughts follow one another, it is always possible to discover the relationship of succession between these concepts and categories. The study of their development is extremely important for understanding the laws of the development of man's knowledge. In the following, we will analyze the growth of the concept of *qi* (often translated as material force, ether or fluid—translator) in traditional Chinese philosophy.

Some thinkers as early as the Spring and Autumn period already discussed the impact of *qi* on man. For example, the *Zuo Zhuan* mentioned "the six *qi*" in the medical theory recorded in the first year of the reign of Duke Zhao of Lu (541 B.C.). By the Warring States period, *qi* became a general concept. People not only believed that the body of man was made of *qi*, but some believed that the spirit of man also was made of *qi*. In "White Heart," "Inner Function" and "Mechanism of the Heart" chapters of the book *Guanzi*, it was said: "As for essence (*jing*), it is the essence of *qi*;" "the *qi* of all things changes and thus becomes life;" "when *qi* goes to the ground, grains grow; when it goes into the heavens, there emerge the constellations; when it floats in the air, it becomes ghosts and spirits; when it goes into man's chest, the man becomes a sage," and "therefore when there is *qi*, there is life; when there is no *qi*, there is death," etc. According to these thinkers, among the "*qi*" there is an "essential *qi*," the life-giver. When such an "essential *qi*" enters the body of a man, he becomes wise and turns into a sage.

During the Warring States period this unscientific theory of "essential *qi*" was used to explain man's spirit. If we considered it materialist, it would be a materialist viewpoint with grave defects which, under certain circumstances, were used by idealists and turned into a component part of their system. It could also be utilized by the supernaturalists who transformed it into a basis for advocating "life without end." We know that Mencius also talked about *qi*, and posed a sort of *qi* called the "*qi* of vastness" (*hao ran zhi qi*). The "White Heart" chapter of the book *Guanzi* mentions the "essential *qi*" that can give man wisdom and "this *qi* should not be checked by strength but should be accommodated by power (*de*)" which is to say, *qi* itself possesses an intelligence which should be consolidated by moral

power. And in the theory of Mencius, his “*qi* of vastness is “obtained through accentuating righteousness.” Obviously, *qi* in Mencius’ theory has already become spiritual.

By the Han Dynasty, Dong Zhongshu went a step further and moralized and mystified *qi* which became the manifestation of the will and power of God. Dong Zhongshu held that *qi* had the power of meting out punishment and award, that there were good and vicious *qi* and that *qi* had emotions such as happiness, anger, grief and joy. So *qi*, though still retaining material appearance, already lost its material substance. Later, during the Han period, there were all sorts of superstitious explanations of *qi* which were indeed the outgrowth of the viewpoint of Dong Zhongshu.

From the historical data of the pre-Qin period and the Han Dynasty, we can see that the concept of *qi* is closely linked with questions of spirit and form, and thus has much to do with the question of the preservation of health, which often was deemed a means to becoming a deity. In *Zhuang Zi* the “true man” (*zhenren*), the “spiritual man” (*shenren*) and others were often described as “with the spirit guarding the form to achieve longevity,” “drinking dew and breathing the wind instead of eating grain,” “unifying their nature and preserving their *qi*.” They made their spirit integrate with their form so that they could accomplish the goal of “keeping their form perfect and replenishing their spirit to be merged into one with Heaven and earth.” The *Lü Shi Chun Qiu* includes numerous discussions of the “preservation of good health” and considers that to “achieve longevity,” *qi* “should be made to flow constantly within the body,” and “with essential *qi* renewed daily, the vicious *qi* will go and a full life span will be reached; this is called truth.” In *Huai Nan Zi* the preservation of *qi*, of form and of nature are the same thing; moreover all are linked together with *qi*. The writers of both of these two books were influenced by the “theory of essential *qi*,” in “White Heart” and other philosophical works. They all thought that “spirit” (*jingshen*) is also a kind of *qi*, or “essential *qi* which can reside or leave the body and that when spirit and body are at one, there will be long life.”

Meanwhile, some philosophers of the pre-Qin and Han periods held a materialist view of *qi* and considered it to be the matter that constitutes the world. Xun Zi held that everything in the universe, including man, was made of *qi*. He wrote: “Water and fire have *qi* but no life, plants have life but no senses, birds and beasts have senses but

know not righteousness and man has *qi*, life, senses and also righteousness." The chapter "On Spirit" of the book *Huai Nan Zi* says that the universe was originally a murky body of original *qi* without any shape and that later the interaction of the positive and negative forces gave birth to everything, so "the dirty *qi* became worms and the pure essential *qi* became human beings." Wang Chong put it with even greater clarity. He wrote: "The merging of the *qi* of Heaven and earth gave birth to everything," and that was the result of the movement of *qi*. He said: "When Heaven moves, it gives *qi*,...*qi* comes out and it gives birth to things." In order to oppose Dong Zhongshu's idealist view of *qi*, Wang Chong particularly pointed out that *qi* has no will, no aim. He said: "*qi* is void of ambition, purpose or scheme;" "*qi* is like smoke and cloud, how can it listen to man's request?" Nevertheless, like the book *Huai Nan Zi*, Wang Chong took the spirit of man (or the phenomenon of life) as "essential *qi*." He said: "Man lives because he has essential *qi*; when man dies, the essential *qi* vanishes." An analysis of the contents of the concept *qi* in the history of ancient Chinese philosophy reveals clearly the development of this concept. The three doctrines, or rather definitions, mentioned above, however, were all merged into the thought of Daoism (Taoism) toward the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, which we will not discuss here.

*Analysis of the Systems of Concepts and Categories of Philosophers (or Philosophical Schools)*

Historically major philosophers, in establishing their philosophical systems, have invariably used a series of concepts and categories. Thus the study of the relationships between these concepts and categories is necessary for us to make a thorough analysis of their theoretical systems. The level a philosopher's thought reaches often can be judged by how richly and systematically his concepts and categories reflect the essential relationships between the objects they are meant to reflect. Divergent views in the study of a past philosopher (or philosophical school) sometimes arise from the lack of a comprehensive, systematic study of the system of concepts and categories of that philosopher or school. For example, if we merely take into account Guo Xiang's concepts of "being" and "nonbeing" and their relationship, we might conclude that he was a materialist. But the reason why Guo Xiang's philosophy was the zenith of the Wei

and Jin metaphysical school was not that he put forth a view different from that of Wang Bi's on the relationship between "being" and "nonbeing," but that he had a fairly complete philosophical system, an analysis of which reveals that it comprises the following four groups of basic concepts. (Though there are other important concepts in Guo's philosophical system, we will not deal with them here.)

"Being" and "nonbeing:" The central topic of discussion among the Wei and Jin metaphysicians was the question of "origin and outcome, being and nonbeing." The philosophy of Guo Xiang might be considered to originate from the discussion on this topic. Guo believed that "being" (the "being of everything") is the only thing that exists; it is constantly present; although being undergoes infinite changes and transformations, it cannot in any instance become nonbeing," and "we say the Heaven and earth constantly exist because there is no time they have not existed." As for "nonbeing," he held that the creator above "being," or "the nonbeing" serving as noumenon, is non-existence, that is, "nothing." Thus he said: "Nonbeing is simply nonbeing, it cannot produce being," and "I venture to ask whether there is a creator or not? If not, how can he create things?" Therefore, from the very beginning, Guo Xiang denied the existence of a "creator" above the being of "everything," or a "nonbeing" which is the antithesis of "being" which as the primal body serves as the basis for the existence of being. However, Guo Xiang's philosophy did not stop here, but went further.

"Nature" and "destiny:" Since the existence of things is not based on "nonbeing" as the primal body, then is there an inherent cause for the existence of things? According to Guo Xiang one cannot say that the being of "everything" is groundless. Since things exist, their very existence is the basis for their existence.

Specifically, the basis of their existence is their own "nature:" "Everything has its own nature and every nature has its limit." The "nature" Guo Xiang meant is "the reason that things are what they are" which has the sense of "necessity." Thus he said: "Each gets what he deserves by nature; there is no avoiding it nor adding more." He also said: "Things have their own nature, so the wise stays wise till his last day while the dull goes on being dull till his death, neither able to change halfway." As for "destiny" Guo Xiang defined it as "inevitability;" as he put it "destiny means things all act spontaneously without anything acting on them," and "being aware

of the impossible." Obviously, his "nature" and "destiny" are two concepts he employed to prove the point that "being" alone exists and that "nonbeing" as creator or primal body is absolutely non-existent.

"Self-generated" and "self-sufficient:" The "nature" of things is the basis for their existence, but how does this "nature" originate? Is its emergence with some purpose, or condition? Guo Xiang said: "Things exist by themselves without a source; this is the way of Heaven" and "the emergence of things is just out of their own accord." If the "nature" of a thing is not "self-generated," then it must be given by others or intentionally produced by a creator. Yet this thing becoming this thing and that thing becoming that thing is not something else making this or that thing emerge and exist, nor even making itself emerge and exist; therefore "self-generation" can only be produced "unexpectedly," "abruptly" and "spontaneously" by itself. Were there any reason or purpose for the emergence and existence of a thing, it would inevitably lead to the admission of the existence of an initiator. Then what is the relation between one "self-generated" thing and another "self-generated" thing? Guo Xiang held that everything is "self-generated" and its existence is "entirely in keeping with its own nature" and therefore is "self-sufficient" (*wudai*). On the one hand, "self-sufficiency" is possible because "things produce themselves;" "things produce themselves without relying on anything else." On the other hand, anything can be "self-sufficient" as long as it "conforms with its own nature," and "is content with its own nature," "for when satisfied with its own nature, a giant roc does not despise the sparrow and the sparrow does not covet the heavenly lake and both are quite satisfied. Thus, big or small, all live in complacency." So, to insist on the premise that one must recognize that it is "self-generated" and "self-sufficient."

"Self-transformation" and "mutual indispensability:" To support the concepts of "self-generated" and "self-sufficient" requires the solution of another question. Suppose everything exists by itself, this being this and that being that with one differing from another, then are not all the things related? Suppose all the things are relative, then are not they limited? Suppose they are limited, then are not they "insufficient" (*you dai*)? To answer this question, Guo Xiang advanced the concept of self-transformation" (*duhua*). By self-transformation," he meant that everything emerges and generates independently, hence "self-sufficiency" is absolute. If we try to seek the cause and

basis of the emergence and generation of things, ostensibly we can pursue this question infinitely, but ultimately we can come only to the conclusion of "self-sufficiency." Thus he said: "If we try to find out what a thing relies on and what is the cause of its creation, there will be no end and finally we will come to self-sufficiency and the working of self-transformation will be obvious." In his "Annotations on (Zhuang Zi's) *Qi Wu Lun*" Guo Xiang cited an absolute example. He said that the bodily form, the shadow and the penumbra are all beings of absolute independence, for "thus throughout the realm of things, there is nothing, not even the penumbra, which is not "self-transformed."

If one thing does not exist independently, then everything else is not independent, which will inevitably lead to the existence of a primal body (or creator) above "everything," serving as the basis of their existence and inevitably recognized as "a cause of creation and generation." Although things exist independently and self-sufficiently, as long as everything fully realizes its "nature," brings it into full play and "the wise stays wise till his last day and the dull goes on being dull till his death," then the ideal realm will be achieved where "Heaven and earth are not so long-lived but live along with me, and things in the world are not divergent, but the same as me." Relating this way to every other thing has the greatest function; that is, "the greatest function of mutual indispensability is the perfection of self-transformation." Seen from another angle, everything is indispensable as long as it exists. Guo Xiang said: "A man, though only seven feet tall, possesses the five constant virtues; thus this mere body is provided with everything in the universe. Therefore none of the things in the world can be dispensed for one day. With one thing lacking, the living will not have means to live; with one law lacking, the living cannot fulfill their natural life-span." Thus, everything existent is rational, inevitable and not mutually exclusive. This view appears to contradict the doctrine of "self-transformation," but it does not. According to Guo Xiang, everything that exists is rational, inevitable and not mutually exclusive precisely because, as the condition for the existence of everything else, everything fully and absolutely brings its "nature" into full play, creates itself and generates self-sufficiently.

From this analysis of Guo Xiang's system of philosophical categories, we can see that his philosophy finally arrives at the

doctrine of “self-transformation,” and the concept of “exalted being” (*chongyou*) is merely a bridge to “self-transformation.” What is more, in Guo Xiang’s system, only after the establishment of the doctrine on “self-transformation” can one support “sublime being” and a relatively thorough refutation of a “nonbeing” above everything as the basis of the latter’s existence.

If we want to know whether a philosopher is a materialist or idealist, or the characteristic of his philosophy, its ideological relations with its predecessors and successors and its place in history, we must first make an analysis of his categorical system.

*Analysis of the Similarities and Differences between the Concepts and Categories of Chinese and Foreign Philosophies*

A comparison between the categorical systems of Chinese and foreign philosophies will undoubtedly enable us to have a better understanding of the characteristics and level of traditional Chinese philosophy. Because of the breadth of this topic and the limited study conducted by this author, we can make only a rather superficial comparison here between Wei and Jin metaphysics and the Buddhist doctrine of *Prajna* introduced into China in that period.

The central theme of Wei and Jin metaphysics is the question of “being and nonbeing, origin and outcome.” Therefore “being” and “nonbeing” are two basic categories in the Wei and Jin metaphysics. The Buddhist *Prajna* doctrine also discussed the question of “being” and “nonbeing” (or the “void,” *kong*), hence Dao An said: “Of the twelve books, *Vaipuliya* is most copious and its doctrine on the void of being and non-being is similar to the teachings of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi, thus the doctrine of Mahayana has been easy to spread in China.” The concept of the “void” (or “nonbeing”) of the Buddhist *Prajna* school is actually different from the “nonbeing” advocated by Wang Bi and other Chinese metaphysicians, despite their apparent similarity. The Buddhist concept of original nonbeing, or *Tathata* in Sanskrit, has the meaning that “all the different *dharmas* are in their original nature void and empty” and that all things have no original actual forms. Wang Bi and other metaphysicians also talked about “original nonbeing” by which, however, they meant that everything “is based on nonbeing as its origin.” Although the two concepts of “original nonbeing” cannot be considered to be entirely different, they do have vast differences in meaning. In Wei and Jin metaphysics,

Wang Bi's thought succeeded the doctrines of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu). In his philosophical system, the category "nonbeing" is one and the same thing as "the way" or "principle;" as he said: "The extreme of greatness is nothing but the way!...though it is important that it has nonbeing as its phenomenon, yet it cannot do without nonbeing as its noumenon;" "nothing exists without principle, everything operates according to its own law." Obviously, the "nonbeing" used by Wang Bi is not the "void" or "non-existence," but the "substance" of a thing. The "original nonbeing" of the Buddhist *Prajna* doctrine on the void only means that "all the different *dharmas* are in their original nature void and empty." They held that everything is void of nature, but created through the association of *hetupratyaya*. From this one can see that the Buddhist *Prajna* School in its discourse on the void refers not to "substance," but to "non-existence." As for the content of "being," the Wei and Jin metaphysicians usually referred to "universal being," namely, all sorts of actually existing things whereas, on the other hand, in the translation of Buddhist scripts, terms denoting different meanings of "being" (existence) were all translated into the term "being."

After its introduction into China, Buddhism first attached itself to Daoist necromancy during the Eastern Han Dynasty and then to Wei and Jin metaphysics. The various schools of the *Prajna* doctrine formed by Chinese monks during the Eastern Jin period generally still used metaphysical thought to explain the teachings of *Prajna* until the arrival in China of Kumarajiva whose translations of *Modhyamikasatra*, *Satasastra* and *Dvadasa-mikaya sastra* of the *Mahaprajnapramitasastra* provided Chinese Buddhist with the material for understanding the true meaning of Buddhism Monk Zhao's *On No Real Non-Existence* is more or less close to the original meaning of "neither being nor nonbeing" of the Buddhist *Prajna* doctrine.

A comparison and analysis of the Chinese and foreign philosophical concepts and categories can thus show their characteristics and level of development as well as the impact of foreign culture on indigenous traditional culture and the process of a foreign culture being assimilated and becoming a component of the culture of the country (nation, or region) into which the foreign culture was introduced.

### **A Tentative Theory of the Categorical System of Traditional Chinese Philosophy**

The term category has myriad definitions in the history of philosophy in the West. Aristotle in his *Categories* treated it as the basic mode of being and put forward ten categories such as substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, state, action and passion. And Kant described his twelve categories as principles related to cognition or as the precondition for constituting experience. Lenin said: "Categories are stages of distinguishing, i.e., of cognizing the world, focal points in the web, which assist in cognizing and mastering it."<sup>2</sup> *A Dictionary of Philosophy* published in the Soviet Union defines category as "the basic concept that reflects the most general and most essential character, aspect and relationship of the various phenomena and knowledge of reality.

"Category" then is generally explained from the two aspects of the existence and knowledge of reality: from the aspect of existence it is defined as "the basic mode of existence" or "the most general and most essential character, aspect and relationship of the phenomena of reality;" from the aspect of knowledge it is defined as the "precondition for constituting experience" or "focal points in the web, which assist in cognizing and mastering it." The necessary precondition for knowledge is certainly the reflection and manifestation of the "basic mode of existence" while the "basic mode of existence" is meaningful only in the process of man's knowledge. From what we listed above, we can see the relationship between "category" and "concept:" a category is a basic concept whereas a concept is not necessarily a category. Thus, what we are discussing here is what are the categories or basic concepts of traditional Chinese philosophy. If, using the basic concepts of classic Chinese philosophers, we can form a system which shows how traditional Chinese philosophy identified and explained "the basic mode of existence" and which reveal the line of development of the traditional Chinese philosophical thinking, then we have proven that traditional Chinese philosophy does have a categorical system. This is presented first in the following diagram (see next page) and further explained below.

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<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961), XXXVIII, 92.

In this diagram, twenty pairs of basic concepts make up the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy. This is certainly a very preliminary proposition. However, despite its many possible defects, it is intended to initiate discussion and study on this question. Here the author would like to explain some points:

(1) This diagram is divided into three major parts. Part I is intended to indicate what basic concepts are used in traditional Chinese philosophy on the question of the existence of the world; Part II is meant to show what basic concepts are used to present the form of being; and Part III is meant to show what basic concepts are used to denote the existence and knowledge of man. The relationship between "Heaven" (or the Heavenly way) and "man" (or the way of man) has always been a central theme for discussion in traditional Chinese philosophy and it is around this question that the struggle between materialism and idealism has been waged in the history of Chinese philosophy.

Zi Can was the first Chinese philosopher to make a proposition on the relationship between the two when he wrote: "The way of Heaven is remote, whereas the way of man is near." Confucius attached importance to the "mandate of the Heaven" but he gave even greater attention to the "affairs of man." Although he mentioned that he "began to know the mandate of Heaven as the age of fifty," he seldom discussed this question. "The master was seldom heard discussing the question of nature and the Heavenly way," reports the *Analects* which, however, extensively records Confucius' sayings on the question of the "way of man." Mencius talked about "obeying nature, and knowing fate and Heaven," and the *Doctrine of the Mean* says: "Sincerity is the way of Heaven; knowing sincerity is the way of man." Xun Zi said: "Grasp the way of Heaven and man. Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), the founder of Daoism (Taoism) said: "The Heavenly way is spontaneous non-activity," and he played down the importance of "humanness and righteousness" (the way of man). And Zhuang Zi "was misguided by Heaven and ignorant of man" Dong Zhongshu, the Confucian master of the Han Dynasty, described his research as a study of "the relationship between Heaven and man." Sima Quan who was much influenced by Daoist thinking said that his *Historical Records* were works of "investigations into the relationship between Heaven and man and the changes past and present." The Wei and Jin metaphysicians concentrated on the question of "spontaneity" (the

way of Heaven) and “ethics” (the way of man). Hence, He Yan said: “Only with people like Wang Bi, can you discuss the question of the relationship between Heaven and man.”

The Song Neo-Confucians of both the School of Principle (*Lixue*) and School of Mind (*Xinxue*) strongly believed: “The supreme ultimate (the principle of Heaven) is simply an utterly excellent and supremely good normative principle;” the supreme ultimate is an appellation for “all that is good in heaven and on earth, and among men and things.” The “principles of Heaven” and the “desires of man” are still a question of the relationship between Heaven and man. Even Wang Fuzhi still made this a focal point in his philosophical discourse. He held that “Rites, no matter how pure they are, are merely expressions of the principles of Heaven inevitably to be found in the desires of man,” and that “the desire of man, when reaching superb altruism is the perfection of the principle of Heaven.” Thus, traditional Chinese philosophy proceeded from the discussion of the pair of categories: (the way of) Heaven and (the way of) man, an indication of the main attention and particular content of traditional Chinese philosophy.

(2) This diagram shows the development of the categories of traditional Chinese philosophy and their relationships. Proceeding from the study of the relationship between Heaven and man, traditional Chinese philosophy branches out into two parts: Daoism (Taoism) and Confucianism. Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) advanced the relationship between the “way” and “all things.” He said: “The way creates one, one creates two, two create three and three create all things.” He also said: “All things in the world are produced by being and being is produced by nonbeing,” therefore the relationship between the “way” and the “way” and the “thing” is also represented by the pair of categories “being” and “nonbeing.” The Confucian School however proposed the categories the “way” and the “instrument” in the *Commentary on the Book of Changes*, which says: “That which shapes and is above is called the way and that which shapes and is below is called the instrument,” and adds: “Change contains the supreme ultimate which produces two extremes,” and “the alternation of *yin* and *yang* is called the way;” thus the relationship between the way and the instrument is reflected in the categories of the supreme ultimate and *yin* and *yang*. The Han Dynasty witnessed some development in philosophical thought, but it seems

that practically no new and influential philosophical categories were advanced. The Wei and Jin metaphysics upheld three philosophical classes, *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*), *Zhuang Zi* and *Zhou Yi*, which brought a gradual merging of Daoism (Taoism) with the Confucianism of the *Zhou Yi* system. This established the theory of a primal body as the origin of the universe, a theory with Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)'s and Zhuang Zi's thought as the framework. The Wei and Jin metaphysicians used categories such as "essence" and "function," "stem and branch," the "one" and the "many" to illustrate "nonbeing" (the primal) and "being" (everything or the various manifestations of this substance). They used "spontaneity" (essence) and "ethics" (function) to present the relationship between the "originality of the universe" (primal body) and "human social relations" (the various social positions and codes), and used the pair of categories "idea" and "word" to explain questions on understanding the substance of the universe. From the Wei and Jin Dynasties and the Northern and Southern Dynasties, onward, traditional Chinese philosophical thought, under the impact of Buddhism introduced from India, evolved into the Neo-Confucianism of the Song Dynasty. If the Wei and Jin metaphysical doctrine on substance has the thought of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi as the framework, then Neo-Confucianism of the Song-Ming period alternately were based on an objective idealism (represented by Zhu Xi), a subjective idealism (represented by Wang Yangming) and a fairly high level materialism (represented by Wang Fuzhi). The philosophical categories of this period succeeded Wei and Jin metaphysics and also absorbed Tang Buddhist thought in the Sui and Tang periods. Thus, there was a confluence of the thinking of Confucianism, Daoism (Taoism) and Buddhism within a Confucian framework. The most basic philosophical categories of the time became "principle" and *qi*, "mind" and "matter;" the question of "mind" and "nature" grew into the question of whether "mind is principle" or "nature is principle." Categories such as "subject" and "object," "investigation of things" and "fulfillment of principle" were used in the discussion of the question of knowledge and the categories "Heavenly principle" and "human desire" were used to discuss social issues.

Lenin in his *On the Question of Dialectics* wrote:

"Circles" in philosophy: (is a chronology of persons essential? No!)  
Ancient: from Democritus to Plato and the dialectics of Heraclitus.

Modern: Holbach—Hegel (via Berkeley, Hume, Kant). Hegel—Feuerbach—Marx.<sup>3</sup>

In his *Conspectus of Hegel's Book "Lectures on the History of Philosophy,"* he wrote: "Comparison of the history of philosophy with a circle...a circle on the great circle (a spiral) of the development of human thought in general."<sup>4</sup> Hegel's comparison of the history of philosophy with a circle, as pointed out by Lenin, is a penetrating reflection of the law of development of the philosophical thought. This is of tremendous importance in our study of the development of traditional Chinese philosophical thought.

From the above diagram, we can see that the development of traditional Chinese philosophy is roughly made up of three spiraling circles: The first covers the period prior to the Qin Dynasty; the Confucian School, including Confucius, Mencius and Zhuang Zi (or the *Commentary on the Book of Changes*); Daoism (Taoism) including Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), the School of Shuxia (i.e., the "White Heart" and other works) and Zhuang Zi; with the Han Dynasty forming a transitional period. The second circle was the period of the Wei and Jin Dynasties represented by Wang Bi—Xiang Xiu—Guo Xiang (or Wang Bi—Guo-Xiang—Seng Zhao). Buddhism was in vogue from the Northern and Southern Dynasties through the Sui and Tang Dynasties and after a period of development, Buddhism in China grew into several sects such as the Huayan (*Avatamsaka*) Sect and the Chan (Zen) Sect. The third circle covers the Song and Ming Dynasties represented by Zhang Zai—Zhu Xi—Wang Fuzhi.

(3) In the second column of the diagram only three pairs of categories are listed, of which the most fundamental is the pair "quiescence" and "movement," whose manifestation is the pair "constant" and "variable," though in fact "positive" and "negative" are also peculiar manifestations of "quiescence" and "movement." Although many philosophers of traditional Chinese philosophy discussed the question of "quiescence" and "movement," little discussion on the question of "time" and "space" was conducted among Chinese philosophers (except for the pre-Qin philosophers of the School of Names and philosophers of the later Mohist School).

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

Philosophical propositions in traditional Chinese philosophy seem not to have been restricted by time or space and they paid little attention to the question whether movement took place in time and space. That is why we have not included the categories "time" and "space" in our diagram.

(4) The question of man (the way of man) was much discussed in traditional Chinese philosophy which was especially characterized by the study of the question of "morals" (ethics). Therefore careful consideration should be given to what should be included in the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy. In this diagram (column III) five pairs of categories (in fact not all of them are related to the way of man) seem to be sufficient as basic concepts. "Spirit" and "form," or the relationship between spirit and body, are used for the study of the phenomena of the human life. This was discussed from pre-Qin days onward, with materialists and idealists holding different views. The question of "nature" and "emotion" might be looked at as the key ethical issue. There have been divergent views on the question of "nature" ever since the pre-Qin days, such as "man is born good by nature," "man is born evil by nature," "man is born with a mixed nature both good and evil," "man is born neither good nor evil by nature," and "man is born good or evil by nature, all depending on the specific man," etc. On the question of nature and emotion, there were views that "nature is good whereas emotion is bad," "nature is quiescent and emotion is active," etc. The Wei and Jin metaphysicians paid considerable attention to this question, but concentrated on a discussion of the difference and similarity between the sage and the ordinary man. The Song and Ming Neo-Confucians divided nature into "the universal nature" and the "humoral nature," with the former stemming from the "principle of Heaven" and the latter from man's inherent emotion and desire or from the *qi* that makes up the body. Hence, this is still a question of nature and emotion and the importance of ethical education is to "maintain the principle of Heaven and suppress human desire." The question of "knowledge" and "action" also occupies a very important position in traditional Chinese philosophy. Most of the past Chinese philosophers upheld both "acknowledge" and "action" and thought the latter was even more important. The categories "name" and "actuality" were always contained in traditional Chinese philosophy and the categories "subject" and "object" were borrowed from Buddhism, but all four are

related to the question of knowledge. Therefore column III of the diagram contains categories involving existence and knowledge.

### Discussion

As the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy is a rather broad and complicated issue, it calls for an earnest and extensive discussion. The following are only preliminary views on some of the questions:

(1) Should the categories in the categorical system be in pairs?

This question should be discussed in two aspects. On the one hand, in the history of philosophy, the philosophical categories used by a philosopher may not be in pairs. For example, the concept "spontaneity" used by Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) seems not to have its opposite in the book *Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)*. The concept *qi* used as the most general concept in the "White Heart" chapter of *Guanzi* did not seem to have its opposite either. However, taking the development of traditional Chinese philosophy as a whole, the categories are in pairs. For example, the concept "spontaneity" is paired with "ethics" and "principle" with *qi*. On the other hand, everything is contradictory, with two contradictory aspects, of which one does not exist without the other. Therefore, the categories which reflect the essential relationships of things must be in pairs of opposites. Some of the concepts and categories of traditional Chinese philosophy indeed seem to have no pairs of opposites, such as the "mean." We certainly cannot say there is a "counter-mean." Yet an analysis of the meaning of the mean may possibly lead to the solution of this question. Confucius advanced his "doctrine of the mean" to oppose "excess;" he said: "Excess amounts to insufficiency." Thus, the "mean" has the sense of "middle" or "correct." Therefore it would be sufficient to have the concepts of the "positive" and the "negative" in traditional Chinese philosophy since "mean" is included in the meaning of "positive."

Not all the categorical systems used by Western philosophers necessarily reflect the unity of opposites. Among the ten categories used by Aristotle, some can be paired up as opposites such as "quality" and "quantity," but "substance" has no specific opposite, though the other nine categories might be considered to be the opposites of "substance." The twelve categories used by Kant and the categories of the categorical system of Hegel's *Logik* are mostly pairs

of opposites. Though divergent in their views on the categorical system, all Marxist philosophers agree that categories are in pairs, for instance, essence and phenomenon, content and form, necessity and chance, possibility and actuality, etc. Marxist philosophy holds that categories must be pairs of opposites; this is certainly a correct view and reflects the reality of things. Thus when we today study the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy and try to make it more systematically and scientifically reflect the characteristics and level of traditional Chinese philosophy, we should try to find out the law of unity of opposites in its categorical system.

(2) How many categories should the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy contain in order to be sufficient to indicate “the basic pattern of being” or “the basic concepts that reflect the most fundamental characteristics, aspects and relationships of the phenomena and knowledge of the reality?”

The twenty pairs of opposite basic concepts of the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy are merely a tentative proposition. They indicate mostly what the “world” and “man” are; for example, the existence of the “world” comprises “principle” and *qi* and the existence of “man” comprises “spirit” and “form.” The categories used by Western philosophers, however, generally show the mode of existence and the “principles of knowledge.” The contemporary categories of Marxist philosophy as a whole also show the characteristics and aspects of being and do not include the most basic concepts such as “mind” and “thing” in the categorical system. By this criterion, some of the categories listed above should not be included in the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy and some other concepts should be added. However, the way we have indicated the system of traditional Chinese philosophy might be just one approach, for the various categories listed in the diagram do indicate the “basic mode of existence” so far as their contents are concerned, and are also “focal points in the web” of man’s knowledge. Would not, then, our way seem to be better suited to reflect the characteristics and level of traditional Chinese philosophy? It would be even better if we could use less basic concepts to indicate traditional Chinese philosophy, such as the diagram on the next page.

(3) Can “the categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy” reflect its characteristics and level?

This is a major question because serious research and thorough discussion is needed to ascertain the characteristics of traditional Chinese philosophy and its level. Could we venture to say that our diagram of the categorical system more or less reflects the characteristics and level of traditional Chinese philosophy? Apparently, traditional Chinese philosophy paid special attention to the study of the basic mode of existence and the existence of man and the relationships between things; that is, the identity of things, hence the multitude of concepts such as the "Heaven and man combine as one," the "knowledge and action combine as one," "essence and function are like one," "nonbeing originates in being," the "spirit and form combine as one," and "mind and matter are not two." Although traditional Chinese philosophy did not devote much discussion to such concepts as time and space, cause and effect which are not included in our diagram, yet as a categorical system, traditional Chinese philosophy already attained a fairly high level as compared with ancient Western and Indian philosophy in that it covered a vast scope, with basic concepts all in pairs and the development of the meaning of its concepts reflecting the world with increasing depth.

The categorical system of traditional Chinese philosophy has not been widely discussed and is a fairly new topic. Here, the author has ventured to propose some preliminary propositions with the aim of arousing interest in the discussion of this topic in the hope that the study of the history of Chinese philosophy, under the guidance of Marxism, will advance even more scientifically.

(Translated by Liu Bingwen)

4.

## **New Progress in the Study of the History of Chinese Philosophy**

In recent years study of the history of Chinese philosophy has been in full swing in China. The Society of the History of Chinese Philosophy has been set up and has in publication two journals entitled *Studies of the History of Chinese Philosophy* and *Chinese Philosophy* dedicated to publishing research results in this area. A number of books specializing in the subject have come off press and dozens of seminars have been held to discuss special issues. Thus a variety of different views in regard to Chinese philosophers ranging from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen have come forth. All this signals the new progress made in the study of the history of Chinese philosophy. However, I do not propose to discuss here the concrete issues; rather, I would like to talk about the prevailing trends in the study as these probably can give a better picture of the new progress made in this area and points to new prospects which will open up in the studies. In light of this, I would like to address myself to four mutually related issues.

### **The History of Chinese Philosophy as the History of Knowledge of the Chinese Nation**

There had been in the past a theory which moved from the classical conclusion that the history of philosophy was an historical account of the struggle between materialism and idealism to the study of the history of philosophy as the development of man's knowledge and the laws governing the development of theoretical thinking. However, the many years of practice in taking the history of philosophy merely as an historical account of the struggle between materialism and idealism not only gave rise to such drawbacks as over-simplification and indiscriminate labeling, but also failed to identify any concepts that bore nature of regularity. How should we resolve this problem? The discussion of "how to evaluate idealism" and "the object of the study of history of philosophy" had failed to lead us out of the dilemma. Under such circumstances people began to turn their attention to studying how philosophy as theoretical thinking

developed in history rather than becoming unduly entangled in the class background of a certain philosopher and his place in history.

A philosophical idea that once played a role in the development of man's knowledge naturally had a place in history. But excessive discussion about the relative superiority or inferiority of materialism and idealism is unnecessary, for which of the two is better can be fully determined by the effect they each produced on the development of man's knowledge. The study of the history of Chinese philosophy, in particular, used to stress the role played by a certain philosopher or philosophical school in history and how they were related to the ongoing class struggle and political struggle at that time. Of course, studies of this sort are also important, though strictly speaking they are the problem that the historical study of philosophy is designed to resolve eventually. The final purpose of such a historical study is to reveal the logical inevitability of the development of theoretical thinking as it occurred in history. In the pre-Qin Dynasty philosophy, for example, was there any inevitability for the ideas of Confucius to develop through Mencius to that of Xun Zi? At present more and more people who study the history of Chinese philosophy as a history of knowledge think so. For example, a multi-volume book entitled *History of the Development of Chinese Philosophy* is now being compiled under the auspices of Professor Ren Jiyu, who asserted that the book was intended to deal with the developmental history of the Chinese nation's knowledge. The *History of Chinese Philosophy* compiled with the joint efforts of Wuhan and Zhongshan universities also applied this idea as its guiding thought. In the preface, Xiao Jiefu (Hsiao Chefu) of Wuhan University remarked: "The history of philosophy is the history of how the contradictions of philosophical knowledge have developed; it is man's understanding about the general laws governing nature, society and movements of thinking manifested in the form of theoretical thinking."

Chen Junmin of Shaanxi Teachers University wrote that the "study of the history of philosophy is in essence a science that inquires into the dialectic movement of man's philosophical understanding." In the article "On the Scope, Target, and Task of the History of Chinese Philosophy" Zhang Dainian observed: "The history of philosophy is the history of knowledge in its totality." "It is the history of how man's knowledge develops, that is, a process in which the relative truths developed by mankind accumulate and increase, and the new ones

replace the old." To find out in its totality the law that governs the development of Chinese philosophy, Chinese philosophical circles have also turned their attention to Hegel's idea of "likening the history of philosophy to cycles." In the preface to his newly published *History of Chinese Philosophy: New Version*, Feng Youlan made a special reference to this issue.

Two seminars were held in Beijing, one on "The Philosophy of the Han and Tang Dynasties," was convened by the editorial department of *Study of the History of Chinese Philosophy*, the other on "Philosophy of the Han Dynasty" was under the auspices of the editorial department of *Chinese Philosophy*. At both meetings I suggested as a clue to the development of traditional Chinese philosophy in its totality that it is formed by a large spiral cycle constituted in turn of three smaller spiral developmental cycles. The first cycle was pre-Qin Dynasty philosophy. With Confucius as the starting point, it moved on through Mencius and Xun Zi to the *Book of Change* (also through other masters of the School of Logicians) and thus formed the first cycle in the history of Chinese philosophy. The second cycle was the philosophy of the Wei and Jin dynasties and the Northern and Southern dynasties. Starting from the idea of "valuing nil" advocated by Wang Bi and He Yan, it developed through "esteeming substance" upheld by Xiang Xiu and Guo Xiang, to Seng Pi's "doctrine of non-vacuum" which was "neither something nor nothing." The third cycle began with Zhang Zai and moved on through Zhu Xi to Wang Fuzhi.

In the midst of the three cycles were the study of the Confucian classics of the two Han dynasties and Buddhist studies during the Sui and Tang dynasties, indicating the transition from one cycle to another. The three cycles of spiral movements made up the large cycle of traditional Chinese philosophy. Namely, from the philosophy of the pre-Qin period and the two Han dynasties with Confucianism as its main body, it moved on to the metaphysics of the Wei-Jin period and the Sui and Tang dynasties built on the framework of Lao Zhuang theories. Gradually it assimilated Buddhism (the Hua Yan sect, the Chan sect) and finally developed into the neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties, a new school of Confucianism that had absorbed ideas of both the Buddhist and the Daoist schools which it developed at an even higher plane. This pattern of development, it seems, gives expression to the true feature of traditional Chinese philosophy; it shows the place of Confucianism in traditional Chinese

philosophy and also the profound influence which Buddhist and Daoist ideas exerted over the philosophy.

### **The Concept and Category of Traditional Chinese Philosophy**

If we intend to study the history of philosophy as the history of man's knowledge and reveal the law of the development of theoretical thinking in history, we must probe the issue of concept and category. As theoretical thinking, philosophy is unavoidably manifested through a series of concepts and categories and philosophical propositions formed by concepts and categories. This applies to philosophies in general and is particularly significant in the study of concepts of traditional Chinese philosophy. As Hegel said: "As cultural difference is generally formed on the basis of differences of ideological categories, it is even more so by difference of philosophy." Therefore the study of the concepts and categories of traditional Chinese philosophy and the history of its development will help us understand the characteristics of China's traditional philosophy and the level of its development.

Except for having absorbed some concepts from the Buddhism of India, philosophical studies in China had in the main developed independently prior to modern times and thus maintained a very distinctive character. Precisely because traditional Chinese philosophy has a set of concepts and categories of its own and has gradually formed itself into a complete system it is inappropriate to apply to it concepts and categories of Western philosophy in an oversimplified way; nor is it possible to equate them simply with the concepts and categories of Marxist philosophy. For example, the concept of "shen" in traditional Chinese philosophy has several implications. It may refer to god and ghosts, the meaning that was probably meant by Confucius when he said: "Worship god as if god were there." "Shen" may also mean "spirit" or "soul." This was what Xun Zi implied when he said "'Shen' (spirit or soul) is engendered when matter takes shape." Nevertheless, in traditional Chinese philosophy "shen" has an even deeper layer of meaning, that is, "a subtle change." This idea stood out in the *Record of Changes*, which said: "When there is no telling whether it is yin or yang, it is called 'shen.'" Even though "shen" implies a variety of ideas, the implications are related to each other. Another example is "ti," the opposite of "yong" in traditional Chinese philosophy. It also has a lot

of implications; it implies not only “substance” and “support” but also “whole” and “abstract.” The multiplex and mutually related implications embodied in one concept give expression to the special features of traditional Chinese philosophy and its level of development.

Since traditional Chinese philosophy has its special conceptual categories, is it true that it has a special categorical system? I have discussed this issue in my article “On the Problems of a Category System of Traditional Chinese Philosophy,” which, on the basis of the historical development of Chinese philosophy, delineated the system of its categories. According to the article, this system is made up by 20 or 12 pairs of categories. Among them the most important pair comprises “the Way of Heaven” and “the way of man.” This problem of “Heaven” and “man” remains the core issue of traditional Chinese philosophy. Starting from Confucius’ theory of “the Way of Heaven and life,” it moved on through Mencius’ idea of “do with all one’s heart, understand one’s lot, and know about Heaven;” the concept “honesty is the Way of Heaven and to be honest is the way of man” stated in *The Doctrine of the Mean*, the idea to “establish the Way of Heaven” and “establish the way of man” as advocated by *Record of Changes*; down to Dong Zhongshu, the great Confucian of the Han Dynasty, who described his studies as a learning that probed into “what links man with Heaven.” Even Sima Qian, much influenced by Daoist ideas, called his *Historical Records* a book designed as “an inquiry into what is between Heaven and man and a probe into the changes in the past and present.” He Yan, a founder of the metaphysics of the Wei and Jin dynasties, described Wang Bi, another founder of metaphysics, as “one who is qualified to talk about what is between Heaven and man.” Even Tao Hongjing, a Daoist master during the Northern and Southern dynasties, was also of the opinion that Daoism (Taoism) studied “what is between Heaven and man.” By the time of the Song Dynasty, the Confucians discussed such issues as “the separation of reason and Way,” “the heart of Way,” “the heart of man,” “Heaven’s reason,” “man’s desire,” and so on, which were all developments of the issue of “Heaven” and “man.” Therefore an understanding about the relations between “Heaven” and “man” means having a grip on the basic issue of traditional Chinese philosophy.

Judging by how things stand at present, articles dwelling on conceptual categories of Chinese philosophy in its totality are increasing. Aside from my article, there were “Unfold the Study of Conceptual Categories Inherent in Chinese Philosophy” by Professor Zhang Dainian (*Studies of the History of Chinese Philosophy*, January 1982), “Unfold the Study of Categories in the History of Chinese Philosophy” by Fang Keli (*People’s Daily*, September 3, 1982), “A Preliminary Discussion of Methodology in the History of Chinese Philosophy” by Xiao Jiefu (Hsiao Che-fu) (*Journal of Wuhan University*, no. 3, 1982), and others. However, there are even more papers and publications dwelling on the categorical systems of certain philosophers, or a certain pair of philosophical categories. For example, in the article “Study of Zhu Xi’s Thinking” Zhang Liwen made a special study of the relations among different categories of Zhu Xi’s philosophy. In his book entitled *The Viewpoint on Knowledge and Practice in the History of Chinese Philosophy* Fang Keli analyzed knowledge and practice as a pair of categories in the perspective of historical development. The journal *Study of the History of Chinese Philosophy* began a special column in every issue to publish various studies of categories in traditional Chinese philosophy. In particular we should mention Pang Pu’s “On ‘San (Three),” in which in the perspective of “can’s” various implications he discussed the unique position of “three” in Chinese culture and the special philosophical significance of triaism. It appears the study of traditional Chinese philosophy can take a further step forward only after such research into the categories of Chinese philosophy and its system.

### **The Comparison and Analysis of Traditional Chinese and Foreign Philosophies**

Toward the end of October 1980, a “Symposium on the Comparative Study of Chinese and Foreign Philosophies” was held in Guilin. The conference failed to produce any results; however, the issue it brought up began to arouse the attention of us all. As a matter of fact, the study of conceptual categories of Chinese philosophy naturally would have led to such a question, but special features of the conceptual categories of Chinese philosophy can be identified only through comparison with foreign philosophy. That little attention has been paid to the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign philosophies is due to a variety of factors. As far as the study

of history of philosophy itself is concerned, however, one of the most important reasons was the total neglect of the special characteristics of traditional Chinese philosophy. We tried either to explain it in light of Western philosophy or mechanically to apply Marxist jargon to it. Thus it became unnecessary to study the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign philosophies. Thus far not many studies have been conducted in this regard and studies generally have been done on some individual topics. For example, the Department of Philosophy of People's University held a discussion to compare and analyze Zhu Xi's idea of "*Taiji*" (the great ultimate) and the "absolute spirit" advocated by Hegel.

An interesting phenomenon which has emerged in the course of comparing Chinese and foreign philosophies is that a number of people, including some natural scientists, have analyzed the Chinese theory of "vitality" and found that it contains more grains of truth and thus is superior to the Western theory of the "atom." According to them, the concept of "vitality" as theorized in China has not only the implication of "basic particle" but also that of "field;" in other words, it has a "dual character of both wave and particle." Professor He Zuoxiu of the Institute of Theoretical Physics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences published in *Chinese Science* an article entitled "The Materialist Theory of Vitality" in which he said: "Vitality is a matter of continuity. It is close to 'field as discussed in modern science.'" "The theory of vitality is the forerunner of the contemporary theory of the quantum field." The theory of "vitality" as discussed in Chinese philosophy has special value in holding that the interaction among different things comes as a result of the effect of "vital energy."

But while this thesis probably contains some grains of truth, it appears also to have certain drawbacks, namely, it lumps together all different phenomena under "vital energy" or the "effect of vital energy" instead of focusing attention on analyzing the phenomena. The "theory of the atom" which prevailed in ancient Greece required that the smallest, indivisible particles be found and called "atoms." While this was, of course, incorrect, in terms of method it called for analysis of concrete matter which cannot be but as an advantage for Western philosophy. As far as the method of thinking is concerned, traditional Chinese philosophy seems to have laid more emphasis on the relations among things and the unity of their many aspects. On the contrary, Western philosophers in ancient times were probably more

concerned about the distinction between different things and stressed the analysis of their various aspects.

As attention has been paid to the comparison of Chinese and Western philosophies, the comparison between Chinese and foreign religions also has drawn more attention than before. More studies have been carried out on Daoism (Taoism), the religion of the Chinese nation. There are institutions for Daoist studies, for example, the Institute of Religion under Sichuan University specializes in the study of Daoism (Taoism). Special courses on Daoism (Taoism) are now being offered in universities, special teams have been set up to compile *An Outline of Daoist Collections*, and articles have been published comparing Daoism (Taoism) with Buddhism. The January issue of *Philosophical Studies* in 1981 carried an article under the title of "A Preliminary Discussion of the Early Daoist Theory of Life, Death, Spirit, and Body;" which, based on historical data, this analysis of these specific concepts in Daoism (Taoism) and Buddhism revealed the special features of Daoism (Taoism) as a religion.

In the perspective of a comparison of Chinese and foreign philosophies, two important questions have been raised. First, in view of the different development in Chinese and Western societies, some have asked very perceptively whether there is a "mode of Asian thinking." Did not some major propositions of traditional Chinese philosophy express the characteristics of the Chinese mode of thinking? Over the last few years quite a few articles have addressed such propositions as the "integration of Heaven with man," "identification of the intrinsic with the extrinsic," "integration of knowledge with practice," and "feeling and scenery in perfect harmony." Do not all these propositions embody a search for "unity," and is this the basic characteristic of the mode of thinking in traditional Chinese philosophy? If such be the case can we predict that once its lack of logical analysis and demonstration has been rectified Chinese philosophy will develop more along this search for unity? The second question raised is where the national spirit of Chinese culture lies. The answer to such a question can be found only through the comparison of Chinese with foreign philosophies.

### **The Method Employed by Traditional Chinese Philosophy in Establishing a System**

At the "Symposium on Philosophy of the Han and Tang dynasties" and the "Discussion of Philosophy of the Han Dynasty" held in 1983 the method of establishing a philosophical system was raised and Jin Chunfeng was the first to address this issue. He said philosophers of the Han Dynasty generally used the method of positivism to establish the philosophical system; the Wei and Jin people used a different method, but he was not sure how to define it; the method used by neo-Confucians of the Song and Ming dynasties can be called the method of ethical rationalism. At an enlarged session of the editorial committee on Study of the History of Chinese Philosophy held in 1981 I proposed that this question be chosen as a topic for solicited contributions. Philosophy has two aspects, the "contents" and the "method." Not only the "contents" but the "method" as well reflect a philosophy's level of theoretical thinking. During the period from the pre-Qin Dynasty to the Wei and Jin dynasties traditional Chinese philosophy comprised two major systems, Confucianism and Daoism (Taoism). These two schools were significantly different not only in their contents, but also in terms of the methods they used in establishing their systems.

To put it briefly, the method used by the Confucians was basically that of experience, namely, to use experience in demonstration of things transcending experience or other experience. By the method of experience we mean that the rationality of a philosophical idea can be proved through experience. Confucius said: "To draw a simile from something close can be called the method of benevolence." Mencius remarked: "Categorize and list things that are similar." Xun Zi also noted: "Things of the same category do not conflict; they are of the same rationality even after a long time." The *Record of Changes* mentioned "draw close experience from your own person and distant experience from things," "make a divination to observe nature," "observe astronomic phenomena above and study geographical features below" to illustrate the principles of its thinking. Dong Zhongshu put forward the idea that "things that can be counted are of the second number and things that cannot be counted are of the second category," and with this he demonstrated that "things can be combined by the category and Heaven becomes one with man."

By the time of the metaphysical school in the Wei and Jin dynasties, the method underwent a change. In fact, metaphysics was built on the framework of Lao Zhuang's thinking, and therefore the method it used in establishing its philosophical system can be called "dialectical thinking," which is characterized by demonstrating the rationality of things existing in experience with things transcending experience. Wang Bi said: "Forget words when the idea is grasped;" Guo Xiang said: "place words within the framework of the idea;" and Ji Kang (Chi Kang) remarked: "Words cannot express the idea completely" — they all meant the same thing. Wang Bi cited "implements originate from the Way" to demonstrate that "ministers are subordinated to the king." Guo Xiang tried to prove the "fairyland" did not exist "beyond the real world" ("to take a journey to the outside world in order to enhance the inner world" "inside and outside are mutually obscure.") The method of "dialectical thinking" was used in all these.

Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties was a combination of the two schools and an improvement on them. Their method perhaps can be called "introspection of ethical rationality." Regardless of whether it was "character is rationality" advocated by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi or "heart is rationality" upheld by Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming, they all took "rationality (*taiji*), a priori morality, as the basic contents. Zhu Xi said: "*Taiji* is a principle of the extremely good. Every man has a *taiji*, and every thing has a *taiji*." Lu Jiuyuan remarked: "Those who know before others know this reason, and those who become aware before others are aware of this reason. For this reason one loves one's close relative and respects one's older brother."

In either "the Way questioning the learning" or "respecting virtue and character," one can perceive the "reason of Heaven" in its totality through a moral introspection.

Why was this question raised? Because at that time we were thinking about Engels' remark: "Theoretical thinking is merely an ability endowed by nature and should be developed and trained. To train it, there has been no other method up to now except studying philosophies of the past." Theoretical thinking calls for the formulation of a number of philosophical concepts and the formation, on the basis of philosophical concepts, of a series of philosophical propositions. In order to form the concepts and propositions of a philosophical system as well as the system itself it is imperative to use

a certain method, which itself must be a certain kind of abstract thinking. The abstract thinking one exercises in the course of establishing one's philosophical system certainly will train and improve one's level of theoretical thinking. If we can reveal the different methods employed by the various philosophers and philosophical schools in history and make a clear analysis of them they will be an important help in analyzing the philosophers and philosophical schools under study. In addition, practice is no different from telling people a method for training and improving their level of theoretical thinking, and is therefore very significant.

Judging from the problems mentioned above, we seem to be able to perceive such a trend of development; namely, people may raise the question: What are the prospects of traditional Chinese philosophy, or in other words, does the continued existence of Chinese philosophy in its entirety have any value? If this question is raised and the proper conditions are available, then a comprehensive and systematic analysis can be made of Chinese philosophy in today's perspective. But at present quite a few people continuously maintain a negative attitude toward traditional Chinese philosophy as a whole. Whatever the circumstances, they regard traditional Chinese philosophy as a product of old times, an ideology of feudal and even slave society. Nevertheless, certain ideas of the philosophy are continuously quoted in everyday life. We can see that a great many articles, especially writings on "spiritual civilization," often quote passages from books of ancient China or historical stories in ancient times which were mostly the embodiment of traditional Chinese philosophical thinking.

Why are there such a contradictory phenomena? Is the concept of "value" involved here? Where does the basic spirit of traditional Chinese philosophy lie? Does this spirit still have value in today's world? Following the disclosure of the law of how traditional Chinese philosophy developed, the study of this problem will, in my opinion, show increasingly clearly that it works continuously toward the solution of a major problem, namely the value of the "'Way of Heaven" and the "'way of man" and their relations.

This problem should be resolved through the continuous elevation of man's spiritual realm, a concept in Chinese philosophy which requires that man should transcend "oneself" and identify with the "Way of Heaven." Having attained such a realm in which "Heaven is integrated with man" and "man succeeds alongside the Way," an

individual could become a saint and society a “world of Great Harmony.” As to how or whether it would be possible to realize such an ideal, there were, of course, different views due to the difference in historical conditions and environments. Nevertheless, philosophers in Chinese history tended to take as their motto the epigram that “Heaven moves along a healthy track, and a gentleman should make unremitting efforts to improve himself.” How things will develop is hard to predict; we are not prophets, nor do we believe in prophecy. But if things always develop according to law, can we predict its future development by studying and analyzing its previous experience; can the development of philosophy be forecast to help us know what will happen with Chinese philosophy in the future? I think it is possible.

Even though I proposed to describe the new progress now made in China about the study of the history of traditional Chinese philosophy, I mainly discussed my personal views on the new trends of philosophical studies. Perhaps this can be called the idea of one school.

## Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Philosophy: An Outline

At present Chinese philosophy in its development is combined with two important issues: (1) how to meet the challenge of Western philosophy and (2) how to approach Marxist philosophy. To understand both the characteristics and values of traditional Chinese philosophy will be beneficial in resolving the above two issues.

The viewpoint concerning the true, the good and the beautiful in traditional Chinese philosophy is fully embodied in three propositions which have long been discussed by ancient Chinese philosophers, namely: (1) "the integration of heaven and man;" (2) "the integration of knowledge and practice;" and (3) "the integration of feelings and scenery." The integration of heaven and man refers to the relationship between man and the universe, a concept in which man is considered the center of the whole universe. The conduct of the sages should not only conform to the "way of heaven." Living between heaven and earth man should not adopt a pessimistic attitude but should make unremitting efforts to improve himself, thereby giving expression to the prevalence of changes in the universe. By so doing, man should set a standard for himself, have a principle of conduct, and possess a lofty spiritual state.

The most important of these qualities is to do everything in the light of integrating knowledge and practice, to cultivate morally the integration of knowledge and practice. In addition, man should take pleasure in realizing the ideal state of "integrating heaven and man" and the principle of "integrating knowledge and practice." Man has to conduct himself properly and, at the same time, enjoy the pleasure of conducting himself properly.

Man has to comprehend the wonder of the creation of heaven and earth. To do this man must display his powers of creation in reproducing the wonders of creation by producing essays as "perfect essays," paintings as "godly works" and music as "heavenly music." Therefore, the demand for art should be in the spirit of "integrating feelings and scenery." When man has entered into such a state of creation, he has attained a state in which the true, the good, and the

beautiful are unified. The meaning of man's life and the most lofty ideal of mankind consist precisely in this. In the eyes of China's ancient sages, to conduct oneself properly is difficult, and to bring nature, society, and the inner and outer aspects of one's body and soul—as well as those of others—into full harmony is even more difficult.

Traditional Chinese philosophy has had a profound influence on the psychology of the entire Chinese nation and has been expressed in the unique psychological characteristics of the Chinese people. These characteristics have long influenced the nation in all respects and express both the strengths and weaknesses of the Chinese tradition of thought and culture. Traditional Chinese philosophy has exercised great influence on the whole nation by means of the following concepts:

*Utopian Idealism.* Most of the principal philosophers in traditional Chinese philosophy had an intense sense of responsibility and mission towards their country and people. They adopted an active and warm-hearted attitude toward social reality which they tried to transform with their doctrines and ideas. However, these doctrines and ideas failed to transform political reality in China and turned out to be tools used for its embellishment. Therefore, many influential thinkers in Chinese history turned out to be tragic figures. The actual role which utopian idealism played in China was quite contrary to their wonderful but subjective hopes.

*Practical Moral Concepts.* In traditional humanistic Chinese philosophy there has been a tendency which differs from Western humanism. Chinese humanism emphasizes the place of man in the universe and society. In any given social relationship it dwells on how man should behave himself, on how he should take responsibility, and how he should fulfill his duty to society and to others. But traditional Chinese philosophy is seldom concerned with human rights, thus hindering the development of personal character and restricting creativity.

*Unitary Way of Thinking.* Most major figures in traditional Chinese philosophy considered it their duty to establish a harmonious and unified society. Therefore, traditional Chinese philosophy has been

rich in dialectical thinking, which emphasizes unity and harmony and opposes both the “overdone” and the “underdone.” In these respects, this unitary way of thinking has positive meaning. Unfortunately, being a worldview often lacking in analysis, it is not easy for Chinese unitary thinking itself to develop into a modern science, since it is unable to set up a systematic theory of logic and knowledge.

*Intuitive Rationalism.* Most traditional Chinese philosophers have paid great attention to the functions of the “mind.” Confucian scholars pursued the full play of mental intuition from a positive viewpoint. According to Mencius, “the function of the eyes and ears is not thinking, for they are only blocked by objects.” “The function of the mind is thinking. Think and then you gain, otherwise you gain nothing.” The school of idealist philosophy of the Song and Ming dynasties even centered on the study of the “nature of the mind.” As for Daoist scholars, they tended to treat man’s subjective intuition from a pessimistic position. Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) advocated “sweeping away the dust from the mirror” and told people to get rid of the dark spots and make the “mind” as clear as a mirror able to reflect the outside world correctly.

Wang Bi, metaphysician of the Wei and Jin dynasties, held that sages were different from the common people because their “godly wisdom” (wisdom of the mind) is higher than that of others: “The better part in sages is their godly wisdom.” Overemphasizing the intuitions of the “mind,” this kind of nationalism could not be based on the analysis of things since it focused on “experience” while ignoring “verification.” Intuitive rationalism tended to be tinged with mystery.

Traditional Chinese philosophy has already made its contribution once to human civilization. To let it make an even greater contribution, we must undertake its thorough study and analysis to understand clearly both its strengths and weaknesses, so that it can develop further and play an even greater role in the present world.

(Translated by Hou Mingjun)



6.

## **Trends in the Development of Contemporary Chinese Philosophy: An Outline**

Since the conclusion of the Great Cultural Revolution, the study of traditional Chinese philosophy has gone through three periods. From October 1976 to early 1979, the task was to bring to the study of traditional Chinese philosophy an end to the chaos that resulted from the Cultural Revolution. What was unique during this period was the adoption of an attitude of "seeking truth from the facts" in the evaluation of Confucius. However, negative influence from two sources still existed: (1) that academic work must serve politics and (2) the application of dogmatic research methods that kept the field of study from making any important advances.

Since 1979, however, the study of traditional Chinese philosophy has begun to break through the bounds of dogmatism, and some important issues have been discussed. I made an analysis of progress during this period in an essay, "New Developments in the Study of the History of Chinese Philosophy," published in the *Min Bao* monthly journal in Hong Kong and also in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. This essay discussed new developments during that period in the following four areas: (1) the study of the history of Chinese philosophy as the history of the development of knowledge of the Chinese nation; (2) the study of concept categories and systems of Chinese philosophy; (3) the problem of method in establishing a philosophical system for traditional Chinese philosophy; and (4) the comparative study of traditional Chinese philosophy and foreign philosophies.

Since 1983, with the deepening of the study of traditional Chinese philosophy in the People's Republic of China, it is natural that the issue of future prospects in the development of Chinese philosophy be advanced. This issue is not only connected with the development of the study of philosophy in China, but also with the study of Chinese philosophy abroad. In August 1983, I presented a paper at the 17th World Philosophy Conference in Montreal, Canada, on "An Inquiry

into the Possibility of a Third Phase of Development of Confucianism." This paper confirmed the realistic value of traditional Chinese philosophy as a whole and was appreciated by many scholars both at home and abroad. To find a solution to the issue of future prospects for the development of Chinese philosophy, the value of traditional Chinese philosophy must be recognized. For this purpose, some Chinese scholars have made a special study of this problem.

Li Zehou, for example, holds that the history of the development of traditional Chinese philosophy is a history of the cumulative knowledge of the value of man. The core of Confucian teaching is "benevolence," that is, to treat other individuals as "man," an approach which makes people realize that the meaning, position, and value of an individual as man lies in his dealings with other individuals. "To be open and sensible" was advocated by the Metaphysical School in the Wei and Jin dynasties is, in a sense, an expression of the emancipation of "human nature." By the Song Dynasty, Confucianist philosophy expressed consciousness of knowledge of the value of man as man. Therefore, the characteristic feature of traditional Chinese philosophy lies in the fact that people come to know themselves gradually in moral practice, seeking to realize their ideals in present society. Li names this "Practical Rationalism" or "Chinese Wisdom."

Pang Pu holds that the characteristic feature of Chinese philosophy is a kind of "humanism" that emphasizes the meaning and value of "man" in social reality. Even Daoism (Taoism), the original Chinese religion, affirmed this characteristic feature. Daoism (Taoism) preaches "living in eternity" and "immortality of the flesh," the purpose of which is for "man" to attain a state of "immortality" in social reality.

Wang Ruoshui published an essay, "Man in Reality is the Point of Departure in Marxism," in response to Hu Qiaomu's essay criticizing humanism and alienation.

Why are there so many Chinese scholars at present who all take "man" and the value of man as the focus for the development of Chinese philosophy? It is clear that the development of Chinese society has been closely connected with the issue of the value of man.

Since the winter of 1984, a series of conferences have been convened to discuss Chinese culture and the comparative study of Chinese and Western cultures. First, a seminar on the "History of

Contemporary Chinese Culture" was held in Loyang, Henan Province, then a seminar on the "Comparative Study of Oriental and Occidental Cultures" was held in Shanghai. In April 1985, a coordinated conference on the "Comparative Study of Oriental and Occidental Cultures" was held in Shenzhen, and, in December, a seminar on "The Philosophical Thought of Xiong Shili" was held in Hubei. In January 1986, the first session of a seminar on Chinese culture was convened in Shanghai. From the above conferences, we can discern three closely-related problems that form the general topic of the development of Chinese philosophy, thought and culture.

A. At present, Chinese philosophy is confronted by a challenge from Western philosophy, including various Marxist philosophies in the West, and the problem is whether or not we can make immediate and active responses. To modernize China must introduce modern science and technology from the West and Western experience in economic management. But at the same time, does China have to usher in Western philosophical thought to enrich her own philosophy? Here three problems are involved: (1) whether China's Marxism can develop an open system to confront new scientific theories and new creative approaches to philosophical issues; (2) how to understand the similarities and differences between "modernization" and "Westernization;" and (3) whether China can preserve her own rich tradition of philosophy.

B. How or in what way can Marxism be combined with China's traditional philosophy? Marxism was introduced into China during the May Fourth Movement in 1919, and politically it met the needs of China at that time. In this sense, a fusion was achieved. Nevertheless, Marxism has not been integrated very well with China's philosophical thought. On the contrary, Marxism adopted a negative attitude towards China's traditional philosophy. But to face the challenge of Western philosophy, this synthesis must be achieved, because only by so doing can Marxism take root in China and become a Marxist philosophy in a Chinese environment. And, again, only by so doing can traditional Chinese philosophy develop into a modern Chinese culture which can assimilate both Western and Marxist philosophy.

C. How can we make a historical re-evaluation of traditional Chinese philosophy as a whole? Whether or not we can solve the first two problems depends basically on whether or not we can make such a reevaluation. This must be conducted in the light of the development

of contemporary world philosophy, and in view of the specific conditions of Marxism in China.

(Translated by Hou Mingjun)

**Part II**  
**Confucian Philosophy**



## Transcendence and Immanence in Confucian Philosophy

A nation's philosophy has its origin, as does a nation's culture. However, the origin of a nation's philosophy is not the same as the origin of its culture. A nation has a culture once there is such a nation, but just because there is a certain nation does not necessarily imply that that nation has a philosophy. Some nations possibly have gone through a period in which all along no original philosophical system was created. Or a nation may have declined or even dissolved, before it ever developed a philosophy of its own. Another nation may have adopted a philosophy from elsewhere and continued to exist. The Chinese nation is a general name which includes many ethnic groups. It has evolved from barbarism to civilization over a period of four to five thousand years, but Chinese philosophies, especially those more systematically developed philosophies, were born in the latter stage of the Chun Qiu (Spring-Autumn) period (770-476 B.C.).

At the latter stage of Chun Qiu, China gave rise to several great philosophers: Confucius, Lao Zi, Mo Zi, etc. It has been said that Lao Zi preceded Confucius, yet the book bearing Lao Zi's name was formed during the Warring, Period (475-222 B.C.). Therefore, the assertion that Confucius was China's earliest real philosopher is defensible. *The Analects* as it exists today covers many philosophical issues which have had lasting influence on the development of Chinese philosophy. One of those is the problem concerning transcendence and immanence. This is a real philosophical problem in the sense that only a real philosophical problem gives rise to a theoretical system designed to solve it.

The *Analects* records a saying of Zi Gong (自贡): "What the Master taught about *xing* (性, the nature of life) and *tian dao* (天道 the way of heaven), I have not heard." "This is a very important saying, because it leads to a real philosophical problem: why is it that what Confucius said about *tian dao* (the way of heaven) and *xing ming* (性命 nature and destiny) is not conceivable? It is because *tian dao* is concerned with a cosmic-human problem which raises the question of transcendence, while *xing ming* is concerned with a cosmic-human issue which has to

do with the problem of immanence. Both of these issues are originally metaphysical problems. According to Chinese philosophy, these problems are *chao yen jue xiang* (超然绝象 beyond words and unlimited by images). *Chao yen jue xiang* means something that cannot be explained in words, and even if words are said, what is said is not understood. That is why Zi Gong uttered the saying quoted above. How would the transcendence of *tian dao* be grasped? How would the immanence of *xing ming* be verified? What is the relationship between the two? These have become important topics of discussion in Chinese philosophy. Confucianism from Confucius and Mencius to Cheng Zhu (程朱) and Lu Wang (陆王) in the main is concerned with the explication of the problem involving the mutual relationship of the transcendent *tian* and the immanent *xing*. If this is so for Confucian philosophy, cannot the same be said with respect to another great system of traditional Chinese philosophy, namely, Daoism? The 5,000-word *Dao De Jing* speaks of *dao* and *de*: the *dao* that is referred to has a transcendent nature, while the *de* that is spoken of refers to an immanent quality derived from *dao*. Zhuang Zi has the same idea. Daoism falls outside the parameter of this paper's discussion but another paper will cover the Daoist view of transcendence and immanence.

What Confucian philosophy means by transcendence and immanence, of course, can be interpreted in a variety of ways. But basing our discussion on the saying of Zi Gong quoted above, what is called immanence should refer to the innate nature of the human person, that is to say, the spirit which makes a human being a human being: *ren* (仁, humaneness), *shen ming* (神明, divinity), etc. What is called transcendence should refer to the basis of the existence of the cosmos or the ontological nature of the cosmos, that is, "What makes existence existence," e.g. *tian tao* (天道, the way of heaven), *tian li* (天理, the reason of heaven), *tai chi* (太极, the grand ultimate), etc. In Confucian thought, transcendence and immanence are in union, or it may be said that Confucianism continuously demonstrates the two are in union, whereby the problems of "the transcendence of the immanent" and of "the immanence of the transcendent" have arisen. "The transcendence of the immanent" and "the immanence of the transcendent" have become the conceptual foundation of *tian ren ho yi* (天人合一, the union of heaven and humanity) in Confucian philosophy. This union of heaven and humanity is an ideal state of

being pursued by Confucianism, and is the essence which makes Confucianism Confucianism. I put it in this manner precisely because Zi Gong brings out the problem of the relationship between *xing ming* and *tian dao* in Confucius's teaching. The two are actually different aspects of the same problem.

Zi Gong said, "The Master's writings can be heard; what the Master said about *xing* and *tian dao* cannot be heard." Actually *The Analects* has touched upon many problems which are related to *tian dao* and *xing ming* indicating that Zi Gong might have failed to fully understand Confucius and his philosophy. Confucius said, "People of the past pursued learning for the sake of the self, people today seek learning for the sake of others." This saying is very important. "Learning for the sake of the self" should be an immanent proposition, that is, "to know how to be a person" and should develop one's immanent power to realize one's perfection. "Learning for the sake of others" is an extroverted matter and has a utilitarian value. Xun Zi said, "People of the past learned for the sake of themselves, people today learn for the sake of others. The superior person pursues learning in order to make oneself good; the inferior person learns in order to make oneself a thing to please others" (from *Quan xue* 劝学, "Instructions on Learning"). Cheng zi said, "To attain what one aspires to is for the sake of oneself, to conform to what others want to see is for the sake of others."

Thus we see that "learning for the sake of the self" is a kind of immanent spiritual realization, which is unaffected by external circumstances. Hence Confucius said, "*Ren* is for the sake of self-realization, and why should what others are concerned with be a factor?" Confucius once praised his disciple, Yen Hui, "Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui! With a single bamboo dish of rice, a single gourd dish of drink, and living in his mean narrow lane, while others could not have endured the distress, he did not allow his joy to be affected by it. Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui!" This is to describe an immanent spiritual state, which is unaffected by external conditions. This kind of "learning for the sake of the self" is not only immanent but also transcendent. According to Confucius, "learning for the sake of the self" is "the way of (the sage-kings) Yao and Shun." He said, "Only *tian* is great, only Yao abided by it." Therefore Yao and Shun's spirit is holy and eternal, and is therefore transcendent.

However, it is not true to say that the transcendent in Confucian thought is indifferent to worldly affairs or is outside the world, but, rather, it is in the world though not of it. Confucius said, "If one in the morning hears the way, one may die in the evening without regret." The way is transcendent, yet one who hears the way may give up everything for the sake of it, and here is an immanent transcendent spirit, which can be realized. Perhaps what best represents Confucius's immanent transcendent spirit is the way he characterized the process of his "learning for the sake of the self:" "At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of heaven. At sixty my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right." To know the decrees of heaven is to know the transcendence of *tian dao* so that *tian* is still the object of knowledge.

With respect to "at sixty my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of the truth," Zhu Xi's commentary is: "Sound enters into the heart unblocked, nothing is betrayed, knowing stretches to the limit, and result is obtained even without thinking." "Knowing stretches to the limit," means that knowing reaches the apex, to the point of "getting result without thinking." This is the realization of the immanent. Commentator Guo's "Preface to Zhuang Zi" says that Zhuang Zi can be said "to know the primordial of things," yet that is to reach the state of responsiveness and not union, so that he looked upon *dao* as the object of knowledge, and he still fell short of union with *tian dao*. At sixty Confucius was in union with *tian dao*. When he was able "to follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right," he entered the realm of complete immanent transcendence, or it may be said that this is what constitutes the essence of Confucian philosophy's realization of immanent transcendence. That is to say, *tian dao* is not only transcendent but also immanent, and is itself immanently transcendent. Similarly *ren xing*, human nature as it should be, is not only immanent but transcendent, and is itself also immanently transcendent. We may thus see that Confucius' philosophy is the fountain of Chinese traditional philosophy.

Following Confucius was Mencius, who gave full play to the immanent in Confucius's philosophy. Mencius said: "Whoever fully realizes one's *xin* (heart/mind) knows one's *xing* (nature). Knowing

one's *xing*, one knows *tian*." Mencius observed that all have a "sense of compassion," a "sense of shame," a "sense of courtesy," and "a sense of right and wrong." These are "four beginnings" which all human beings have within themselves. When these four beginnings are given full expression, *ren* (humaneness), *yi* (righteousness), *li* (propriety) and *zhi* (wisdom) are realized, getting to the very heart of human nature (人之本性, *ren zhi bun xing*), which is bestowed by *tian*. Nothing is higher than *tian*, and so *tian* is transcendent. Hence Mencius said, "Preserve the *xin*, nourish the *xing*, so as to serve *tian*." Again: "Doing what cannot be done is *tian*, realizing what cannot be realized is *ming*." What human efforts cannot accomplish, that *tian* can do; what human efforts cannot realize, that is *ming* (destiny). *Tian Ming* (天命 heaven's destiny) is a transcendent power. At this point a question arises: Can it be said that Mencius looked upon *tian* in terms of external transcendence? I think that that is probably not the case. As we know, ancient Greek philosophy took up such a question. Both Plato and Aristotle divided up reality into the transcendent realm and the realistic world. Subsequently Christian thought is like that too: there is a transcendent God who is the "other."

In Mencius' philosophy this problem (of a "transcendent other") is not so prominent. In his view, while *tian* is transcendent, it is not in opposition to human beings, nor is it external to them. This may be seen from two perspectives. First, Mencius conceived of *tian dao* (the way of heaven) and *ren dao* (人道 the way for human beings) in unity. He said: "A sincere person follows a way, (but) he has to understand what is good, otherwise he cannot embody sincerity. Hence sincerity is the way of heaven; the very thought of sincerity is the way of human beings. Striving for the fullness of sincerity and failing to move (others), that can never happen; lacking in sincerity, one can never move (others)." In order to realize sincerity, the first thing is to understand what is good. Hence, although sincerity is the way of heaven, yet the pursuance of sincerity is the way of human beings. Whoever embodies sincerity will move heaven and earth. The crucial matter here is "to understand what is good;" goodness inheres with the way of heaven (*tian dao*) as well as the way of human beings (*ren dao*). Zhu Xi said: "*tian li* (the orderliness of heaven) is the manifest virtue of *cheng*. That is what is meant (by Mencius)."

Secondly, from "Wan Zhang" in *The Book of Mencius*, the paragraph where Wan Zhang asked, "Was it the case that Yao gave the empire to

Shun," we can also see (the same point that heaven is not opposed to humanity.) Mencius quoted the words, "Heaven sees according as my people see; heaven hears according as my people hear," to explain the transcendence of *tian* which is not dislocated from the realism of human life. This shows that transcendence is lodged in the reality of human living. The reason why the people accepted Shun was that their nature was inherently good. Therefore in the final analysis the transcendence of *tian dao* and the immanence of *ren dao* are in union. By the same token, *tian dao* and *ren dao* are both immanently transcendent. The philosophy of Mencius is a system of thought which seeks to carry through the immanence of transcendence.

Although "The Great Commentary" of *The Book of Change* has been considered to be a development of pre-Qin thought, I believe that it belonged to Confucianism. At least the Confucians of later ages elaborated from The Great Commentary to establish and construct a metaphysical system. Hence the Great Commentary belongs to the system of Confucian philosophy. In the Great Commentary it is said that "Yin and Yang (in interplay) constitute *dao*. Whoever furthers it is a good person, and whoever realizes it fulfills *xing* (human nature as it should be). The humane person who recognizes it shows *ren*, the knowledgeable person who recognizes it is one who really knows. So the way of the superior person is rare." Commented Cheng Zi (程子): "*Tian dao* transforms itself in an unfathomably profound manner, so that the humane person recognizes what is humane, and the knowing person has knowledge. Although this is unfathomably profound, yet if we further the way, we become good persons. Its attainment is within reach of human beings, and (those who attain it) realize human nature (in the normative sense)." *Tian dao* then is the immanent basis of what human nature should be. Human nature is derived from *dao*, so that basically speaking it is good.

From there we see the transcendence of *tian dao* and the immanence of human nature (which is good). "The Great Commentary" of *The Book of Change* again said: "The 'higher' metaphysics is a matter of *dao*, concrete affairs in the 'lower' realm belong to what may be called *chi* (器, formed matter). Transform and nurture it (*dao*) and you have *bian* (变, change); promote it and pursue it through, and you have *tong* (通, flow); raise it up for people under heaven to follow, and you have *shi ye* (事业, enterprise)." The *dao* here is the *dao* of the interplay of yin and yang. If we contrast *dao* with *chi* (formed matter), the metaphysical

with the concrete, we affirm the transcendence of *dao*. The systematic thought of *The Book of Change* can be said to have constructed a model of the existence of the cosmos. It “circumscribes heaven and earth in the varied forms without exceeding their limits, winds its way through the ten thousand things without leaving anything behind,” so that such a model transcends space and is the principle by which heaven and earth are measured. “Yi (the principle of change) is the measure of heaven and earth, so that it can widely explain, the way of heaven and earth.” That is to say, in the thought system of *The Book of Change*, metaphysical principles and the principles of nature and society are correlative in each respect. The system includes “the way of heaven and earth,” which means that nothing can be separated from *dao* and nothing can be contrary to *dao*. In comparing the philosophy of “The Great Commentary” of *The Book of Change* and the philosophy of Mencius, I see that the former moves from the transcendence of *tian dao* toward the immanence of the *xing* (nature of being human), whereas the latter moves the other way round. Yet both recognize that the transcendence of *tian dao* and the immanence of *ren xing* are in unity and are inseparable. Hence The Great Commentary of *The Book of Change* is a system of thought which is a demonstration of immanent transcendence.

Confucian schools of idealist philosophy of the Song and Ming dynasties constituted the second period of development of Confucianism. Fundamentally speaking, that period sought to resolve at a deeper level Confucius’ problem concerning *xing* and *tian dao*, whereby the special character of the immanent transcendence of Confucian philosophy is systematized and given a theoretical foundation. Chen Zhu’s claim that “*xing* (nature) is *li* (reason)” and Wang Lu’s that “*xin* (heart/mind) is *li* (reason)” face the same question even if their starting points are different. Cheng and Zhu move from the transcendence of *tian li* (the reason of heaven) toward the immanence of *ren xing* (human nature), Lu and Wang move from the immanence of *ren xing* toward the transcendence of *tian li*, all to demonstrate “nature is reason” or “the heart/mind is reason,” thus bringing out the special character of immanent transcendence of Confucian philosophy.

If it can be said that the pre-Qin Confucian schools of thought on the whole sought to demonstrate the transcendence of *tian dao* and the immanence of *ren xing* are in accord, then by the time of Song-Ming

Confucian thought, *tian li* and *ren xing* both exhibit immanent transcendence and constitute the two sides of the same problem. Therefore when Song-ming Confucianism speaks of transcendence, it is immanent transcendence; when it speaks of immanence, it is transcendent immanence. Thus one sees what the outstanding character of Chinese Confucian philosophy is.

The “nature-is-reason” thesis of Cheng and Zhu is built on the theoretical foundation of “heaven and humanity are not two.” Cheng Yi said, “*Tian* has its reason, and if the sages abide by it (the reason of *tian*), that is *dao*.” Hence “*dao* is one, for it has never been the case where a human being realizes himself/herself to the full without fully realizing that (the reason) of heaven and earth, and heaven and humanity are not two.” The reason of heaven is not only transcendent but immanent, and that is because it is not merely a transcendent, objective criterion, whereby “the interplay of *yin* and *yang* is *dao*” and “the interplay of opening up and closing down is *dao*,” but it is also immanent, subjective spirituality, whereby “exercising reason to the full and reaching the limit of nature lead to the same destiny, all the same thing.” Further “nature is reason, and what is called reason is nature.” Also, “reason under heaven, residing where it is originally, is never found to be not good.” Cheng Yi again said, “In heaven it is destiny, in righteousness it is reason, in the human person it is nature, and where the heart/mind is what moves the body, all is one.” That is to say, the reason which resides in the human person is the heart/mind-nature (*xin xing*), *xin xing* heart/mind-nature and the reason of heaven are one. The reason of heaven is objective spirit; heart/mind-nature is subjective spirit. Objective spirit and subjective spirit are of one piece with the immanent transcendent spirit.

Zhu Xi thought that in principle the reason of heaven, as existent, preceded heaven and earth and the multitude of things, so that “Before heaven and earth come into being, reason for their existence must have already existed. If no such reason exists, then heaven, earth, persons, things should not have been there.” Nevertheless, the reason of heaven is not external to persons and things, so that Zhu Xi said, “Reason has no passion or will, no calculation, no artificiality; wherever *chi* (spirit) dwells, reason is found.” Hence, though the reason of heaven is transcendent, yet it is not external transcendence but is rather inward or immanent transcendence. Zhu Xi also said, “*Xing* (nature) is reason, and is the general name for the reason of the

ten thousand things. This reason is also the reason publicly known through heaven and earth. If I receive it from high, it becomes my possession." Chien Mu said in *Zhu Zi xin xie an* 朱子新学案 (A New Scholarly Study of Zhu Zi), "This is to say that the *tian li* (reason of heaven), bestowed on persons and things, becomes *xing* (nature)." Therefore, "nature is reason."

Zhu Xi went one step further to say, "*xin*, *xing*, *li*, all clasp together as one, and this one thing pierces through all." This is to say, "Whether it be from *xin* (heart), *xing* (nature) or *li* (reason), whichever you start with, you always link it up with the other two, that is because "*xing* (nature) is the *xin* (heart/mind) where *li* (reason) resides," or "*xin* (heart/mind) is the spot where *li* (reason) is met." *Xin*, *xing* and *li* basically are inseparable. Reason is in nature and does not leave the heart/mind. Therefore *tian li* (heavenly reason) is immanently transcendent, and so is *ren xing* (the nature of human beings) immanently transcendent.

"Heart/mind is reason" is the basic proposition of Lu Xiang-san. In his "letter to Li Zai," he said, "what all human beings have is *xin* (heart/mind), what all *xins* (hearts/minds) have is *li* (reason), *xin* is *li*." Why is it that heart/mind is reason? He argued: "*Xin*, one *xin*; *li*, one *li*. All return to one. The essence of righteousness is not dualistic. Neither *xin* nor *li* allows dualism." This is to say, all people's hearts and minds are of one heart and mind, the reason or principle of the cosmos is one reason or principle. All fundamentals boil down to one thing. You cannot separate the *xin* from *li*, so *xin* is *li*.

Then what is *xin*? What Lu Xiangsan called *xin* is also known as *ben xin* (innate heart/mind). He explained *ben xin*: thus: "Compassion is the beginning of *ren* (humaneness); shame is the beginning of *yi* (righteousness); courtesy is the beginning of *li* (propriety); discernment of right from wrong is the beginning of *zhi* (wisdom); (all these "beginnings") belong to *ben xin* (innate heart/mind). *Ben xin* is immanent goodness in human nature. *Ben xin* is not only immanent goodness, but also transcendent being. According to the disciple of Lu Xiangsan, "The thought-system of Xiangsan is ethics, life and metaphysics." For Lu thought: "The full development of the human heart/ mind is spirituality. This is a self-evident principle. All human beings have this heart/mind; all heart/minds comprehend this reason." Hence, *ben xin* (innate heart/mind) is not limited by time and space. "The multitude of things are awe-inspiring in every square

inch, the human heart/minds are over-flowing, is not the cosmos this reason (li)?” Heart/mind is immanent and also transcendent. Hence reason is also immanent and transcendent. Following Lu Xiangsan, Wang Yangming promulgated the thesis, “Outside the heart/mind there is no reason.” This is also based on the presupposition that heart/mind and reason are immanent and transcendent. Hence Wang’s philosophy is an immanent-transcendent philosophy. We need not explain further. In a word, even though Cheng Zhu and Lu Wang’s schools of thought do not have the same starting point, yet what they seek to demonstrate is a system in which *tian dao* (the way of heaven) and *xing ming* (nature and destiny of life) are one in immanent transcendence.

If we say that the Song-Ming idealist philosophies made up the second era of development of Confucianism in China, can there be a third era of development? In the latter part of the twentieth century, some Chinese scholars advocated Confucianism. This occurred after Chinese traditional philosophy came under the impact of Western thought and against the background of society developing in the direction of science and democracy. They hoped to find a place of worth for Confucianism in contemporary society. We leave aside the question whether or not what these scholars inherited and brought out or what they sought to establish in contemporary Confucianism can be called a third era of Confucianism, for this is too immense a problem and it is difficult to give a judgment. I merely think that if Confucianism is to have a third era of development, there must be a solution to the following questions: (1) Can a “learning of inward sageliness” (内圣之学, *nei sheng zhi xue*) with an immanent-transcendent foundation open a way for “a way for outward kingliness” (外王之学, *wai wang zhi dao*) adaptable to the demands of contemporary democratic society? (2) Can a “learning of the heart/mind-nature” (*xin xing zhi xue*) with an immanent-transcendent foundation open a way for a system of scientific epistemology? In my view, the difficulties are probably great. For a “heavenly-way, nature-and-destiny-of life” (*tian dao xing ming*) system of learning with an immanent-transcendent foundation is a pan-moralistic system of thought. This makes moral goodness the fundamental content of the way of heaven and nature and destiny of life, overemphasizing the human being’s capacity for self-awareness, the human subjective spirit and inherent human goodness. This way of thinking takes for

granted a self-awakened people's ability for self-discipline. Such an emphasis leads to the "sage-king" concept, which assumes that the "sage-king" will govern the world well. However, human beings cannot simply rely on their inherent goodness to become self-aware; the majority of people have difficulty in adequately realizing their immanent transcendence. Hence the so-called learning "for the sake of self-realization" is merely an ideal, which is for a few only. Of course, I have no intention to deny the contribution of this "self-realization" learning to human civilization, nor do I have any desire to negate the special worth of the philosophy which has immanent transcendence as a unique feature, because after all it is a very good ideal for humankind.

However, in facing social realities, do we not also need a philosophy of external transcendence? I think we do. From the standpoint of human society, there is need for an external transcendent power to restrict people. For instance, such transcendence is affirmed by the religious belief in a transcendent power by the external (or "objective") supra-mundane presuppositions in Western philosophy, and by a politico-legal system which corresponds to such religio-philosophical theories. The philosophical foundation of such a politico-legal system has an external transcendent basis. If Chinese traditional philosophy with immanent transcendence as its unique feature can adequately absorb from and harmonize with religious and philosophical systems which have external transcendence as a special characteristic, as well as (learn and adapt from) politico-legal systems built on such a basis, then Chinese philosophy will perfect itself on a higher foundation, and will perhaps thereby meet the demands of contemporary social development.

(Translated by Yan Xin)



## **An Inquiry into the Possibility of a Third-Phase Development of Confucianism**

Is there the possibility for Confucianism to have a third-phase development? In saying this we mean to regard the school of thought advocated by Confucius, Mencius, and Xun Zi during the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States as the first-phase development of Confucianism. After the Han Dynasty Buddhism spread to China. Under the impact of Buddhist ideas, a Confucian school of idealist philosophy emerged during the Song and Ming dynasties. It greatly pushed forward the Confucian doctrines and constituted the second phase development of Confucianism. Over the last century, Western Civilization has found its way into China. Especially around the time of the "May Fourth" Movement (1919) Marxism was also disseminated into our country, having an even bigger and more serious impact upon China's traditional thought and culture. Under such circumstances, is it possible for Confucianism to have a third-phase development? Can it be brought back to life? Can it still have a role to play in China and the world? In my opinion, it is perhaps too early to conduct an all-round discussion of this issue. However, to raise questions and opinions from certain angles in an attempt to push the inquiry forward may prove helpful.

In discussing whether it is possible for Confucianism to have a third phase development we must, first of all, acquire a clear understanding about the basic spirit of Confucianism. Regarding this basic spirit there have been in the past, and may be in the future, a variety of different views. The existence of different views is not necessarily a bad thing; it may help deepen the study of this issue. In clarifying the basic spirit, I think attention should be paid to two parts: the thoughts that have been constantly effective in the entire course of the development of Confucianism, and the thoughts that still have vitality today. By combing the two for consideration we may perhaps discover whether a third-phase development of Confucianism is possible from a certain aspect.

Running through the entire course of the development of Confucianism are two basic elements which still bear a major significance for us today: one is idealism and the other humanism; the two are connected.

Confucianism is a kind of idealism. Starting from Confucius, this school of thought has cherished the ideal of having a society in which "right principles prevail" and has made every effort to materialize the ideal in the real world. Despite its acknowledgment of the unattainability of such a goal, it still insists that one should foster the ideal and dedicate oneself to realizing it in the spirit of "Doing the impossible." Therefore when Zi Gong asked Confucius: "What if one can generously give to the people and provide relief to them? Can that be called benevolence?" Confucius answered: "One who behaves with benevolence must be a saint! Even Yao and Shun fell short of that." Evidently, Confucius did not regard the society of Yao and Shun's time as man's highest ideal. What then should we see as an ideal society? According to the Confucians, an ideal society is an ideal, which has the possibility, but not the necessity, of being realized. Despite the fact that an ideal society has never been realized before, it is a matter of fundamental importance, a problem of one's attitude toward life, whether or not one should seek to realize it. The Confucians' belief is that one should ceaselessly seek after it. This is why people at that time criticized Confucians as "being ignorant of world affairs."

Though it is not necessary that an ideal society be realized in the real world, as far as the Confucian philosophers are concerned, it can be realized in their minds. Why was the *West Inscription* by Zhang Zai so highly respected by later Confucians? Because it embodied the Confucian spirit of seeking to realize an ideal society, plus the fact that Zhang Zai had already built in his mind the ideal society. True, it was important whether the ideal society in which "the people are my brothers and I share my things with them," as Zhang Zai conceived, could be realized in the real world, but more important was whether one could have a world outlook in pursuing an ideal society. Therefore the last sentence of *West Inscription* says: "I carry on my pursuit when alive, and rest at ease when I die." While one lives, one has a duty to fulfill. The duty is to exert oneself for the realization of the ideal "world of commonweal." It can be said that this is an attitude of "concerning oneself only about cultivation instead of gains."

Whoever holds such an attitude toward life has a clear conscience. Today we need more than ever such an attitude.

Confucianism is a kind of idealism for which humanism is a prerequisite. Why is it that man must have an ideal and seek to build an ideal society? According to the Confucians, man is the most important factor in the world because he can “formulate ethics for the universe, provide sustenance for the people, carry forward consummate learnings into posterity, and win peace for thousands of generations to come.” Confucius said: “Man can enhance the Way and not the reverse.” The “Way” or the “Way of Nature” is an objective existence, but it needs to be enhanced and carried forward by man; it has to be effected by man through practice. How can man embody the “Way of Nature?” If, as the Confucians envisaged, man can understand how “Heaven is integrated with man,” “knowledge is integrated with practice,” and “feeling is integrated with scenery,” man can then attain the loftiest realm of being a man. In other words, man can congeal in his heart the ideal of the true, the good and the beautiful.

The integration of Heaven with man, knowledge with practice and feeling with scenery are the three basic propositions the Chinese traditional philosophy about the true, the good and the beautiful; they are the ideal realms the Confucian school has been trying to attain. Why is it that Confucianism is in pursuit of the three integrations? In my opinion, Confucianism is nothing more than a teaching regarding how to behave oneself, namely, one should set a demand upon oneself and hold oneself responsible to the world and the nation. This is a very common question, but involves a task extremely difficult to fulfill. Whoever has attained such an ideal realm of the true, the good and the beautiful is a saint.

Although the proposition of integrating Heaven with man is designed to illustrate the relations between man and the entire universe, it begins with man as the center of the universe. *Zhongyong (The Golden Mean)* stated: “Being honest is the Way of Heaven. Striving to be honest is the Way of man. An honest man hits the right Way without difficulty and understands it without deliberation. One who conforms oneself on the Way of Heaven without qualm is a saint.” Therefore a saint not only behaves in conformity with the requirements of the Way of Heaven, but also assumes as his responsibility the fulfillment of such requirements. In living a life in

this world, one should not behave passively; rather, one should “make unremitting efforts to improve oneself” in order to embody the ceaseless flow and evolution of nature. In this way, man will set a demand upon himself; he will find a reason for his existence and foster a lofty ideal. In this light the most important thing is for one to “integrate one’s understanding with one’s behavior” so that one can have a unified viewpoint on understanding and behavior in terms of morality and self-cultivation. The three programs and eight articles outlined in *Da Xue (The Great Learning)* tell us exactly what this is about. It is said in *Da Xue*:

The Way of the great learning lies in shedding light on the bright principles, being close to the people, and stopping at nothing but the utmost good. Those in ancient times who wanted to shed light on the bright principles for the world had to first bring order to their own kingdoms. To bring order to their kingdoms they had to first bring their own houses to order. To bring their houses to order they had to first cultivate their own moral character. To cultivate their own moral character they had to first set their minds straight. To set their minds straight they had to first foster a sincere desire. To foster a sincere desire they had to first carry knowledge to the utmost degree. To carry knowledge to the utmost degree they had to first inquire into the properties of things. Having inquired into the properties of things, they were able to carry knowledge to the utmost degree. Having carried knowledge to the utmost degree, they were able to foster a sincere desire. Having fostered a sincere desire, they were able to set their minds straight. Having set their minds straight, they were able to cultivate their own moral character. Having cultivated their own moral character, they were able to bring their houses to order. Having brought their houses to order, they were able to bring order to their kingdoms. Having brought order to their kingdoms, the whole world would be at peace.

This is a process of knowledge, but still more a process of moral practice. Many must have an ideal, and the highest ideal is to “achieve peace” so that human society can attain a realm of “Great Harmony.” In turn, the world of “Great Harmony” requires that everyone should set for himself the requirement of being a man, a reason for being a man, and “not do to others what one does not wish done to oneself.” Noted Confucius: “To implement my principle is nothing more than being honest and just.” Whether the ideal society of “Great Harmony”

can be attained or not remains, of course, a question. But a Confucian must have such a goal and find pleasure in pursuing it. To lead one's existence in the world and be a man, one must find pleasure in doing so and appreciate the creation of the universe. To have a true appreciation of Nature one must be able to display creativity and man's spiritual realm in reproducing the "creation of the universe."

One must be able to show why man should be a man, to create poetry and prose "masterpieces," paintings of "superb workmanship," and music like "the sounds of nature." This is why art requires that "feeling be integrated with scenery." Wang Fuzhi observed: "In name feeling and scenery are two things, but in reality they are inseparable. Those gifted in writing poetry are capable of unlimited wit. A witty line naturally has feeling in the midst of scenery and scenery in the midst of feeling." "Once feeling is integrated with scenery, a witty remark is ready at hand." When one enters the realm of creation, it will be a realm in which the true, the good and the beautiful are integrated with one another. This is precisely where the meaning of life and the highest ideal of mankind lie. Confucius described himself as "doing things at will without violating rules at the age of seventy." Probably it was the ideal realm as mentioned above. It must be the realm of a saint when whatever one says and does is in harmony with the entire universe, society, and one's own frame of mind.

That the continued existence of Confucianism still has a value is due perhaps to the sole fact that it provides a reason for being a man. It is most difficult for one to be a man, still more to maintain a harmony between oneself and nature, society and others, or between one's inner and outer sides in body and soul. Is such a requirement unnecessary in today's world? Confucianism only tells us the reason for being a man. We should not set demands on it in other aspects, and it should come as no surprise that it suffers from some inadequacies.



## On The View of *Zhengyi* in Traditional Chinese Thought

“*Yi*”<sup>1</sup> carries several different meanings in Chinese classics. It can be explained as “impressive and dignified manner” (*weiyi*, 威仪), which was probably first seen in inscriptions on ancient bronzes.<sup>2</sup> For instance the *Zhou Guo shu lüzhong ming*, 周虢叔旅钟铭 records, “The grand deceased father was of awe-inspiring bearing (*weiyi*) and was capable of serving the king (*tianzi*).”<sup>3</sup> *Shu xiang fu Yin ming* 叔向父殷铭 says, “Surrounded by illustrious virtue, holding awe-inspiring bearing (*weiyi*).” It also can mean “appropriate” (*heyi* 合宜) in the following quotations:

He was generous in attending to the needs of the common people, and he was appropriate (*yi* 义) in employing their services. (The Analects of Confucius, V: 16)<sup>4</sup>

Appropriateness (*yi* 义) means doing what is fitting (*yi* 宜). (Zhongyong<sup>5</sup>, XX: 5)<sup>6</sup>

Benefiting (all) creatures, he is fit to exhibit the harmony of all that is right; correct and firm, he is fit to manage (all) affairs. (I Ching)<sup>7</sup>

In addition, “*yi*” can be comprehended as “good” (*shan* 善). In *Wen Wang* (King Wen 文王), the first ode from the *Da Ya* 大雅 (Greater Odes of the Kingdom) part in the *Book of Odes*,<sup>8</sup> it says, “...To spread and to

<sup>1</sup> 义 who perform ben or *I*, often translated as “righteousness” or “justice.”

<sup>2</sup> Especially inscriptions on those of the Shang, Zhou, Qin and Han dynasties, named *Jinwen* 金文 or *Zhongdingwen* 钟鼎文.

<sup>3</sup> Cited from *Xu Gu wen yuan* 续古文苑. Unless otherwise noted, further quotations in this article are translated by the translator.

<sup>4</sup> See Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr. trans., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998), p. 99.

<sup>5</sup> Also *Chung-yung*, or *The Doctrine of the Mean*.

<sup>6</sup> See Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, trans., *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> These words are quoted from the explanation of Qian Trigram 乾卦. See James Legge, trans., *The I Ching* (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), p. 408.

<sup>8</sup> *Shijing*, or *Book of Songs*, *Book of Poetry*.

brighten the good reputation, the warning of Yin is from the *tian*..."<sup>9</sup> And the commentary says, "Yi means good (*shan*)." Moreover, *yi* also means "truth" (*daoli* 道理), such as in "on the boundary of hard and soft, truth commits no error," quoted from the *xiang* (image 像) of Jie, 解 Trigram in *Zhouyi* 周易,<sup>10</sup> etc. However, records show that *zhengyi* as a word first appeared in *Xun Zi* 荀子 (or *Hsün Tzu*). In the article *Ru xiao* 儒效 of this book, it states, "Those who are in pursuit of neither knowledge nor righteousness (*zhengyi*), but take wealth and profits as something significant and grand are vulgar people." Xun Zi classifies people into four groups: grand Confucians, proper Confucians, vulgar Confucians and vulgar people. The last group is considered the lowest among people, while the first group, grand Confucians, refer to people who perform benevolence and righteousness (*renyi* 仁义). There are still words related to *zhengyi* in the same article, for instance, "One should never obtain *tianxia* 天下<sup>11</sup> by doing something unrighteous (*bu yi* 不义) or through the murder of an innocent man" wherein *bu yi* means "not conforming to *zhengyi*." Another example lies in the statement, "(He) does not even have a space large enough just for the point of an awl, and yet still keeps the grand righteousness (*da yi* 大义) of the nation," which means that even when a *junzi* 君子<sup>12</sup> is utterly destitute, he is aware of observing the grand righteousness (*da yi*) of the order of the nation. In Xun Zi's *Zheng ming* 正名 (Rectifying Names), *zhengyi* also appears: "When one acts from considerations of profit (*li*), it is called business. When one acts from considerations of duty (*yi*), it is called (moral) conduct."<sup>13</sup> As Yang

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<sup>9</sup> For this line, James Legge translated, "...Display and make bright your righteousness and name, and look at (the fate of) Yin in the light of Heaven..." See James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics*, vol. IV, *The She King, or the Book of Poetry* (1871; reprint in China, 1939), p. 431. Klas Bernhard Johannes Karlgren translated, "...display and make bright your good fame; the lord of Yü and (the house of) Yin got their investiture from Heaven..." See Bernhard Karlgren, trans., *The Book of Odes*, (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950), p. 186.

<sup>10</sup> Also *I Ching*, or *The Book of Change*.

<sup>11</sup> "Tianxia" has rich meanings in Chinese tradition. Common translations are "the world," "the empire," or "the country."

<sup>12</sup> Also *chun-tzu*, a gentleman, or a profound person.

<sup>13</sup> See Burton Watson, trans., *Hsün Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 140. With slight modification.

Jing 杨惊<sup>14</sup> commented, “If there is no *zhengyi* (in one’s conduct), it is treachery (*jianxie* 奸邪),” *zhengyi* is contrary to treacherousness (“*jianxie*”). This extract means: an act done according to profit can only be called business (of travelling merchants, farmers, craftsmen and shopkeepers, who aim only at dealing with the business); while one who acts in accordance with righteousness can be considered to have moral conduct.

Based on what is mentioned above, it seems Xun Zi did not approve of acting merely for the sake of gaining. The various meanings of *yi* cited in the preceding part of this text actually share the implications of *zhengyi* in Xun Zi. Furthermore, in *Zuozhuan* 左传 (or *Tso Chuan*) and *Mencius*, which predates Xun Zi, such words as “*yi*” and “*Dao*” (or “*Tao*,” the Way) are often used to substitute for “*zhengyi*.” For example, a passage from the first year of the *Yin Gong* 隐公 (Duke Yin) in *Zuozhuan*, states, “If he does too many things that are not right (*bu yi*), he is doomed to bring ruin on himself.”<sup>15</sup> “If he acts wrongly (*bu yi*), no one will side with him. Although he expands his territory, he will face ruin.”<sup>16</sup> Here “*bu yi*” means “not conforming to *zhengyi*,” similar to the meaning in “*Ru xiao*” of Xun Zi cited above. These two sentences of *Zuozhuan* are from the story of “*Zheng Bo Ke Duan Yu Yan*” 郑伯克段于鄆,<sup>17</sup> which tells that Gong Shu Duan 共叔段, the younger brother of Zhuang Gong 庄公 of State Zheng, was doted upon by their mother, who requested Zhuang Gong to give the city of Jing to his brother to rule over. Zhai Zhong 祭仲, a high official of Zheng, warned Zhuang Gong, “What Gong Shu Duan has done violates the regulations and you may not avoid the danger it has aroused either.” To this Zhuang Gong replied, “If he does too many

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<sup>14</sup> A scholar and official in Tang Dynasty. Based on the data available, his *Xun Zi Zhu* (*Commentary on Hsün Tzu*) is considered as the earliest commentary version of Xun Zi.

<sup>15</sup> Burton Watson, trans. *The Tso chuan: Selections from China’s Oldest Narrative History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 2. With slight modification.

<sup>16</sup> See Burton Watson, trans. *The Tso chuan: Selections from China’s Oldest Narrative History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 3. With slight modification.

<sup>17</sup> The title means “Earl of Zhuang conquered Duan in Yan.” This story is also named “Two brothers of Cheng and the Mother who doted on the younger,” see Burton Watson, trans. *The Tso chuan: Selections from China’s Oldest Narrative History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 1-4.

things that are not right (*bu yi*), he is doomed to bring ruin on himself." The quotation, "If he acts wrongly (*bu yi*), no one will side with him. Although he expands his territory, he will face ruin," means that one cannot unite the people when one lacks *zhengyi* (righteousness, justice), thus the strengthening of his power will only end in disintegration and failure.

Mencius, mentioned "yi" a dozen times in his book, either independently or together with "ren"<sup>18</sup> as "renyi," but never the word "zhengyi." It should be noted that "yi" or "renyi" as it appeared in Mencius may not actually imply "zhengyi" ("righteousness"/"justice") in a strict sense. However, there is indeed a term that he uses which corresponds to "zhengyi," namely "Dao" (or *Tao*, the Way) such as in "One who has the Way will have many to support him; one who has not the Way will have few to support him" (Mencius, Book II, Part B: 1),<sup>19</sup> which indicates "daoyi" and implies "zhengyi." Mencius stated,

It is not by boundaries that the people are confined, it is not by difficult terrain that a state is rendered secure, and it is not by superiority of arms that the Empire is kept in awe. One who has the Way will have many to support him; one who has not the Way will have few to support him. In extreme cases, the latter will find even his own flesh and blood turning against him while the former will have the whole Empire at his behest. Hence either a gentleman does not go to war or else he is sure of victory, for he will have the whole Empire at his behest, while his opponent will have even his own flesh and blood turning against him. (Mencius, Book II, Part B: 1)<sup>20</sup>

What Mencius expressed was targeted at the unjust wars at that time and pointed out that one does not have to resort to using borders

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<sup>18</sup> Or *jen*, often translated as "benevolence."

<sup>19</sup> See Meng K'e, *Mencius*, vol. 1, trans. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), p. 73.

<sup>20</sup> See Meng K'e, *Mencius*, vol. 1, trans. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), p. 73. This passage of speech delivered by Mencius was recorded after mentioning "Heaven's favourable weather is less important than Earth's advantageous terrain, and Earth's advantageous terrain is less important than human unity," see Meng K'e, *Mencius*, vol. 1, trans. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), p. 73.

to restrict his people, or depend on perilous landscape to protect his nation, or rely on the sharp-edged weapons to threaten the world. A just cause enjoys abundant support, while an unjust one finds little support. If he is in conformity with “*daoyi*” 道义, many people will assist him, even the whole *tianxia* will come over and pledge allegiance. Conversely, if he cannot fulfill the requirements of “*daoyi*,” few will support him and even his relatives will be against him. It is a war between the one who has *tianxia* behind him and the one who has turned his own relatives into enemies. Thus, a *junzi* does not need to resort to wars, and if he does, he is bound to win. Mencius once said, “The *Spring and Autumn Annals* acknowledges no just wars” (*Mencius*, Book VII, Part B: 2).<sup>21</sup> Most traditional Chinese schools of thought believe that the reason why just wars acquire victory in the end lies in the fact that they win the hearts of people and ultimately gain their support. Below is an extract taken from *Mencius*:

It was through losing the people that Chieh and Tchou lost the Empire, and through losing the people’s hearts that they lost the people. There is a way to win the Empire; win the people and you will win the Empire. There is a way to win the people; win their hearts and you will win the people. There is a way to win their hearts; amass what they want for them; do not impose what they dislike on them. That is all. (*Mencius*, Book IV, Part A: 9)<sup>22</sup>

According to traditional Chinese views, the reason Jie 桀 (Chieh) and Zhou 纣 (Tchou), tyrants of Xia and Shang dynasties, were overthrown and lost *tianxia* is that they lost the people’s hearts. Therefore Mencius concluded from historical experience that winning or losing *tianxia* is entirely determined by conformity with “*daoyi*,” although one might win *tianxia* for a short time with unrighteous means, one will eventually lose it. Especially after the victory, it is important, too, for the governance to be just (“*zhengyi*”). Jia Yi,<sup>23</sup> a great thinker in the early Han Dynasty, analyzed the conditions that led to the success and failure of Qin Dynasty and in his essay “Guo

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<sup>21</sup> See Meng K’e, *Mencius*, vol. 2, trans. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), p. 287.

<sup>22</sup> See Meng K’e, *Mencius*, vol. 1, trans. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), p. 145.

<sup>23</sup> Jia Yi, 200 BC-168 BC.

Qin lun" ("On the Cause of Ruin of the Qin Empire") cited a proverb, "Past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide for the future." This was to warn the ruler of the Han Dynasty not to follow the same disastrous road of Qin to ruin. He explained that the reason the Qin lost the empire was that the ruler did not understand "the offensive and defensive position change if *renyi* (benevolence and justice) is not put in place." In essence due to the ignorance of the change in situation, the ruler of Qin, after uniting the empire, failed to carry out the policies of *renyi*, which caused the loss of the people's support and further demise of the regime.

"Yi" has rich implications in traditional Chinese texts, however, in most cases, it is associated with "*daoyi*" (*zhengyi*, righteousness, morality and justice). Confucius once said, "Exemplary persons (*junzi*) understand what is *yi*; petty persons understand what is of personal advantage (*li*)."<sup>24</sup> "Yi" herein can be interpreted as "public interest" (*gong li*, 公利), which tallies with "*zhengyi*;" while "*li*" can be expounded as "private interest" (*si li* 私利), which deviates from "*zhengyi*." Hence the distinction between "*yi*" and "*li*" is actually the distinction between the public and the private. Nevertheless, in my opinion, two kinds of interrelated explanations among the interpretations of "*yi*" are of particular significance: (1) "Authoritative conduct (*ren* 仁) means conducting oneself like a human being (*ren* 人); Appropriateness (*yi* 义) means doing what is fitting (*yi* 宜)" (*Zhongyong*, XX: 5);<sup>25</sup> "Universal love is called *ren* (benevolence); practicing it and conforming to it is called *yi*" (*Yuan Dao* 原道 of Han Yu 韩愈); (2) "Benevolence (*ren*) is the heart of man, and rightness (*yi*) his road" (*Mencius*, Book VI, Part A: 11);<sup>26</sup> "rightness (*yi*) is a man's proper path" (*Mencius*, Book IV, Part A: 10).<sup>27</sup> The former indicates that the inner nature of human, or human's heart of universal love, is called "*ren*," while the behavior of people is called "*yi*;" therefore "*yi*"

<sup>24</sup> See Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr. trans., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998), p. 92. With slight modification.

<sup>25</sup> See Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, trans., *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), p.101.

<sup>26</sup> See Meng K'e, *Mencius*, vol. 2, trans. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), p. 235. With slight modification.

<sup>27</sup> See Meng K'e, *Mencius*, vol. 1, trans. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), p.147. With slight modification.

has a bearing on human activity and behavior which forms human history. The latter also accounts that “*ren*” is the inner nature of human and “*yi*” is the process people practice in the light of this inner nature, or the process of people’s behavior—namely, human history. Perhaps from this perspective of traditional Chinese thought, what we call “history” is the activity of the human being or people’s behavioral process, of which “*yi*” (*daoyi, zhengyi*) should be used as the evaluating standard. Therefore, it is probably appropriate to conclude that the fundamental concept of historical philosophy in the Chinese tradition is “*yi*” (*daoyi, zhengyi*), while its basic proposition is “Appropriateness (*yi* 义) means doing what is fitting (*yi* 宜)” (*Zhongyong*, XX: 5);<sup>28</sup> and “rightness (*yi*) is a man’s road” (*Mencius*, Book VI, Part A: 11).<sup>29</sup> From this they also draw the historical outlook that “one who has the Way will have many to support him; one who has not the Way will have few to support him” (*Mencius*, Book II, Part B: 1).<sup>30</sup>

What does the spiritual life of humankind pursue? I think the answer should be truth, goodness, beauty, and the unity of the three. Of course, there are different ideas about what constitutes these values and how to go about uniting them. The benevolent will see benevolence and the wise will see wisdom, but there is no question as to whether people pursue them. What is the learning focus for these three studies then? I think it is philosophy that focuses on truth, literary and art theories on beauty. Typically, the question of goodness is seen solely as an ethical issue however, history should probe the idea of goodness even more than the field of ethics. It is undeniable that historical studies investigate the process of historical movements, its trends, and underlying factors. Yet where does the significance of these studies lie? As far as I am concerned, the study of history, after all, aims at unveiling what is reasonable and just and what is not. Justice is a question of goodness. So perhaps we can consider truth, goodness and beauty as the essence of the most fundamental disciplines in the humanities—philosophy, history and literature.

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<sup>28</sup> See Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, trans., *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), p.101.

<sup>29</sup> See Meng K’e, *Mencius*, vol. 2, trans. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), p. 235. With slight modification.

<sup>30</sup> See Meng K’e, *Mencius*, vol. 1, trans. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), p. 73.

Since we know from the Chinese tradition, that these three disciplines are inseparable, then traditional Chinese thought, operating as a stand alone field, is also a mode of value which studies truth, goodness and beauty as an integrated unit.

(This article was for the seminar on Democracy and Social Justice in Los Angeles, US, June 26-29, 1990)

## The Zhi Yan in Feng Youlan's *Xin Zhi Yan*

Professor Feng Youlan passed on from this world on November 26, 1990. Originally, the International Academy of Chinese Culture (Zhongguo Wenhua Shuyuan) had hoped to be able, before Feng departed, to convene an academic conference specifically to discuss Feng's philosophical thought. Although the conference is taking place according to schedule on December 4, Professor Feng's birthday, Professor Feng has already passed on. This is an extremely sad event. Professor Feng was my teacher. He was also a close friend of my father, Tang Yongtong.<sup>1</sup> Among Professor Feng's *Zhen Yuan Liu Shu*

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Tang Yongtong (1893-1964), like Feng Youlan, studied in the United States in the early 1920s. Tang entered Harvard University Graduate School in 1920 to study philosophy, Sanskrit, and Pali. Two years later he returned to China having graduated from Harvard with a Master's degree in Philosophy. From 1930 onward, Tang Yongtong was Professor of Philosophy at Beijing University. During the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945), Beijing University, Qinghua University and Nankai University joined together to form the SouthWest Associated University, located first in Changsha and then in Kunming. At SouthWest Associated University, in 1938-39, three close friends, Feng Youlan, Tang Yongtong and Jin Yuelin (1895-1984) finished major works. Feng's book was his *Xin Lixue* (New Lixue) (Shanghai: 1939), Tang's book was the first part of *Han Wei Liang jin Nanbei Chao Fo Jiao Shi* (History of Buddhism in the Han, Wei, Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties) (Shanghai:1938), and Jin's book was *Lun Dao* (On the Dao (Way)) (Shanghai:1940) which, like Feng's work, presents a metaphysical system. After the War, Feng Youlan went again to the United States, to the University of Pennsylvania, where he served as Visiting Professor in Philosophy for one year. Tang Yongtong went again to the United States in 1947, to the University of California, to lecture and to research. Feng Youlan returned to China in late 1948 after teaching one semester at the University of Hawaii. Tang Yongtong returned to China with the establishing of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Returning to Qinghua University in 1949 after liberation, Feng Youlan served briefly as Head of the University's Administration Committee. At Beijing University from 1949-1951, Tang Yongtong served as Chairman of the University's Administration Committee and from 1951 until his illness in 1964, Tang served as Vice-President of Beijing University. In 1952, Feng Youlan joined the Department of Philosophy at Beijing University where he remained until his passing on in 1990.

(purity Descends, Primacy Ascends: Six Books),<sup>2</sup> there are several which Professor Feng gave to my father to read before they were published. However, there is one book, *Xin Zhi Yan* (A New Treatise on the Methodology of Metaphysics),<sup>3</sup> which it would seem, my father did not read before it was published. At this time, I would like to express, simply, my humble views on this work.

Professor Feng in the Preface of *Xin Zhi Yan* states:

*Xin Yuan Dao* (The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy) sets forth the main current of Chinese philosophy in order to see clearly the place of New Lixue in Chinese philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

This book (*xin zhi yan*) discusses the method of New Lixue and from its method, one can also see the place of New Lixue in contemporary world philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

In Chapter Six of *Xin Zhi Yan*, on "Methods of New Lixue," Feng states:

The work of Kant's critical philosophy wants to pass through Hume's empiricism newly to establish metaphysics....The work of New Lixue wants to pass through the empiricism of the Vienna Circle newly to establish metaphysics.<sup>6</sup>

One can see that Professor Feng took this book (*Xin Zhi Yan*) very seriously. In this short essay, I have no way to discuss and assess

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Among Tang Yongtong's many writings in Buddhism, Indian Philosophy, and Chinese philosophy are *Yindu Zhexue Shi Lue* (A History of Indian Philosophy), *Wei Jin Xuan Xue Lun Gao* (Discussion on Deep and Profound Learning of the Wei-Jin Period), and *Sui Tang Fo Jiao Shi Gao* (A History of Buddhism during the Sui and Tang Dynasties, editor).

<sup>2</sup> See Selected Bibliography of this volume for a listing of *Zhen Yuan LiuShu*, Chinese and English titles and dates of publication.

<sup>3</sup> *Xin Zhi Yan* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1946); in *Sansongtang Quanji* (The Collected Works at the Hall of Three Pines), Volume Five (1986). (*Xin Zhi Yan* might also be translated into English as "New Discussion of Knowledge.")

<sup>4</sup> *Xin Yuan Dao* (Chongqing: Commercial Press, 1944); in *Sansongtang Quanji*, op.cit., Volume Five (1986); translated into English by E.R. Hughes, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy* (London: Kegan Paul, 1947).

<sup>5</sup> *Xin Zhi Yan* in *Sansongtang Quanji*, op. cit. Volume Five (1986), p. 163.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

completely whether *Xin Zhi Yan* truly is able to accomplish all that Feng hoped, but there would appear to be one question to which we can put our attention.

Why did Professor Feng want to demonstrate the position of his New Lixue in contemporary world philosophy by way of (penetrating through) *Xin Zhi Yan*? This may contain an important question as regards comparing Chinese and Western philosophy. We all know that none of China's traditional philosophies, no matter whether Ru (Confucian), Daoist, or sinicized Buddhist Chan, established its own system of epistemological theory (*renshilun tixi*). Especially in the system of Ru (Confucian) philosophy, epistemological theory all along has not been separated from ethical theory (*lun li xue*). By contrast, in the development of Western philosophy up to modern times, questions of epistemological theory have become important questions for discussion. Coming upon the challenges which traditional Chinese philosophy faces in Western philosophy in contemporary times, it would appear that several contemporary Chinese philosophers, to a greater or lesser degree, have become consciously aware of this short-coming in Chinese traditional philosophy. Because of this, since the May Fourth movement, several Chinese philosophers have endeavored to use different routes to resolve this one question (of epistemological theory in Chinese philosophy). Professor Feng Youlan was one of these.

Feng Youlan not only considered that his system of New Lixue connects with and continues (*jiezhe*) Chinese traditional philosophical discussion, he also considered that it connects with and continues Western contemporary philosophical discussion. In my view, Feng's writing his *Xin Zhi Yan* was precisely<sup>7</sup> for the purpose of explaining clearly that his philosophy connects with and continues Western contemporary philosophical discussion.

If his philosophy is for the purpose of connecting with and continuing Western contemporary philosophical discussion, then in that case, it would be absolutely essential to require his philosophy to have an epistemological theory as its foundation. And we can see just this kind of plan in the arrangement of the entire book of *Xin Zhi Yan*. Starting with the methods of Plato straight through the methods of the Vienna Circle, fundamentally what is discussed in *Xin zhi Yan*

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<sup>7</sup> Italics are the Editor's.

throughout is the methodology by which Western philosophers established their philosophical systems. That is to say, (what *Xin Zhi Yan* discusses) are questions belonging in the direction of epistemological theory. Moreover, Feng considered that upon this foundation (of the discussion of epistemological theory in *Xin Zhi Yan*), the direction of (his) New Lixue is established.

We know that Feng's New Lixue uses the analytical methods of New Realism (*Xin Shizai Lun*) of Western philosophy to establish its (New Lixue's) philosophical system. As Feng himself has said, the metaphysics of his New Lixue only provides a formal explanation of "experience" In the Introduction to his *Xin Lixue* (New Lixue), Feng states.

As for philosophy, it is that which, from the point of view of pure thought, makes reasonable (*lizhi de*) analysis, summation, and explanation of experience, and then using well-known words, expresses it.<sup>8</sup>

Although Feng's New Lixue discusses establishing a new metaphysics, nonetheless, how (this new metaphysical system) is established requires use of some kind of method. "Through reason (*lizhi*) to analyze, summarize and explain, and then, using well-known words, express it" is precisely this sort of method, but this (method) itself is again an epistemological problem.<sup>9</sup> Because of this, Feng said:

When we make formal analysis (*fenxi*) of events/things (*shiwu*) and existence (*cunzai*), we, thereby, attain the concepts of *li* (pattern, principle) and *qi* (energy-matter). When we make formal summation (*zonggua*) of events/things and existence, we, thereby, attain the concepts of "da quan (great whole)" and "daoti (embodiment of dao [way])."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Xin Lixue* (Changsha: Commercial Press, 1939); in *Sansongtang Quanjit*, op. cit., Volume Four (1986), p.7.

<sup>9</sup> Italics are those of the Editor.

<sup>10</sup> *Xin Zhi Yan* in *Sansongtang Quanjit*, op. cit., Volume Five (1986), p.224. (For further discussion of the four main concepts of the four propositions at the foundation of Feng's New Lixue, namely, in Chinese, "li (pattern, principle)," "qi (energy-matter)," "daoti (embodiment of dao [way])," "daquan (great whole)." (See the first section of both Chapters Six and Seven of this volume. Editor.)

From this new Lixue (with the above four newly defined concepts), Feng brought forth four sets of propositions by which he established Xin Lixue's system.

However, Feng Youlan really did not stop at this. If we say that the method he uses in Xin Lixue is logical analysis, this kind of method which from the positive side (*zhengmian*) elucidates and explains metaphysical questions, then, in that case, his *Xin Yuan Ren* (New Treatise on Nature of Man)<sup>11</sup> uses even more the method of direct experience and recognition (*zhijue tiren*) from the negative side (*fu mian*) to elucidate and explain metaphysical questions. In *Xin Zhi yan*, Chapter Six "New Lixue's Method," Feng at the every end states:

The positive (obverse) method (*zheng de fangfa*) of metaphysics starts out discussion by discussing metaphysics and, arriving at the end, also must admit that metaphysics, possibly, is (that which we are) not able to discuss. The negative (converse) method (*fu de fangfa*) starts out (admitting that) metaphysics (is that which we) are not able to discuss and, arriving at the end, also has discussed some metaphysics.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Xin Yuan Ren* (Chongqing: Commercial Press, 1943); in *Sansongtang Quanji*, op. cit., Volume Four (1986).

<sup>12</sup> *Xin Zhi Yan* in *Sansongtang Quanji*, op.cit., Volume Five (1986), p. 232.

(The English translations of Chinese "*zheng de fanfa*" and "*fu de fangfa*" as "positive method" and "negative method," respectively, come from Feng's own hand. In *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, which he wrote himself in English, Feng uses the English terms "positive" and "negative" as he explains further what he means when he states that in metaphysics there are two methods:

...The essence of the positive method is to talk about the object of metaphysics which is the subject of its inquiry; the essence of the negative method is not to talk about it. By so doing, the negative method reveals certain aspects of nature of that something, namely those aspects that are not susceptible to positive description and analysis.

...To Kant and other Western philosophers, because the unknowable is unknowable, one can therefore say nothing about it, and so it is better to abandon metaphysics entirely and stop at epistemology. But to those who are accustomed to the negative method, it is taken for granted that, since the unknowable is unknowable, we should say nothing about it. The business of metaphysics is not to say something about the unknowable, but only to say something about the fact that the unknowable is unknowable. When one knows that the unknowable is unknowable, one does know after all, something about it. On this point, Kant did a great deal.

Thus, we can say that Feng's positive and negative methods are both questions or problems of epistemological theory. His system of New Lixue not only wants to discuss questions of metaphysics, it also wants to discuss questions of epistemological theory. Moreover, he himself considered that his New Lixue's method is a "most philosophical, metaphysical method." Like this, Feng took very seriously questions of philosophical method, just as in his Introduction to his *Xin Zhi Yan*, Feng said:

As regards our experience, we can pay attention to its content and we also can pay attention to the order of experience. As for what is called the content of experience, it is the knowledge (zhi shi) which the experiencer has of the object experienced. As regards reasonable analysis, summation, and explanation of experience, this also can be divided into that which pertains to the order of experience and that which pertains to the content of experience. The former (i.e. that which pertains to the order of experience) is theory of knowledge (zhi shi lun) in philosophy; the latter (i.e. that

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The great metaphysical systems of all philosophy, whether negative or positive in their methodology, have crowned themselves with mysticism. The negative method is essentially that of mysticism. But even in the cases of Plato, Aristotle, and Spinoza, who used the positive method at its best, the climaxes of their systems are all of a mystical nature...

Thus the two methods do not contradict but rather complement one another. A perfect metaphysical system should start with the positive method and end with the negative one. If it does not end with the negative method, it fails to reach the final climax of philosophy. But if it does not start with the positive method, it lacks the clear thinking that is essential for philosophy. Mysticism is not the opposite of clear thinking, nor is it below it. Rather, it is beyond it. It is not anti-rational; it is super-rational.

See Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, edited by Derk Bodde (New York: The Free Press, 1948), pp. 340-342.

What the Chinese terms "zheng de" and "fu de" suggest visually are two sides of one and the same page or two sides of one and the same coin. Feng starts with the English term "positive" in "positive philosophy," i.e. analytic philosophy, and uses "negative" as the other or flip side of that approach. The English term "negative" here, therefore, should not be understood as suggesting something "wrong" or "inferior," but simply the other side of "positive." In this regard, "obverse" and "converse" in English may be more neutrally helpful terms for discussing these two approaches. Editor)

which pertains to the content of experience), is metaphysics (xing shang xue) in philosophy.<sup>13</sup>

From this we can know that what Professor Feng calls New Lixue's method is also New Lixue's question or problem of a theory of knowledge (zhi shi lun wen ti).

Currently, under the impact of Western philosophy, in China several contemporary philosophers, while developing traditional Chinese philosophy, are attempting to draw out and highlight questions of epistemological theory (ren shi lun). Of course, Feng Youlan (1895-1984), Zhang Dongsun (1886-1962), and so forth, (were also engaged in these efforts). It appears that all these scholars have become consciously a ware of and put their attention to questions already existing within traditional Chinese philosophy. Xiong Shili, for example, all along hoped to establish his theory of knowledge (or epistemological theory), called "lianglun," in his *Xin Weishi Lun* (New Treatise on Consciousness-only).<sup>14</sup> In the third volume of *Shili Yuyao* (Essential Writings of Xiong Shili), in the section entitled "Answers to Mou Zongsan," when Xiong Shili discusses the importance of establishing "lianglun," he says:

This book actually had a necessity to be written. What I want to discuss is the road of reasoning (li zhi) and speculative thinking (si bian) of Western people, stopping of thought and direct insight (zhi guan) of the people of India, and from the midst of actual practice penetrating discernment (cong shi jian zhong che wu) of the Chinese people...Lianglu (theory of knowledge) should investigate and discuss thoroughly all of these three directions of China, India and the West.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Xin Zhi Yan*, in Sansongtang Quanji, op. cit., Volume Five (1986), pp. 166-167. (Italics are those of the writer.)

<sup>14</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi Lun* (Zhejiang: Litu Shuguan Chubanshe, 1932). Editor

<sup>15</sup> (In Xiong Shili's reply to Mou Zongsan in *Shili Yuyao*, the following appended discussion pertains to "lianglun" (epistemological theory or theory of knowledge). Xiong Shili here is talking about li (pattern, principle) and where li converges as one, not many:

As regards 'without form but having divisions (wuxinger youfen),' this requires intuition or direct comprehension (zhengliang) to understand. Kong Zi speaks of 'silent knowledge' (mo er shi zhi) (Analects 7.2). The term 'mo' refers to 'deeply without appearance' of difference, not raising difference, but is not having

One can see Xiong Shili considered that ancient Chinese philosophy must absorb positive results from the direction of epistemological theory in Western philosophy.

He Lin in his *Zhi Xing Heyi Xin Lun* (New Treatise on the Unity of Knowledge and Action) states.

As regards the question of knowledge and action, (we have a necessity) both to raise anew (this question) for discussion and to add anew critical research...If we do not examine closely knowledge which is in mutual relationship with action, (if we do not examine closely) truth which is in mutual relationship with good, of course, we may sink into baseless conclusions.<sup>16</sup>

One can see that He Lin had already discerned that as regards the question of knowledge and action, (we) necessarily must separate and draw out questions of epistemological theory from within questions of ethical theory. Turning to Jin Yuelin's *zhishilun* (Theory of Knowledge),<sup>17</sup> it even more directly discussed questions of epistemological theory. And again, Zhang Dongsun absorbed Neo-

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knowledge. This is why it is also called 'knowledge' (shi). This is what Buddhists call 'zhengliang' (direct comprehension). As regards 'zheng,' it is 'zhenghui' (intuition); as regards 'liang,' it is 'zhiyi' (non-analytic knowledge). This is not ordinary knowing...(Zhengliang) takes great effort to cultivate...until 'zhenti' (one true embodiment) is manifest. At that moment, 'zhenti' (one true embodiment) knows itself, comprehends itself. This is 'zheng liang.' This is not the realm of reason (lizhi) or deduction or calculation...What is called knowledge which goes beyond (chaoyue) is just this.

(Editor's translation, with some added quotation marks for clarity.)

*Xiong Shili Yuyao*, (Hubei, 1947); reprinted in Taipei: Guangwen Shuju: 1962 as *Xiong Shili Lun Zhu Ji* (Collected Writings of Xiong Shili), Volume Three, again reprinted in Taipei: Yue tian Chubanshe, 1971, (renamed Hongshi Chubanshe), 1975, pp. 417-424. Editor)

<sup>16</sup> He Lin, *Zhi Xing Heyi Xin Lun*, first published as a monograph in Beijing Daxue Sishi Zhounian Jinian Lunweiji (Collected Essays Commemorating the Fortieth Anniversary of Beijing University); reprinted in He Lin, *Wushi Nian Lai de Zhongguo Zhexue* (Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy) (Liaoning: Liaoning Jiaoyu Chubanshe, (1988), 1989), Part Two, Chapter One, pp. 130-131.

<sup>17</sup> Jin Yuelin, *Zhishilun*, writing was completed in 1948, first published in Beijing, Commercial Press, 1983.

Kantism in establishing his “pluralistic epistemological theory (duoyuan renshilun).”<sup>18</sup>

All these situations can demonstrate clearly that during the decades of the 1930s and 1940s of the last century, in China a group of philosophers, under the impact of Western philosophy, had no choice but to investigate various kinds of questions raised by Western philosophy, in particular, questions in the direction of epistemological theory. Of course, here we have intended only to demonstrate clearly that this one kind of phenomenon, indeed, actually exists. Turning to whether these philosophers have already determined and resolved various insufficiencies which Chinese traditional philosophy has had since ancient times or whether (these philosophers) are able truly and correctly to absorb into Chinese philosophy attainments in certain directions on the part of Western philosophy, (these questions), again, ought to be discussed else. Where and are not what this essay wants to resolve. However, if Chinese philosophy wants to attain true and correct development, if Chinese philosophy wants to take its deserved place in world philosophy, then in addition to elaborating fully upon (Chinese philosophy’s)own excellent strengths (which it must do), at the same time, in facing questions raised by Western philosophy, Chinese philosophy must give positive and appropriate responses. Because of this, the contemporizing (xian dai hua) of Chinese philosophy is and will continue to be a huge process. It will require a long period of research and discussion. Only in this way will we be able to find for Chinese philosophy a road that can be traveled in the direction of the contemporary age and thus towards world philosophy, Chinese philosophy will make (its) contribution.

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<sup>18</sup> Zhang Dongsun, “*Duoyuan Renshilun*” (“Pluralistic Epistemological Theory”), in his *Renshilun* (Epistemological Theory) (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1939).



## **Some Reflections on New Confucianism in Mainland Chinese Culture of the 1990s**

My comments on New Confucianism in this essay will be focused on two broad issues; the rise of New Confucianism in mainland China during the 1990s and the questions that the New Confucianism address in this context.<sup>1</sup> The rise of New Confucianism in contemporary mainland China has attracted much attention internationally, in particular among scholars in the Chinese-speaking world. It is therefore important to give shape to this development by defining its salient features. To my mind, the founding of the International Confucianism Association (Ruxue Lianhehui, ICA) in October 1994 in Beijing is a very significant moment in the rise of New Confucianism. To date, the ICA has had little influence on its immediate social environment, but the very fact of its existence, considered in the context of the issues I will be discussing below, would tend to suggest that Confucianism might one day play an important ideological role in several Asian countries. But why should Confucianism assume such importance in these countries? It is worthwhile to note the following points. First, the inaugural conference to mark the founding of this Confucian federation in Beijing was attended by representatives from practically every country in the East and Southeast Asian region. Previously, this kind of conference on Confucianism would attract representatives from mainly China, Japan, and South Korea. When I say China, I include Taiwan and Hong Kong because they are important parts of the Chinese-speaking world. But at this 1994 conference, in addition to participants from these countries, there were also academics from Vietnam, Singapore, and even the Philippines. Participation from across the Asian region greatly broadened the cultural scope of this

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<sup>1</sup> (Translator's note) Xin ruxue has been translated as "New Confucianism," not as "Neo-Confucianism," in order to mark the term as referring specifically to modern twentieth-century interpretations of Confucianism and to avoid confusion with the various historical forms of Neo-Confucianism dating from the Song dynasty. For this reason, all references to twentieth-century xin ruxue in this book have been translated as "New Confucianism."

conference and clearly exceeded the scope of previous ones. Second, scholars such as Zhang Dainian who took part in this conference and those who participate in the activities of the ICA are among the foremost scholars of Confucianism in the world today.<sup>2</sup> There were also several young scholars in attendance. The conference was graced by the presence of distinguished scholars such as Kenji Shimada from Japan and a notable number of prominent scholars based in the United States such as Theodore de Bary, Tu Weiming, and Cheng Zhongying. There were also several Taiwanese and Russian scholars there. By contrast, there were very few scholars from the European countries.

The obvious disparity at this conference between a minority of European scholars and the majority of predominantly Asian scholars from various countries is noteworthy and constitutes a salient feature of contemporary New Confucianism. Another feature is the importance attached to this conference by the Chinese government. This is crucial for understanding the rise of New Confucianism in mainland China. At the conference, both Deputy Premier Li Lanqing and the chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Li Ruihuan, delivered speeches.<sup>3</sup> When the proceedings were over, President Jiang Zemin met with a number of prominent scholars who were participants at the conference. From these facts, it is evident that the Chinese government set considerable store by the conference. The topics discussed there were also diverse, including, among other things, the history of Confucianism, the renaissance of Confucian studies, the influence of Confucianism on global culture, and the relation between Confucianism and modern industry. At one point during the conference I said to my friend Sun Changjiang, "At present, Confucianism in mainland China is like speculating in shares. The slightest move will send its stock soaring."

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<sup>2</sup> (Translator's note) Zhang Dainian, a professor of philosophy at Peking University, is an international authority on Chinese cultural and philosophical issues. Tang and Zhang were both founders of the Academy of Chinese Culture, a leading minjian (nonofficial) enterprise in the Culture Fever of the 1980s. See Chen Fongching's chapter in this book.

<sup>3</sup> (Translator's note) The conference proceedings were edited by a committee of the International Confucianism Association and published by Beijing renmin chubanshe in 1995 under the title *International Studies of Confucianism* (Guoji ruxue yanjiu).

The major week-long Commemoration Conference for the 2,550th birthday of Confucius, which began in Beijing and ended in Qufu on 12 October 1999, provides more recent evidence of the growing importance of Confucianism in the public culture of mainland China as well as the East Asian region.<sup>4</sup> Jointly sponsored by the ICA, China's Confucius Foundation, and UNESCO, the conference drew together academics and business and political figures. According to Kim Yersu, who represented UNESCO at the conference, "Today the whole world is taking a second look at Confucianism as the source of inspiration for the ideas and values needed to deal with the problems facing humanity as it looks forward to the new millennium."

The rise of New Confucianism in contemporary mainland China is also the outcome of critical reflection on the "Culture Fever" of the 1980s. In the more sober climate of the 1990s, several mainland Chinese scholars came to regard the Culture Fever as "radical, overly hasty, irresponsible, Westernized" and so forth. The legacy of the May Fourth Movement, often invoked during the 1980s, was also placed under critical scrutiny. Some scholars have now come to regard the Culture Fever of the 1980s as having inherited the so-called radical tradition of the May Fourth Movement. They adopt a negative attitude toward the kind of knowledge associated with the May Fourth Movement, thus challenging the once unquestioned authority of the May Fourth Movement as the inaugural moment of modern Chinese thought.

It is important to remember that although cultural conservatism has flourished in mainland China since the 1990s, scholarly inquiry into the viability of cultural conservatism had already begun during the 1980s. In order to explore what is at issue in cultural conservatism, one need to distinguish between those who adopt a culturally conservative stance and those who study traditional Chinese culture but are not culturally conservative in their views. This is an extremely complex task. Some eminent scholars such as Luo Yijun and Chen Lai openly acknowledge that they are culturally conservative?<sup>5</sup> However,

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<sup>4</sup> (Translator's note) See the report of the conference in *China Daily*, 20 October 1999.

<sup>5</sup> (Translator's note) See also Liu Qingfeng's description of Luo Yijun as someone who "obviously worshiped Mou Zongsan" and who "became very angry whenever anything was said that did not accord with Mou Zongsan's view" in her chapter in this book.

to claim a position of cultural conservatism does not mean that one is automatically aligned to neoconservatism in contemporary Chinese politics. There is a distinct difference between cultural and political conservatism. Naturally, there are also those who see a direct relation between their own cultural conservatism and political neoconservatism. It should also be noted in this context that scholars like Jiang Qing who seem to be radically conservative in their cultural attitude are not likely to see too much of a connection between their own stance and political neoconservatism in the People's Republic of the 1990s. Then there are those who are engaged in research on cultural conservatism but do not themselves adopt a conservative approach to the subject of their research.

One may ask why there is now a demand for research into issues of cultural conservatism. To my mind, the main reason is the emergence of critical attitudes toward the new "traditional" concepts that have emerged over the last few decades in mainland China.<sup>6</sup> Because these new "traditional" concepts have led to the view that radicalism is the only effective approach to cultural development, contemporary research on cultural conservatism represents a critical response toward this view. To my mind, this response is not at all surprising at this present stage, nor is it surprising that some have taken to calling themselves cultural conservatives. Let us take Chen Lai, for instance.<sup>7</sup> He has reflected at length on formulations of the past such as "Chinese (ethical) knowledge as the foundation, Western knowledge (and technology) for practical application" (*Zhong xue wei ti Xi xue wei yong*); its reverse, "Western knowledge (and technology) as the foundation, Chinese (ethical) knowledge for practical application" (*Xi xue wei ti Zhong xue wei yong*); or yet another alternative, "Chinese and Western knowledges both as foundation and for practical application" (*Zhong Xi hu wei ti yong*). Chen observes that notions such as "foundation" and "practical application" are inappropriate when applied to Eastern and Western cultures. He proposes instead a different formulation: "Humanity as

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<sup>6</sup> (Translator's note) This is referring to the "tradition" of Mao Zedong Thought and party orthodoxy since the 1940s.

<sup>7</sup> (Translator's note) Professor Chen Lai teaches Chinese philosophy at Peking University and is a specialist in the Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming. He has also published on the popular reception of Confucianism and on Confucian ethics in relation to Chinese modernization.

the foundation and synthesis (of Chinese ethical knowledge and Western knowledge and technology) for practical application" (Renyi wei ti, zonghe wei yong). Chen argues that what our age requires is the spirit of synthetic culture (zonghe wenhua de jingshen). In this formulation, the cultural conservatism of his intellectual orientation is evident.

The call for "academic standardization" constitutes yet another aspect of cultural conservatism in contemporary mainland China, and it has come from two different sources. The first is the journal *Xueren* (Scholars—now defunct), which came into existence in 1992. In the "Commentary" section of its first issue, the question of academic standardization was explicitly raised but along quite traditional lines. "*Zhongguo shehui kexue jikan*" (*The Journal of Social Sciences*), edited by Deng Zhenglai, also raised the question of academic standards. Broadly speaking, this journal advocates the adoption of Western sociological standards in Chinese academic work. The journal later took up the issue of standardization versus indigenization. To my mind, raising the question of standardization has had a positive effect on the progress of scholarship in China. At the same time, we must not forget that there is clearly room for discussing what standardization really means. Given that those who have raised this question of academic standardization are implicitly criticizing what they view as the rashness and superficiality of the Culture Fever of the 1980s, standardization, if simply accepted in these terms, brings with it certain problems. Such a view of standardization would tend to be defined predominantly in terms of negating the Culture Fever of the 1980s. It has been said that the Culture Fever of the 1980s produced ideas but lacked scholarship, while the craze for national studies in the 1990s has produced scholarship but is lacking in ideas. Evidently, comments of this kind are groundless, but nonetheless they give us some idea of what people are thinking.

One other outcome of the critical reevaluation of the Culture Fever of the 1980s is the emergence or resurgence of a keen interest in historical studies of the late Qing period among contemporary mainland Chinese scholars. This new trend is bound up with ideas of reformism (as opposed to revolution) and positive reevaluations of the Self-Strengthening Movement of the nineteenth century. Thus two different editions of the *Collected Works of Zeng Guofan* have been published in mainland China, together with a collection of his

personal correspondence and several biographies about him. We have also seen the publication of biographies of Li Hongzhang and Zuo Zongtang and other such case studies of influential individuals and events of the late Qing. This surge of interest in studies of the late Qing is part of a growing intellectual trend that views revolution as being inferior to reform. It is based on the belief that China would have been better off had it continued along the path of reform (*gailiangzhuyi*) and Western-style “self-strengthen-ing” (*Yangwu yundong*).

Naturally, essays like the ones that appear in Li Zehou and Liu Zaifu’s controversial book, *Farewell to the Revolution* (*Gaobie geming*), have elicited two kinds of responses in mainland China, of which the views of Sun Changjiang and Fang Keli can be taken as representative. Sun Changjiang is strongly opposed to the kind of view put forward by Li Zehou in *Farewell to the Revolution* and accuses Li of lacking any sense of social responsibility and historical mission by regressing to such a standpoint. Fang Keli, on the other hand, has analyzed Li Zehou’s essays as being a case of not merely “bidding farewell to the revolution” but opposing revolution altogether. Thus, when Sun Changjiang told me that he wanted to publish his criticism of Li Zehou, I told him that Fang Keli had already criticized him in print and that he should wait for a while or Li Zehou would be under siege from all sides. For this reason he delayed publishing his criticism of Li Zehou.<sup>8</sup>

One important cultural and ideological context for the rise of New Confucianism is the deepening challenge posed to Marxism in mainland China. For instance, a certain member of the Chinese leadership raised the issue of “national studies” (*guoxue*) at a speech given at a university in Beijing. When members of the audience then asked him whether explicit reference to national studies might not be seen to constitute a blatant promotion of Confucianism and traditional Chinese culture, they were implicitly asking this leader to clarify whether it was necessary to dress national studies in Marxist garb. This leader made it quite clear that national studies could be advocated without resort to such political packaging. On another

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<sup>8</sup> (Translator’s note) Sun Changjiang eventually published the review in 1996 under the name Chang Jiang, “Zehui zhuanxing qi de yizhong wenhua xianxiang: Ping Gao bie geming” (“A Curious Cultural Phenomenon during Social Transition: A Critique of Farewell to the Revolution,” *Twenty-first Century*, no. 33 (February 1996): 68-71.

occasion, when this member of the Chinese leadership was conversing with a foreign political scientist, the foreign political scientist asked him whether China would invade other countries once it had become strong. The Chinese leader replied that China would not “because we have Confucianism.” At the inaugural meeting of the ICA, another political leader, Li Ruihuan, quoted from Mencius in at least five or six places in his speech and was roundly applauded by the audience each time.

The work of compiling and editing textbook materials for ethical and moral education proceeded apace in the 1990s, and it is not surprising that most of these materials are based on Confucianism. What needs to be noted is that this kind of work has the full support of the government. Since the appearance of the highly significant full-page article, “The Quiet Rise of National Studies at Old Peking University” (“Guoxue zai yanyuan qiaoran xingqi”), in the 16 August 1993 issue of *Renmin ribao* (The People’s Daily), Confucianism has gained ever increasing official support. In 1993, *The People’s Daily* was commended for publishing this article, which was said to have been circulated to all members of the party leadership. In 1999, particularly at the time of the Commemoration Conference for the 2,550th birthday of Confucius, party leaders publicly emphasized the importance of turning to Confucianism for solutions to contemporary social problems.<sup>9</sup>

The journal *Zhexue yanjiu* (Philosophical Studies) published several articles in its June 1994 issue that criticized the rise of national studies and expressed alarm at the deviation it represented from the new socialist culture of post-Mao China. Hu Sheng, president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), published an article in *Liaowang* (Outlook), a journal widely read in official circles, in the same year endorsing these published critiques of national studies. The appearance of this concerted attack on national studies led the journal *Kongxue yanjiu* (Confucian Studies) to hold a conference in early 1995 that, in turn, criticized *Philosophical Studies* and Hu Sheng, singling out the detractors of national studies by name. This was something quite unprecedented, for Hu Sheng was someone whom most would not have dared to openly criticize. The organizers of the conference

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<sup>9</sup> (Translator’s note) See also the short critical review by Willy Wolap Lam, “Hitech Confucian Future,” [FreeRepublic.com/forumJa38058d9d3d3c.htm](http://FreeRepublic.com/forumJa38058d9d3d3c.htm), 14 October 1999.

took the further step of publishing a summary of the conference in the first issue of *Confucian Studies* for 1995. The third issue of this journal in the same year carried an article by Liu Hongzhang entitled “Some Thoughts on the Relation between Marxism and Confucianists” (“Guanyu Makesizhuyi yu rujia guanxi de sikao”) that further affirmed these criticisms of the president of the CASS.

In these various examples, it is evident that the ideological authority of Marxism was being actively challenged in society and, in particular, within the precincts of the university. Another important context for the rise of New Confucianism is the support that Confucian studies has received from the commercial sphere in contemporary mainland China. In the 1990s, a considerable number of conferences and publications and even some scholarships and grants for research on traditional Chinese culture received financial support from business enterprises. For instance, I attended a symposium in 1995 on Confucianism and modern business jointly organized by the Shenzhen-based Chao Shun Group and the Oriental Cultures Research Association (*Dongfang wenhua yanjiu hui*). In October of the same year, another symposium called “China’s Buddhist Culture and Modern Society” received funding from the entrepreneur Mei Zi.<sup>10</sup> Several conferences on Chinese or Confucian studies sponsored by business enterprises have been held in different cities across China. The journal *Zhongguo wenhua* (Chinese Culture), edited by Liu Mengxi, receives an annual donation of some 200,000 yuan from another entrepreneur, Xie Yongjian. Similarly, *Yuan dao* (Original Path), edited by some of the younger scholars at Peking University, receives funding from a business enterprise in Hainan. The chief executive officer of the Chao Shun Group, Wu Xiegang, has also provided scholarship funds for the establishment of the Society for Moral Cultivation (*Xiusheng xuehui*) at Peking University. There are many such examples demonstrating that research on Confucianism and traditional Chinese culture has received substantial financial support from the Chinese business sector. Besides these more conspicuous examples, large numbers of business people show an avid interest in Confucian studies, and some, such as the aforementioned Chao Shun Group, even invoke Confucian values by

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<sup>10</sup> Mei Zi is a female entrepreneur based in Beijing who owns real estate in the Beijing suburb of North Putuo used mainly for film and television production.

stating that the company's philosophy is "Harmony as the supreme value" (he wei gui). To gain perspective on the trend for national studies and the emergence of what has been called cultural conservatism in mainland China of the 1990s, one needs to reflect on the important role played by the commercial sector in fueling this trend.

My own view on the trend toward national studies is that it is likely to have at least three important and culturally complex outcomes. It may serve the interests of the government and become the basis for opposing Westernization. It may be hailed, in the name of patriotism, as the return to nationalism through the celebration of Chinese cultural essentials. This is not only a likely scenario but also an unfortunate reality to some extent, for several instances of such sentiment have been publicly and even violently expressed over the last few years. Most people know that the emphasis on patriotism and national pride in contemporary mainland China is closely linked to, and a development out of, the "opposition to bourgeois liberalization" within the national ideology. As early as 1993, I expressed my concern over the likely negative social effects of national studies deployed for ideological and political purposes. Today, such effects are evident in mainland Chinese society. In this regard, the undermining of Marxism as the ideological foundation of the People's Republic of China, to which I refer earlier, requires careful analysis. More positively, the turn toward cultural conservatism is likely to produce substantial research in traditional Chinese studies. For some decades, in the periods before and during the Cultural Revolution, a negative attitude to traditional Chinese culture prevailed. In statistics produced at a 1984 symposium in Shanghai organized by the Shanghai People's Press, it became clear that there was a notable discrepancy in the numbers of publications on Chinese culture between two thirty-year periods, 1919-1949 and 1949-1979. Between 1919 and 1949, there were more than two hundred types of publications dealing specifically with Chinese culture. In the period from 1949 to 1979, there was only one kind of publication dealing specifically with Chinese culture, not including philosophy text-books. At this symposium, it was decided that the gap should be addressed by the publication of a series on the history of Chinese culture that would comprise 100 books. The relatively long period of stagnation that research on traditional

Chinese culture underwent from 1949 to 1979, and perhaps even some years beyond that, has clearly affected its development.

Thus, the question is whether the contemporary trend toward national studies can produce substantial research on traditional Chinese culture and exercise a decisive influence, irrespective of whether one regards this influence as positive or negative. For instance, a number of scholars have begun to conduct meticulous research on specific aspects of traditional Chinese culture. Everyone is aware of the tremendous interest that *The Book of Changes* (Yi Jing) has attracted in mainland China in recent years. There are, however, few people who actually know a great deal about *The Book of Changes*. *The Book of Changes* developed out of the practice of divination by tortoiseshell and straws (bu shi). The practice of divination led to the study of diagrams and the positions of strokes within diagrams (xiang shu), which later became constitutive of the principles of *The Book of Changes*. Nowadays, most people who make use of, write about, or read *The Book of Changes* are familiar only with the principles of this classic. They are ignorant of the ancient practice of divination and the study of diagrams and stroke positions that preceded these principles. Thus, they are unable to produce any rigorous interpretation of *The Book of Changes*. In order to engage with this text in a significant way, one would need to examine the specific contexts of its emergence and dissemination. A somewhat different example would be the Mawangdui silk scrolls that have now been almost entirely reproduced in print. In the past, studies of the Mawangdui silk scrolls were based mainly on existing commentaries. Now that the original Mawangdui texts have been published and made widely available, Mawangdui research based on secondary sources alone is no longer regarded as valid. This is one instance in which a decisive shift toward substantial research on traditional Chinese culture has taken place.

In referring to substantial research on traditional Chinese culture, I mean both the study of specific aspects of Chinese culture and the study of traditional Chinese culture as a whole, as several scholars have already posed the question of how traditional Chinese culture should be approached as a totality. Among these scholars is the late Professor Feng Qi, who is the author of *Tile Quest for Wisdom* (Zhihui

de tansuo) and *Three Essays on Wisdom* (Zhihui san lun).<sup>11</sup> Professor Feng was a Marxist who happened to have studied under two eminent modern philosophers, Jin Yuelin and Feng Youlan, in his youth at the West China Union University (Xinan lianda) during the War of Resistance against Japan. Thus, he had considerable expertise in logical analysis. In the last years of his life, he set himself the task of applying the Western method of logical analysis to traditional Chinese culture in order to produce a new understanding of Chinese culture. Unfortunately, this highly significant project could not be completed because Feng passed away in 1995. When he turned eighty in 1994, I wrote to him, mentioning that I had read the doctoral dissertation he wrote on “wisdom” when he was at the West China Union University. I asked him whether he had considered resuming and further developing the path he had mapped in his doctoral dissertation, one that his former teacher Jin Yuelin had laid down. At that time, I had not had the chance to read his then forthcoming publication, *Three Essays on Wisdom*. After reading it, I discovered that he had done precisely that. The point of this anecdote is to illustrate the importance of the approach that one adopts in relation to studies of Chinese culture. In order to produce meaningful substantial studies of traditional Chinese culture, one needs to be mindful of the global context in which we now conduct our research. In other words, we must locate our research on traditional Chinese culture within the general trend toward the development of global culture in our time. If we were to depart from this trend, the consequences could be extremely dangerous, for national studies might easily be manipulated to serve the interests of cultural chauvinism and nationalism, resulting in the politicization of academic research.

We need to also consider the nature of the relationship between the old Chinese tradition of several thousand years and the “new tradition” of the last few decades. Evidently, the nature of this relationship is highly complex. One can see this in the work of Jin Guantao. In this regard, the extreme leftism of Marxist dogmatism that prevailed in China for several decades in this century needs to be considered as well. Is there a significant difference between the

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<sup>11</sup> (Translator’s note) Feng Qi (1915-95) became the foundational professor of philosophy when the Department of Philosophy was established at East China Normal University, Shanghai, in 1986. The ten-volume *Collected Works of Feng Qi* (Feng Qi wenji) was published by Huadong shifandaxue chubanshe in 1996.

principles informing this form of dogmatism and Confucianism? To my mind, there is a significant difference between the two. This difference can be explored through a number of central issues. The first is that of struggle (*douzheng*) versus harmony (*hexie*). One of the first attempts to address this issue was undertaken by scholars like Chen Fongching and Liu Shuhsien at a symposium in Hong Kong in 1985, which I attended.<sup>12</sup> At that time, the problem was defined in terms of the difference between Confucianism and the kind of Marxism that was based on class struggle as its guiding principle. Thus, there was no question that the difference between the two was immense. Feng Youlan had also discussed this issue in his seven-volume *A New History of Chinese Philosophy* (*Zhongguo zexue shi xin bian*).<sup>13</sup> The seventh volume of this collection deals with this issue and for this reason could not be published in mainland China. It was eventually published in Taiwan. Feng addresses the gulf between Confucianism and Marxism in the form of Mao Zedong Thought, arguing that the latter was a philosophy of struggle based on the idea that “enmity must remain enmity to the end” (*chou bi chou daodi*). This means that the struggle must continue until one’s enemy is vanquished. Confucianism, however, is entirely different from this, for it proposes that “enmity must be harmonized and thereby dispelled” (*chou bi he er jie*). Although “through opposing positions, enmity arises” (*you dui si you chou*), at the end of struggle, the need for conciliation will also certainly emerge. This notion first appeared in the *Correct Discipline for Beginners* (*Zheng Meng*) by Zhang Zai (1020-77) and was later elaborated by Wang Fuzhi (1619-93) in his *Commentary on the Correct Discipline for Beginners* (*Zheng Meng zhu*).

Another significant difference between Marxism and Confucianism is that Marxism is primarily a form of scientism. It is a mode of thinking grounded in the principles of science, whereas Confucianism is a humanistic mode of thinking. Confucianism does not proceed along the path of science, nor does it subscribe to principles of science. As a mode of thinking, Confucianism is not

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<sup>12</sup> This was a symposium dealing with issues emerging from the editing of the *History of Chinese Culture Series*.

<sup>13</sup> (Translator’s note) See Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zexue shi xin bian*, 7 vols. (Taipei: Lan Deng wenhua shiye gufen gongsi, 1991). Editions of the same work published in mainland China contain only six volumes.

based on demonstrable proof or evidence (lun zheng). Rather, it relies on intuition (zhi jue). A third difference between Confucianism and Marxism can be defined in terms of the debate between Liang Shuming and Mao Zedong. Liang Shuming was opposed to the Marxist concepts of class struggle and the class nature of social existence. He subscribed instead to the idea of universal humanity. This was what Liang Shuming told me in 1938 or 1939. When he read Mao Zedong's *The Protracted War* (Lun chijiu zhan), he was most impressed and felt that what Mao had written of the "protracted war" was very convincing. Thus, Liang went to Yan'an to meet with Mao. On the first day that he met with Mao, things went very well because the discussion was confined primarily to Mao's book on protracted war. By the second day, however, when the discussion shifted to class struggle, the two men quarreled right through the night. The debate turned on questions about whether there was such a thing as universal humanity and what was meant precisely by "class struggle." That the difference between Confucianism and Marxism is significant can be gleaned from the incommensurability of these two questions.

Thus, while the new tradition of the last few decades and the old tradition of several thousand years are complexly related to one another, one should note that the new "tradition" that we have been advocating for the last few decades differs significantly in content from the old tradition. From this an important question arises: Can Confucianism be steered toward radicalism, to the extent that it becomes a form of leftist extremism? This is a question worthy of further reflection, for, if it can be demonstrated that Confucianism can become extreme and usher in an ideological trend of leftist extremism or radicalism, then the argument I have put forward in the preceding becomes problematic. In this context, I think it is necessary to distinguish between different tendencies within Confucianism itself. One should distinguish between those aspects of Confucianism that are compatible with the new "tradition" of the last few decades and those that are not. Two individuals can be named to illustrate this distinction. The first is Tu Weiming, especially in relation to his more recent ideas. At a conference that we both attended in Hangzhou in November 1994, Tu Weiming was, to my surprise, critical of certain fundamental features of traditional Chinese culture such as the complementary relation between "the three bonds" (san gang) and

“the five constant virtues” (wu chang).<sup>14</sup> He observed that “the three bonds” were no longer acceptable, called for their repudiation, and proposed that “the three bonds” be regarded separately from “the five constant virtues.” This came as a total surprise to me because he would not have made this sort of distinction in the past. When he raised this issue, another scholar at the same conference, Wang Yuanhua, immediately responded by saying, “How do you propose to distinguish between them? It is impossible to separate the two as they are bound together in their historical development.” Naturally, Tu Weiming then proceeded to defend his argument, but, as his explanation is not relevant to the point I am making here, I shall not elaborate on it.<sup>15</sup>

What this exchange between Tu and Wang makes clear is that there is a crucial difference in their views on Confucianism. It is also clear that Tu Weiming has shifted from his previous position on Confucianism. When I later reflected on what this crucial difference might be, it occurred to me that Tu Weiming has had to adapt New Confucianism to the demands of contemporary global cultural discourse, especially within the modern Western cultural context where “the three bonds” might not be readily acceptable? If he did not do this, then his advocacy of New Confucianism might meet with a good deal of resistance. Thus, I am of the opinion that the separation Tu Weiming has sought to effect between “the three bonds” and “the five constant virtues” is largely the practical outcome of advocating New Confucianism from a particular vantage point—and not the result of attempting to resolve a philosophical conundrum. Wang Yuanhua, on the other hand, bases his argument on historical fact. As

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<sup>14</sup> (Translator’s note) The three bonds refer to the three axiomatic human relationships named by Confucius: between ruler and subject, father and son, and husband and wife. In general, the three bonds are regarded as the basis for defining different modes of proper or ethical conduct in social life, depending on the social position one occupies. The five constant virtues are regarded as innate properties of the cosmic order that manifest in human form as love (ren), righteousness (yi), propriety (li), wisdom (zhi), and good faith (xin). The common phrase “san gang wu chang” indicates how well entrenched the idea of mutual interdependence between these concepts is in the Chinese language.

<sup>15</sup> (Translator’s note) This is referring to the emphasis Tu Weiming places on the relevance of Confucianism for contemporary Western (or even more specifically North American) cultural enrichment in the context of Tu’s institutional prominence as director of the Harvard Yen-ching Institute.

the “three bonds” and “the five constant virtues” have developed together in history, one cannot easily distinguish between them or treat them separately without distorting their conceptual and historical significance. But what is interesting to note is that Wang Yuanhua has also changed his view quite considerably. Most people are aware that before June Fourth, Wang was an advocate of “the New Enlightenment” (Xin Qimeng). What is more, in the years before the Cultural Revolution, he was recognized as someone who firmly upheld the value of the May Fourth Movement. But in the 1990s, he has turned his research interests to Du Yaquan and has moreover written about Du in highly positive terms. In 1993, there was even a conference on Du Yaquan held in Zhejiang.<sup>16</sup> The changes in Tu Weiming’s and Wang Yuanhua’s views allow us to consider a new question, and that is whether antitraditionalist and traditionalist positions of a former era might not converge or become collaborative rather than opposed to one another in the present-day context. This question will in turn require us to reconsider the needs of contemporary Chinese scholarship in new ways.

What we must also remember is that the government is interested in advocating traditional Confucianism as the ethical and cultural core of Chinese society. It is not interested in scholarly or critical inquiries of the kind that are currently being pursued in the name of modern New Confucianism. As I noted earlier, one of the main reasons for this new turn to Confucianism has to do with the decline of Marxism as state ideology. Indeed, one could say that, since the end of the Cultural Revolution, most mainland Chinese have lost their faith in Marxism.

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<sup>16</sup> (Translator’s note) Du Yaquan (1873-1933), a self-taught writer of popular science and translator, was an important intellectual figure during the May Fourth era. He founded and edited the original *Dongfang zazhi* (The Orient Magazine) and compiled several of China’s first modern dictionaries of science. According to Xu Jilin, Wang Yuanhua’s interest in Du Yaquan began when Xu invited Wang to write the foreword for an anthology of Du Yaquan’s selected essays that was about to be published. Wang found Du Yaquan’s ideas extremely engaging and ended up writing a foreword of more than ten thousand characters for the anthology. Xu Jilin describes Du Yaquan as “a cultural conservative and a Confucian liberal at that” and suggests that this was the reason for his relative anonymity in studies of modern Chinese intellectual history in mainland China until quite recently. See Xu Zilin’s interesting anecdotal and critical account, “Du Yaquan yu duoyuan de Wu Si qimeng,” in *Xin Yusi Dianzi Wenku*, <[www.xys.org/xys/ebooks/literature/essays/Duyaquan.txt](http://www.xys.org/xys/ebooks/literature/essays/Duyaquan.txt)>, 5 January 2000.

Yet the government needs a strong and dynamic ideology to serve as its *raison d'être* in order to achieve its contemporary goal of a united China that includes not only Hong Kong and Macau but Taiwan as well. In this regard, traditional Confucianism provides the mainland Chinese government with a wholly valid historical basis for claiming cultural unity between mainland China and Taiwan. For this reason, we will need to pay attention to the popular response to this ideological shift in mainland China. In this context, the claim that Confucianism provides the basis for “the Asian mode” of economic success commonly heard within the mainland business sector, not to mention similar claims by governments and business sectors in other Asian countries, must be treated with great caution.

(Translated by Gloria Davies)

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## Can Confucianism be Modernized?

“Can Confucianism be modernized” and “Can Confucianism have a third development phase” should be the same problem. Confucianism in the pre-Qin period is the first development phase; the Confucian School of Idealist Philosophy in the Song and Ming Dynasties is the second phase. Because it met the needs of social development in feudal China, therefore, it became the leading school during that period. Now as Western culture intersects with traditional Chinese culture, can Confucianism have a third phase of development? If so, Confucianism must suit the needs of modern society; this is the problem for a third phase of Confucianism, “Can Confucianism be modernized.”

There are several understandings of this problem: (1) the modernization of Confucianism means that Confucianism should be the leading thought for modern Chinese society; (2) the modernization of Confucianism means that Confucianism should be remolded according to the model of Western culture; (3) the modernization of Confucianism means that Confucianism should be characterized by Marxism; (4) the modernization of Confucianism means that we could use it to solve all the problems of modern society. I believe that it is impossible or meaningless to modernize Confucianism if we understand the problem in these ways. Can the problem be understood in other ways, namely, that the modernization of Confucianism means a modern explanation of Confucianism? If we explain Confucianism in a contemporary way, it can still have contemporary significance.

Why can, and should Confucianism be explained in contemporary way? We should ask whether Confucianism has already become a “dead learning.” Obviously it is not; Confucianism still influences all aspects of our modern life and has its vitality. To deal with this we should explain it in a contemporary manner in order to develop it and make it beneficial for our modern society. Any dynamic academic thought has its significance for the different times when it exists, because it must be reformed according to the needs of the times and be explained differently from one time to another. The Confucian School of Idealist Philosophy of the Song and Ming Dynasties has its

significance for the ages because it is reformed and developed according to the needs of the ages, although it inherits the Confucianism of the pre-Qin Dynasty. Zhu Xi said: "Everyone has a *Tai ji* 太极 (great ultimate), everything has a *Tai ji* 太极 (great ultimate)," "The meaning of *Tai ji* 太极 in *Da Zhuan* 大传 (Annotation of the *Book of Changes*) is the thoughts of *Lian yi* 两仪 (two modes, yin and yang), *Si Xiang* 四象 (four forms), *Ba gua* 八卦 (eight diagrams) ahead of the three as well as within the three." Zhu Xi's explanation of the "*Tai ji*" is based on "there being no barriers between things and principles" in Hua Yan Mi 华严密, so he gives a new explanation to the "*Yi* has *Tai ji* 太极 (great ultimate), and then can create *Lian yi* 两仪 (two modes, yin and yang) in *Zhou Yi Xi Ci* 周易·系辞. Zhu Xi explains this in an ontological way, but it is originally cosmological in *Xi Ci* 系辞.

When Confucius and Mencius spoke of Ren 仁 (humanity, benevolence), Confucius said, "Ren (humanity, benevolence) means to love people," Mencius said, "The humane or benevolent heart is prior to Ren (humanity, benevolence)." Ren is still explained in a moral sense, or in the sense of spiritual realm of life. But Zhu Xi's Ren has ontological meaning. For example, he said: "Ren is the first concern of Confucianism, which is the source of all theories and the base of all things." Hence, in his *Zhu Zi Xin Xue An* 朱子新学案 (New Studies of Zhu Zi) Qian Mu 钱穆 said: "After Confucius and Mencius, all Confucians consider Ren in the realm of human life; but master Zhu explains it in the realm of the universe." In this sense, the different understandings of Ren and *Tai ji* are based on the differences of times.

Thus, "modernization of Confucianism" means to explain Confucianism in a contemporary manner. That does not mean to make Confucianism the leading thought of our modern society or use the mode of Western culture to remold Confucianism, but to develop those parts which are suitable to the needs of modern society according to the intrinsic contents of Confucianism, or to give a new development of Confucian philosophy in explaining it. Of course, we cannot Marxize Confucianism either, but search for the meeting points of the two in order that Confucianism can absorb Marxism and get enriched on the one hand; Marxism can be combined with the traditional Chinese culture and have the Chinese features on the other hand. Hence, Confucianism cannot be the leading thought of modern society, and cannot be explained freely without reference to the

intrinsic contents of Confucianism. What we can do is to give the intrinsic contents of Confucianism a new contemporary explanation in order that it can play a role in some aspects of modern society or join in the global contemporary academic culture with some aspects which can function today.

There is a question that is how to locate Confucianism in order to enable Confucianism to play a positive role in modern society. In the long process of history, each age has its own special problem. Therefore, there must be a new theory and new thought to solve the new question of the age. The theories and thoughts in previous time cannot solve all questions raised by the developing history, but some of them can be applied to partially solve questions of the new period, or can be made new interpretations to partially solve problems of the new period. During the Medieval Age in the West, Christianity played a leading role in all aspects of social life. In the modern time, the scope of the function of the Christianity has been largely narrowed. Nowadays, people do not expect that Christianity can play a leading role in politics, economics and culture, etc. So why do we require Confucianism to play a leading role in all aspects? It is even unnecessary to require Confucianism to play a leading role in one aspect.

Based on this, we can rethink Confucianism in modern times, and discuss the possible contribution it can make. Confucianism may play a positive role in morality, which is the core of Confucian thought. The important part of Confucian thought is the theory of conscience and consciousness 心性 (xin xing) which asks human beings to achieve the ideal moral realm, to teach people how to enhance their moral cultivation, and how to become sages and superior human. *The Great Learning* 大学 (Da Xue) says: "When things are investigated, knowledge is extended; when knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere; when the will is sincere, the mind is rectified; when the mind is rectified, the personal life is cultivated; when the personal life is cultivated, the family will be regulated; when the family is regulated, the state will be in order; and when the state is in order, there will be peace throughout the world. From the Son of Heaven down to the common people, all must regard cultivation of the personal life as the root or foundation. There is never a case when the

root is in disorder and yet the branches are in order.”<sup>1</sup> This is the Confucian “Way of inner-sageliness and outer-kingliness” expressed in *the Great Learning*.

It is possible for each of us to have our own moral discipline, but it is impossible to solve all social problems with morality. If so, it would become a pan-moralism which was the malady of our old feudal society. Then people always moralized politics, thus idealizing the real politics of the time. When morality was politicized, morality became the tool of the real politics of the time. So, we must divide “inner sageliness” and “outer-kingliness.” “Inner sageliness” is the question of personal moral cultivation; “Outer kingliness” should be guaranteed by a reasonable, objective and efficient system. It is impossible to replace everything with morality because of the limitations of the moral social function. But the moral cultivation of Confucianism really does have its universal significance. Confucius mentioned his life-long “learning:” “At fifteen, my mind was set on learning. At thirty, my character had been formed. At forty, I had no more perplexities. At fifty, I knew the Mandate of Heaven 天命 (Tian ming). At sixty, I was at ease with whatever I heard. At seventy I could follow my heart’s desire without transgressing moral principles.”<sup>2</sup> The “learning” is the “learning for oneself” in Confucius. (“In the old time, learners learn for themselves; in nowadays, learners learn for others,” *Lun yu·Wen Xian*). If we explain Confucius’ words, “At fifty, I knew the Mandate of Heaven (Tian ming). At sixty, I was at ease with whatever I heard. At seventy, I could follow my heart’s desire without transgressing moral principles,” the process of Confucius’ “learning” may start from “understand heaven,” “appreciate heaven” to “join in heaven.” To “understand heaven” is a problem of knowledge, and “Tian” is the target to learn; “appreciate heaven” is a problem of appreciation and interests, “heaven” is not a target to learn but to approach or get close; “join in heaven” means combining with heaven to be one, that is the state of “oneness of heaven and man.”

The process of Confucius’ “learning” is the process from “truth” to “beauty” to “goodness.” Actually, what Confucius sought for in his life was “truth,” “beauty,” and “goodness,” and the state of oneness

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<sup>1</sup> Wing-tsit Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 86-87.

<sup>2</sup> Wing-tsit Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 22.

of “truth,” “beauty,” and “goodness.” The learning is, in fact, the process to transcend self, time and space. Human beings live in heaven and earth and the self-conscious subject should seek to transcend self, time and space. The people with higher consciousness are those sages and saints who can unite “truth,” “beauty” and “goodness” into one. What Confucius sought is generally the realization of self-conscious subjective united with truth, beauty and goodness which transcend self, time and space. Explaining Confucian thoughts with “truth,” “beauty” and “goodness” means that we give his thoughts a contemporary explanation in order to inject a modern sense.

Also, we can see that some philosophical problems may need to be discussed as long as human beings exist. For example, Zi Gong says in *Lunyu* 论语 (The Analects of Confucius), “Confucius’ thinking about *xing* 性 (nature) and *tian dao* 天道 (way of Heaven) cannot be gained.” The question of the relationship between *tian dao* and *xing ming* 性命 (nature, destiny or fate) has always been the philosophical problem in China. Today we analyze the problem which obviously includes the relationship between immanence and transcendence. No doubt, the question of immanence and transcendence is still important in the field of contemporary philosophy.

On one side, we discuss this problem in the context of traditional Chinese philosophy in order to inherit it; on the other side, we discuss it in the new context of contemporary philosophy in order to develop Confucianism with modern interpretation. If Confucianism with new interpretations can respond to some issues in some Western philosophy or if some issues in Western philosophy can be transferred into Confucian issues and solved them, can we say it is the new developments of Confucianism? If Confucianism can be developed in modern interpretations, we may think it is the third phase of Confucian development. Of course, it will be a long-term development, but we can start it now. For instance, there are two aspects in Confucianism. One is the sayings of “To practice humanity depends on oneself,” “It is man that can make the Way great, and not the Way that can make man great,” the other is the saying of “He stands in awe of the Mandate of Heaven; he stands in awe of great men; and he stands in awe of the words of the sages.” The former refers to the “inner-transcendent” aspect in Confucianism, while the latter is the “outer-transcendent” aspect, or we may say that the latter

also contains the “outer-transcendent” factors in Confucianism. Later Confucians developed the former aspect instead of the later aspect. If we study the way to deal with the problem of “inner-transcendence” and “outer-transcendence” in traditional Chinese philosophy, which is contained in Confucianism, can we develop the two aspects of “inner-transcendence” and “outer-transcendence,” and set up a relatively full philosophical system including “inner-transcendence” and “outer-transcendence?” In my opinion, it is a worthy problem to explore, and all the new-Confucians are working on it. It is significant to explore the third phase development of Confucianism whether it is successful or not. If our research is not limited to Confucianism, but extends to Daoism, Mohism and Chinese Buddhism, etc., we have more issues to study in the development of traditional Chinese philosophy with modern interpretations. If we carefully interpret traditional Chinese philosophy in a modern way, we will contribute to the third phase of Chinese philosophy.

For instance, if we study Mohism, we will find out the difference between Confucian philosophy and Mohist philosophy. Mohist philosophy has the characteristic of outer-transcendence. Mohist philosophy is constituted by two interrelated parts, one is the universal love, which has a humanistic spirit, and the other is the will of Heaven, which has a religious feature. The two parts seem conflicting, but universal love is the most essential embodiment of *tian zhi* 天志 (the will of Heaven). Therefore, *tian zhi* 天志 (the will of Heaven) should be the core of Mohist thought. In Mozi’s the will of Heaven, Heaven has will, so it can reward goodness and punish evil. The will is the last and highest standard to judge everything, and has transcendental strength beyond human beings or obviously an “outer-transcendence.” Therefore, Mohist philosophy in the later development has more scientific, with logical and epistemological factors. It is a pity that Mohist philosophy ceased to develop after the Warring States period. Can Mohist thought and Confucian thought become the innate resources of the Chinese philosophical system including “inner-transcendence” and “outer-transcendence?” It is possible and asks us to deepen these philosophical questions in the same direction as our great philosophers in order to make a contribution to the world in its new age.

A question still exists when we discuss whether Confucianism can be modernized. Some scholars attempt to use Confucianism to solve

all problems of modern life, for example, they try to use *nei sheng* 内圣 (inner sageliness) to open a way of *wai wang* 外王 (outer-kingliness) which is suitable to the political requirement of modern democracy, and *xin xing zhi xue* 心性之学 (theory of heart (mind) and nature) to open scientific epistemological systems. Of course, some scholars can do such research. But from another angle, we need to find out what Confucianism lacks, and whether we can draw some thoughts from other isms to enrich and reform Confucianism so that it can meet the need of modernization. This seems more meaningful and important. The traditional Chinese philosophies including Confucianism, Daoism and Chan, the Buddhism with the Chinese features, have not set up a system of epistemology; in particular, Confucian thought has not separated epistemology from the learning of morality. But the question of epistemology has become the major field of modern Western philosophy. Facing the challenge of Western philosophy, some Chinese philosophers recognize the shortcomings of traditional Chinese philosophy. Therefore, from the May Fourth Movement, some Chinese philosophers tried to solve this problem in different ways. Xiong Shili, Feng Youlan and He Lin are the philosophers who established their philosophical systems based on the Confucian school of the idealist philosophy or consciousness in the Song and Ming dynasties. Now people consider them the representatives of contemporary new-Confucianism because they began to pay attention to the question of epistemology.

Xiong Shili tried to complement the shortcoming of traditional Chinese philosophy which has no system of epistemology with *Wei Shi Xue* 唯识学 (consciousness-only) of Buddhism. The book *Xin Wei Shi Lun* 新唯识论 (A New Treaty of Consciousness-only) should have two parts: *jing lun* 境论 (cosmology) and *liang lun* 量论 (epistemology), but he finished only the first. In his *Preface of First and Second Volumes in First Edition of On Xin Wei Shi Lun*, he says: "The original book is planned to have two parts: *Jing lun* 境论 (*Jing* means what we know). It is based on Buddhist classics. In today's terms, it is about ontology, cosmology, and philosophy of life. *Jing* includes everything knowable, visible and accountable. *Liang lun* 量论 (epistemology) is another name for knowledge. Buddhism has such an epistemology of *zheng liang* 证量 (immediate knowledge) and *bi liang* 比量 (discursive knowledge). Now I have just written the first one, and not started the second one yet." In one of his letters to Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, he

mentions about *liang lun* and says: "It is necessary to write this book. It is about the Western methods of reasoning and speculating, the Indian *zhi guan* 止观 (Indian meditation principles of samatha and vipasyana), and the Chinese sudden awareness from practices.... *liang lun* 量论 will combine the three together." (*Shi li yu yao* 十力语要 Shili's Quotations, volume 3) Xiong Shili tried to use the method of "combining reason with sense" to set up his *liang lun* 量论 (epistemology), the system of "complimentary learning of thinking and practicing." He also says that: "I insist that philosophy should combine reason with sense. It is a pity that my *liang lun* 量论 (epistemology), is not finished." (*Shi li Yu Yao* 十力语要, Shili's Quotation, volume 3) "Philosophical method stresses both reason and sense. This is the purpose of the book *Liang Lun* I want to write." (*The First Preface of Shi li's Quotation*). Xiong criticized the Confucian school of the idealist philosophy in the Song and Ming dynasties; he said: "Confucians in the Song and Ming dynasties did not study the meaning of reason, although they talked much about senses, but did not understand reason, so most of them based on their real achievement on chaotic senses." (Appendix, 2, volume 2, *Xin Wei Shi Lun* 新唯识论, A New Treaty of Consciousness-only) Facing the impact of Western philosophy, Xiong Shili had to consider establishing an epistemological system through a "combination of thinking and sensing." Later, he wrote *Original Confucianism* in 1955, mentioning briefly the meaning of *liang lun* 量论 (epistemology) in the *Preface*, though the words were not complete, we can see his purpose.

Feng Youlan made the use of analytical method of the new realism of the Western philosophy to establish his philosophical system in his book *Xin Li Xue* 新理学 (Learning of New Principle or Reason). He "set up his metaphysics through the empiricism of the Vienna School." (Chapter 6, *Xin Zhi Yan* 新知言, On the Method of Philosophy, *The Method of Xin Li Xue*) But the metaphysics of his *Xin Li Xue* is only to give experience a formal explanation." He says: "We analyze formally matters and being, and get the concepts of Li (principle, reason) and Qi (air, matter). By joining formally matter and existence, we can get the concept of Da Quan 大全 (completeness, fullness, inclusiveness) and Dao Ti 道体 (the substance or body of Dao or the Way)." (ibid) He built up his system of *Xin Li Xue* (learning new principles) according to the four propositions. He did not stop here. If he uses the method of logical analyses positively to express

metaphysics in his *Xin Li Xue*, he uses the method of direct sensation negatively to express metaphysics in his New Yuan Ren 新原人 (new philosophy of life). At the end of *Xin Zhi Yan*, *Xin Li Xue de Fangfa* 新知言·新理学的方法 (the philosophical methods of the Learning of New Principle), he says: "The positive method of metaphysics from the beginning to the end proves that metaphysics cannot be spoken although it is applied at the beginning; the negative method of metaphysics starts from this that metaphysics cannot be spoken and says something about metaphysics at the end." The last book of Feng Youlan's *Zhen Yuan Liu Shu* 贞元六书 (Six Books written in the beginning of a new age) is *Xin Zhi Yan* 新知言 (On the Method of Philosophy). According to Feng Youlan, the book, *Xin Zhi Yan* is for establishing the system of New Principle in world philosophy. In Feng Youlan's mind, his system is a new development of the traditional Chinese philosophical learning of the Principle in the Song and Ming dynasties, and the new growth of Western philosophy. Therefore, his system of New Learning of Principle is not just about metaphysical issues, but also concerns epistemological issues. The main point of *Xin Zhi Yan* is to analyze the method with which Western philosophers established their philosophical systems. Feng Youlan believes that the method of his New Principle School is "the method of most philosophical metaphysics." He pays much attention to the philosophical method, as he says in his Foreword of *Xin Zhi Yan*: "We should notice both the content and the rule of experience. The content means experiencers' knowledge of the target of experience. The rational analyses, summary and explanation of experience can be divided into two parts: the rule of and content of experience. The former is knowledge of philosophy, and the later is metaphysics in philosophy." Therefore, we can see that the method of Feng Youlan's New Principle learning is also the knowledge of New Principle learning.

He Ling wrote an important article, *Zhi Xing He Yi Xin Lun* 知行合一新论 (New Views on the Combination of Knowledge and Practice) (It is published in *Guo Li Beijing Da Xue Si Shi Zhou Nian Ji Nian Lun Wen Ji* 国立北京大学四十周年纪念论文集, The Collected Works of the 40th Anniversary of the National Beijing University in 1939, now collected in the *Wu Shi Nian Lai De Zhong Guo Zhe Xue* 五十年来的中国哲学, 50 Years of Chinese Philosophy, published by Liaoning Education Press in 1989). In this article, he states that the question of

“knowledge and practice” is not only an ethical one but also a question of knowledge. At the beginning of this article, he says “It is necessary to discuss again and study critically the question of knowledge and practice both in China’s *Xin Li Xue* 新理学 (School of New Principle or reason) or *Xin Xin Xue* 新心学 (School of New Heart/Mind) and in Western psychology or epistemology. We could learn dogmatic metaphysics if we just talk ontology while not critically studying the issue of thinking and being, and dogmatic ethics if we just talk morality while not critically studying knowledge and action. The reason is that morality focuses on the standard of action and the concept of kindness; if we do not study the knowledge regarding action and the truth regarding kindness, we can come only to a baseless dogmatism. One will be a narrow-minded and dogmatic moralist, if one does not pay attention to the general relation between knowledge and action. Instead, one can assert only that “*You should be like this,*” “*You should be like that*” and give moral commands not based on “knowledge.” Moral judgment is dogmatic if one judges superficially right or wrong, and others’ behaviors to be kind or evil, while not studying the cognitive root of their behaviors.” According to this, we can see that He Ling already understands the significance of epistemological study, and attempts to separate the question of epistemology from ethics. He Ling analyzes epistemologically and psychologically the question of knowledge and action from various aspects, and also makes use of Western philosophers’ (for example Spinoza) thoughts to analyze and enrich the theory of the “combination of knowledge and action” of traditional Chinese philosophy in order to improve the reasonableness of the theory. At the end of the article, He Ling claims again that the theory of the “combination of knowledge and action” is not just a moral issue, but also an epistemological issue. He said, “Due to the re-argument of the union of knowledge and action, firstly, I hope it is helpful for understanding moral life once knowing the real relationship between knowledge and action. There is no right action without knowledge, no inner cultivation without learning, and no morality without truth. The intellectual and reasonable foundation of action can help us break down dogmatic ethics lacking an exploration of the epistemological foundation of morals, break down the dogmatic moral orders which lack knowledge, and smash the dogmatic moral judgment made without considering the knowledge background of actions, while just

denouncing strongly others superficially. Secondly, I wish to point out some new ways of research. For instance, the typology of consciousness and action could be brought forward based on the grades and types of consciousness and actions. Psychology focused on pure action and spiritual science on pure consciousness could be brought forward based on the parallel of knowledge and action, the interpretation of knowledge based on knowledge and action based on action. Before the end of this article, I wish to bring forward the research of phenomenology of action according to a leading knowledge and a following action, knowledge as the essence of action, and action as the embodiment of knowledge. The phenomenology of action is different from behavioral science. Behavioral sciences are objective, experimental and pure science of the interpretation through behavior. The phenomenology of action is to know the essence of action, knowledge or consciousness, from the phenomena of action. Further more, the research of the phenomenology of consciousness or knowledge can help uncover the essence of consciousness, and the idea of consciousness or knowledge. Finally, the interpretation of idea by idea, and the deduction of idea by idea will form logic. Therefore, if the phenomenology of action/consciousness can be regarded as the introductory science or pre-science, so logic will not become abstract or formal. The possibility of the three kinds of knowledge is due to action being the embodiment of consciousness; an idea is the embodiment of consciousness, and the self-evidence and interpretation of the idea itself. Therefore, "pure logic can be established." From this we can see that facing the challenge of Western philosophy, He Lin as the representative of modern new-Confucianism broadens the field of Chinese philosophical studies on the aspect of "combination of knowledge and action," and combines this question with that of contemporary Western philosophy.

In the above passages, we discussed Xiong Shili, Feng Youlan and He Lin, three representative neo-Confucians who had to consider various problems, particularly the problem of epistemology, raised by Western philosophy. Here, we mention only the phenomenon; it is not the task of this article to discuss whether they have already solved the intrinsic defect of traditional Chinese philosophy, or whether they can really adopt some aspects of Western philosophy into Chinese philosophy. It is necessary for Confucianism to develop its own

advantages (for instance, the learning of inner sageliness of moral cultivation) and respond positively to the problems raised by Western philosophy in order to continue to play a role in modern society. Thus, it is quite hard to modernize Confucianism and requires long-term studies and discussion in order to contribute to world philosophy.

Note: The article was written for "The Seminar of Confucianism and China" held in Los Angeles, USA, later presented in "The International Conference of Confucianism" in Macao, completed after some editing.

(Translated by Yan Xin)

## Contemporary Significance of Confucianism

### I.

I have delivered speeches on the topic "*Contemporary Significance of Confucianism*" for several years. For instance, I had addressed it in the eighties and nineties during the last century. Now, I will continue to address it in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Not only I, but also more and more scholars address it. Why? I think there are two important causes: One cause is that we are on the eve of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. So now we must review our history and cultural tradition. Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) had presented the notion of "the Axial Age." He thought that great thinkers emerged in ancient Greece, Israel, India, China and other countries almost simultaneously around 500 B.C, and they all presented their own unique opinions on basic problems which concern human beings. Aristotle and Plato in the ancient Greece, the Prophets of Judaism in Israel, Sakyamuni in India, and Lao Zi and Confucius in China independently initiated and formed distinctive cultural traditions. Through 2000 years of development, these cultural traditions have become the principal part of human intellectual wealth, these different cultures of different regions developed independently at the beginning, and they did not influence each other. "Until today mankind has lived by what was thought and created during the Axial Age. In each new upward leap it returns in recollection to this period and is fired anew by it. Even since then it has been the case that recollections and reawakening of the potentialities of the Axial Period—renaissances—always afford a spiritual impetus. The return to the root is continuous in China, India, and West." (Karl 1989, p.14) For instance, Europeans in the Renaissance looked back on the origin of their culture, the ancient Greece, which had fired anew the European civilization and left its mark on global culture. Similarly, the Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism in China was stimulated by the impacts of Indian Buddhism; the Confucian thinkers, by "recollecting" Confucius and Mencius in the pre-Qin Period, had promoted the ingenious Chinese philosophy to a new height. When we enter into the new millennium,

the world intellectual circle has started to appeal for the arrival of “a New Axial Age.” In this case, we are asked to attach importance to the review and research of ancient thoughts and wisdom, return in recollection to the origin of our culture in order to respond to the new situation of world culture in the form of diversity.

Secondly, our country brings forward a great project to build “a harmonious society” in the new century. Fei Xiaotong (1910-2005) had ever proposed a problem of “cultural self-consciousness.” In order to build a “Harmonious Society,” we have to have the self-consciousness of our own “culture.” What is “cultural self-consciousness?” Fei Xiaotong in *Reconsideration on Humanistic Value* said:

Cultural self-consciousness denotes that people who live in the context of a culture have “self-knowledge” of their own culture, and can explain its origin, development, characteristics, and its trend. It does not mean that people “return to the original culture,” and “return to the ancients,” and it does not mean “complete Westernization” or “complete otherization” at the same time. The request for self-knowledge intends to strengthen the ability of self-determination in the process of cultural transformation, and grasp the initiative of cultural choice in the process of adaptation to new conditions and new era.

It means that we have to have “self-knowledge” of our own culture, establish our initiative status on our culture, and have “independent ability” in the situation of globalization and cultural diversity in the great historical era that we build our “Harmonious Society.” Our cultural initiative status does not mean “completely returning to the ancients” and “complete Westernization,” instead, it means that we assure that our own culture can take root in social life deeply, and it is similar to the fact that leaves will flourish if root is deep. So we have to persist in the cultural initiative status in order to possess strong ability to absorb and digest the excellent cultures of other nations’ to nourish our own culture.

In such situation, we have to adapt the new trend of contemporary development of world culture, that is, the new situation of cultural development as “New Axial Age” when we study our history and the prospect of our national culture. We have to have cultural self-consciousness in order to meet the goal of building a “the Harmonious Society.” In the new historical era, what are the problems facing the world and our society on earth? What problems we should try to

handle in order to drive a rapid realization of “the New Axial Age” and our “Harmonious Society?”

## II.

Entering into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the phenomenon of “the Popularity of Chinese National Learning” (guo xue re 国学热, literally, the flourishing of Chinese National Learning) appears in our country. There are various opinions and explanations about this phenomenon. The so-called “guo xue” (Chinese National Classics Learning) can be found in *Musician, Spring Officials* (officials in charge of rites), *Book of Rites* (Zhou Li, Chun Guan, Yue Shi 周礼·春官·乐师) which is the earliest record, and it says: “The duty of the official in charge of music is to administer the affairs of nation-owned school, and to teach the offspring of high-ranking officials music and dance.” But “guo xue” is the opposite of “the Western learning.” The reason is that we face the input of “the Western learning,” and we have a problem of how to protect and develop our own traditional culture. Thus, the development of Chinese culture is facing a twofold task. One is that we must protect our own culture, and maintain the foundation of our own culture. And the other is how we deal with “the Western” culture. This formed the cultural dispute of “the Chinese and the Western, the Ancient and the Modern” in the past hundred years. But today in the time of globalization, we must get rid of the dispute and syncretize the learning of “the Chinese and the Western, and the Ancient and the Modern,” in order to realize the cultural coexistence and co-prosperity between different cultures.

There are various viewpoints about “the Chinese National Learning,” especially Confucianism in academic and cultural circles. I will make a brief introduction in the following passages.

1. Some scholars propose the outline as “the reconstruction of the Chinese Confucianism.” They think that we “must revive Confucianism omni-directionally in order to fight against the omni-directional challenge of the Western civilization” and “The revival of Confucianism is the urgent affair to revive Chinese culture and reconstruct Chinese civilization.” Therefore, they advocate that we should set up Confucianism as a national religion, and realize the so-called “combination of politics and religion” since the ancient times in our country. (Jiang, 2005)

2. There are two kinds of criticisms against this viewpoint: One kind of criticism is from "the school of liberalism." The critics believe that, "the theory that Confucianism can save the nation" is a counteraction to contemporary democratic politics and harmful to the idea of "equality." Critics assume that if their purpose is to set up "Confucianism" as "the national religion," they will turn China into a Confucian Iran by "attempting to ideologize Confucianism and make use of Confucianism as the instrument of dictatorship" (2006). Another kind of criticism is from Marxist scholars, they think that "the essence of Confucianism as the self-exaggeration of moral function" is "applying the ontological way of Heaven to the pursuit of the kingly way of politics, but this only can cause the trap of feudal dictatorship again." "The real savior can only be Marxism" (2006).

3. Some scholars fully affirm "Confucianism" from the standpoint of maintaining and developing Confucian thoughts. For instance, modern neo-Confucians think that "a way of the outer kingliness," which can be adapted to modern democratic politics, can be developed from learning an inner sageliness. They think that the system of epistemology can be developed from Confucian "learning of mind and nature." Some others thought that "the Three Bonds and the Five Moral Rules in Human Relationship" (san gang wu chang 三纲五常) still have value. In the 1994 conference, Tu Weiming abandoned his former opinion that "the Three Bonds" still had value, but thought that "the Five Rules in Human Relationship" did have value. In his opinion "cultural China," is a significant world contribution according to progressive circles, from the "Chinese Mainland" to overseas Chinese, and then to those countries that have been influenced by Chinese culture, etc. But it is doubtful that persons who have no consanguineous relationship with China, but have a great impact on China are also a part of cultural China, like Sakyamuni, Marx and so on," for then thinkers like Confucius who impact on American culture would be a part of cultural America.

4. Some scholars think that Confucianism was rejected by the May Fourth Movement and that it would be a historical retreat to praise Confucianism once again. Today the different opinions on this question indicate that our society is progressing, because academic and cultural questions can be raised only in an environment of free discussion, and treated through rational dialogue.

But first, there is no absolutely right thinking and culture in history, because all contain internal contradictions including Confucianism. Some aspects of Confucianism have their own historical limitations, and cannot be adapted to the needs of modern social life. Even the quintessential content of Confucianism with universal significance also needs to be interpreted in the modern way. Second, although thinking and culture progress, some philosophical thinking of ancient philosophers can match that of the present time because some philosophical problems such as the problem of "the relationship between human and nature," for instance, may be everlastingly fresh. Third, Bertrand Russell said: "Exchange between different civilizations is the milestone of the development of human civilization, which had been proven many times in the past." Any culture which wants to develop continuously in history must absorb and digest other nations' culture; a culture is able to develop in a timely manner only in mutual exchange especially in the era of globalization. In Chinese history, the entry of Indian Buddhism has proved this point of view. Chinese culture has benefitted from Indian Buddhism, which has been further developed and promoted in China. It was absorbed by Chinese culture and had a profound impact on neo-Confucianism in the time of the Song and Ming dynasties (Song and Ming learning of principle). Today, we must absorb and digest Western and other cultures in this time of globalization. Only in this way can Chinese culture adapt to the demands of contemporary human society and our own national development as national and international. Fourth, cultural subjectivity should be established. Any national culture must take root in its own soil because it is necessary to understand, comprehend, protect and develop the native culture fully in order to have rational social development and absorb other nations' cultures in depth. A culture which has no capacity to retain its own subjectivity and has no ability to absorb other nations' culture in order to enrich and develop its own culture will be wiped out or totally assimilated.

Based on the above positions, we may analyze "Confucianism" from three perspectives: one is political Confucianism; the second is orthodox Confucianism; and third is academic Confucianism.

Confucianism was long combined with politics in past dynasties, and undoubtedly played an important role in feudal dictatorship. Confucian thought pays special attention to moral cultivation. This

has a positive side, but the negative side is that it absolutizes the moral function, subjecting China to a “rule of man,” and making it hard to achieve governance by “rule of law.” Confucians easily moralized politics, and embellished political rule; they politicized morals as an instrument of politics. Of course, some political philosophy in Confucian thoughts also can restrict dictatorship. For instance, “to resist high-ranking official with virtue,” “People are the most valuable,” “to kill a dictator” (Qi Xuanwang 齐宣王 asked: “Is it tolerable if a government official kills his king? “Mencius said: “He who destroys benevolence and righteousness is called a dictator. I just hear about that Zhou Wuwang 周武王, the first king of Zhou Dynasty, kills the dictator Zhou 纣, the last ruler of Shang Dynasty, and I have never heard that he kills his king as an official.”) Confucians applied “Heaven” to restrict the emperor’s power, proposing that humans should reverence “Heaven” and reverence fate. Even in some circumstances, the thought, “the interaction between Heaven and man” can restrict the “emperor’s power.” For instance, when natural disasters or strange phenomena happened, some officials would write to the emperor that he had to publicize an imperial mandate of self-accusation. But generally the negative function of political Confucianism was the more obvious because it was manipulated by politics.

Orthodox Confucianism: the development and influence of every school with a systematic and successive heritage must have its own tradition whether in the West or in China. In China, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism all have its own tradition. Because a school with a tradition can continuously develop, Confucianism is especially conscious of inheriting its tradition, and Confucians regard the cultural traditions of the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties its own responsibility. “Confucius inherits the way of Yao and Shun and imitates Zhou Wenwang and Zhou Wuwang.” But if Confucians overemphasize its own “orthodox tradition,” they might exclude other schools, and suppress heterodoxy, which opposes the mainstream and blazes a path for new thought. Confucianism as a whole is relatively inclusive. For instance, Confucians hold that “The myriad things grow equally without harming each other and the circulation of the four seasons, the travel of the sun and the moon go smoothly without interference.” But sometimes there is also a strong tendency toward exclusiveness in Confucianism. For instance,

Mencius rejected Yang Zhu 杨朱 and Mo Ttse 墨子, and he criticized Yang Zhu for denying filial piety to one's father because he advocated the equally universal benevolence, and held that Mo Tse denied loyalty to the emperor because he advocated that the individual held the first place. Another example is that Han Yu 韩愈 excluded Buddhism. At that time, Buddhism indeed caused some problems and a tremendous waste of national wealth. But when Han Yu went too far when he suggested that "The government should secularize Buddhist monks and nuns, burn off sutra, and transform Buddhism temples to civilian houses." It is not good if factionalism is too strong.

"The academic tradition of Confucianism" is about the history of Confucian learning, and its academic ideals. Maybe in this aspect, the positive value of Confucianism is quite fruitful, and Confucianism can offer significant thought resources for human society. But Confucianism ought not to be ideologized. Learning should not depend on politics and one school of learning should not be authorized as the ruling one. Rather the policy of "contention of a hundred schools of thought" should be practiced. Of course, we must analyze the thought resources offered by sages and the superior men in history, and interpret them according to contemporary circumstances in order to uncover thought resources for that possess universal significance for the rational and all-around development of human society. In order to achieve this goal, Confucianism should be renewed every day in order to make it our real spiritual wealth.

### III.

We may judge the value of some kind of learning from many perspectives such as politics, economics, science and technology. Maybe the most important perspective is to make philosophical judgment on the value of a school. Therefore, we must learn about big problems in our society and mankind, and those problems should be the starting point of the consideration of philosophical problems

The big problems in contemporary human society are threefold: one problem is the relationship between man and nature. The second problem is the relationship between man and man, including relationships between man and self (man and society), nation and nation, people and people. The third problem is the relationship between body and mind. These problems have important connections with the building of a "harmonious society." The three philosophical

propositions: “the unity of nature and man,” “the unity of oneself and the other,” and “the unity of body and mind,” can provide valuable approaches to solving the three conflicts, not that these problems can be solved only by Confucian thought.

When we enter into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we may find that the past century is one of rapid development, the progressive century, but also a tragic century full of conflicts. In those one hundred years, there were two world wars, millions of people died unnaturally because of war, and cultural heritages which were constructed by mankind over several centuries were destroyed. While our nation experienced various sufferings it also made great progress. In the process, we nearly completely negated our cultural tradition, and yet refused to absorb some progressive Western cultures due to various reasons for a long time too. This has led to some social problems, such as “the crisis of belief,” “moral vacuum,” and “environmental pollution,” “the worship of money.” Then how should we tackle these problems? Many scholars wonder whether they can discover some resources in our 5000-year history to deal with these problems and make great efforts to look for the keys to these problems. Of course, we must be alert that we should never think that thought and culture can solve any problem lest we result in a “culture determinism.” The opinion that science and technology can tackle human and social problems, can lead to the trap of “the omnipotence of science” or “scientism.” Therefore, we discuss “the significance of Confucianism,” we just want to find out the resources and approaches which can be applied to offer some thinking approach to the contemporary human and social problems, and a direction for dealing with these problems.

#### IV.

On the problem of “conflict between man and nature,” in 1992, 1,575 scientists including half of the Nobel laureates signed the “World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity.” It began by stating that “human beings and the natural world are on a collision course.” In my opinion, this warning had realized that human society will crash against a serious crisis if the world continued to develop in the current way. Highly developed science and technology can benefit people, but as a part of nature, they not only control a lot of instruments to destroy nature, but also control weapons which can be used to destroy human beings in the process of conquering nature. The unending exploitation

and ruin of nature causes the following consequences, such as the waste of natural resources, the attenuation of the ozonosphere, endangering the sea, environmental pollution, the sudden and sharp growth of population, the ruin of biological balance. And the result is to destroy “the harmonious nature” and “the harmonious relationship between man and nature” and threaten, thus, the conditions of human existence.

The existence of these situations is related to the Western philosophical way of thinking in terms of a subject-object division. For instance, in *A History of Western Philosophy*, Russell wrote: “the philosophy of Descartes...brought to completion, or very nearly to completion, the dualism of mind and matter which began with Plato and was developed, largely for religious reasons, by Christian philosophy...the Cartesian system presents two parallel but independent worlds, that of mind and that of matter, each of which can be studied without reference to the other.” It means that spirit and matter are regarded as independent and isolated in Western philosophy; therefore, this kind of philosophy is established on “external relationships” (“man” and “nature” are two unrelated factors), or it can be said that their thinking mode regards “mind” and “matter” as two independent factors so that when Western philosophers study one, they could not involve the other (Whitehead criticizes this traditional way of thinking in terms of a dualism in his *Process Philosophy*). Chinese philosophy is basically different in its thinking mode, because it is based on “the unity of Heaven and man” (subject and object are connected and cannot be divided).

One of the origins of Chinese philosophy is *the Book of Changes*. There is an important passage of records in “Chu Bamboo Slips” unearthed in Jing Men, Hubei province in 1993, it records:

*The Rituals* is to describe the manners of intercourse.

*The Music* is used to enjoy or educate.

*The Book of History* is the collection of writings of important figures in ancient China.

*The Book of Odes* is the collection of poems of the past and the present.

*The Book of Changes* is to communicate the way of nature and the way of man.

*The Spring and Autumn Annals* is the collection of affairs of the past and the present.

These pieces of bamboo slips were probably done in 300 B.C. They state that "Change communicates with the Way of nature and the Way of man." This means that *the Book of Changes* is a book which studies the Way of Heaven (law of Heaven or nature) and the Way of man (order in society) and the reason of their connection through a comprehensive study of the subjects. People in ancient time had already realized that they have to include "man" when they study "nature," and when they study "man," they have to involve "heaven" too. This is, "the unity of nature and man." In fact, this had already been revealed in the *Analects* of Confucius. Zi Gong (子贡, a disciple of Confucius) said: "I can not hear Master Confucius' speaking about nature and the way of nature." Although Zi Gong had not ever heard Confucius' saying about "nature and the way of nature," he brought forward this problem, which indicates that the relationship of "human nature" (man) and "the way of Heaven" (tian, nature) is very attractive. From the view of the development of human society, people originally came across the problem of the relationship of "man" and "nature" (tian, heaven), because humans cannot live without "nature." Therefore, the ancient Chinese always paid attention to the problem of "the relationship between man and nature." Of course; there are various attitudes and methods to deal with "the relationship of man and nature." Some scholars held that man should comply with nature; others thought that man should make use of "nature" to serve man, and "know and apply nature to serve people;" while still others held that "both of man and nature have its own law and advantage." But the mainstream Confucian thinkers held "the unity of man and nature" meaning that "nature" cannot be separated from "man," and "man" cannot be separated from "nature."

Why there are such thoughts has a long history. We know that the *Book of Changes* was originally a fortune-telling book, and was used to predict good or ill luck, misfortune or good fortune. Who will be asked to answer people's fortune? It is "heaven" (tian). "Man" asks "heaven" about good or ill luck, and misfortune or good fortune. And the *Book of Changes* recorded these materials, so it became a book on the relationship between "heaven" (tian) and "man." Subsequently, various interpretations on this book form a new one, that is, *the Appendices to the Book of Changes* (yi zhuan). Among them, *the Appended Remarks* particularly can be regarded as a kind of philosophical

interpretation to the *Book of Changes*. Since the *Book of Changes* is to solve the problem of the relationship between “heaven” and “man,” what is this relationship? *The Appended Remarks* thinks that *the Book of Changes* includes everything, and the book not only includes “the way of heaven,” “the way of earth,” but also includes “the way of man.” Although “the way of heaven” is manifested by Yin and Yang, “the way of earth” presents as “hardness” and “softness,” and “the way of man” is manifested as “benevolence” and “righteousness,” the principle of the three is united, and the three are the manifestation of Qian and Kun. Confucian Zhang Zai in Song Dynasty said: “Heaven, earth, and man all have the way of Qian and Kun. The Change penetrates heaven, earth, and man: yin and yang are its substance (qi), hardness and softness is its form, and benevolence and righteousness are its nature.” As the Book of Changes unites heaven (earth) and man, heaven and man is a connected entity. The reason, that “qian” and “kun” is used to describe the unity of “heaven,” “earth” and “man,” is that “qian” denotes vigorous movement, and “kun” denotes generosity and virtue in the *Appendices to the Book of Changes*. Therefore, “man” has a special responsibility for “heaven and earth” (heaven). So “man” should take the responsibility which is demanded by heaven and earth in the spirit of “constantly striving for self-improvement” and “with profound generosity to contain or complete things.” Zhang Zai said that “the way of heaven” and “the way of man” is uniform in the sense of “reason or truth.” If we want to know the principle of being a man, we have to know the way of “heaven and earth,” and if we know the truth of “heaven and earth,” we can know the principle or law of “man” (society).

So Confucians in Song Dynasty developed further the thought of “the unity of nature and man.” For instance, Cheng Yi said: “Is it allowable to know the way of man but do not know the way of nature? The Way is one. Is it right if the way of man is one, and the way of nature is another one?” According to Confucian mind, “nature” and “man” cannot be divided, they can not be regarded as a external and opposite relationships, and we cannot study only one of the two. Zhu Xi expressed this idea much more clearly saying: “Nature is man, and man is nature. At the beginning of human birth, they are produced from nature; and after the birth, nature is human too.” Zhu Xi held that “nature” cannot be independent of “man,” nor can “man” be independent of “nature.” At the time of human birth the human is

produced from nature, but when there is human being, the way of "nature" (heaven) will be embodied by "man." In other words, "humans" have a responsibility for "nature." If there is no "human," how can the lively atmosphere of "nature" be embodied, how can the "constantly striving to become stronger" of "nature" can be embodied and how earth's "containing or completing things with profound generosity" be realized? So man should know that "the work to establish mind or heart for heaven and earth" and "the work to establish life for people" is the same, and can not be separated. Therefore, the *Collection One of the Guo Dian Bamboo Slips for Writing* said: "The Way (Dao) can be mastered after knowing what the heavens (nature) do, and what man does. If we know the Way, then we know what the fate is." If we know "the Way of nature (heaven)" (the law of nature), and the way of man (the law of human society and life), then we can know the unified principle or reason of "nature or heaven" and "man," and the development trend of "nature or heaven" (the way of nature or heaven) and "man" ("the way of man," society).

When Confucius said: "It is necessary to know destiny or fate mandated by heaven," he meant that "man" should know the developmental trend of "nature or heaven." Confucius also said: "man should reverence fate or destiny mandated by heaven or nature," and cannot randomly destroy the developmental law of "nature or heaven." Thus to a Chinese philosopher "nature or heaven" is not a dead thing, instead, it is regarded organically, as constantly developing, growing, and united with man as one entity. It is a common sense that the existence of "man" cannot be separated with "nature or heaven." Why then does "man" regard "nature or heaven" as an opposite object, and recklessly destroy and conquer "nature?" Because they regard the relationship between "nature" and "man" as external, and they do not know that the relationship between "nature" and "man" is closely linked and internal. "The internal relationship" is different from "the external relationship," because "the external relationship" denotes that "nature" and "man" is separate, independent, and unrelated, but "the internal relationship" denotes that "nature" and "man" are closely related. Thus "the unity of nature and man" is an ancient philosophical proposition in Chinese philosophy, and it is the foundation stone of Chinese Confucian thought, and needs continuous interpretation by new human

societies. When we consider the human being's problems, we should bear in mind the idea of "the unity of nature and man" and we must deepen our discussion about the close link and the internal relationship between "nature" and "man." Because human society neglects this close link and internal relationship we currently experience the punishment of nature due to choosing a conflicting relationship between "human being" and nature?

The idea of "the unity of nature and man" (the thought that "Yi (change) is to communicate the way of nature with the way of man") originating from *the Book of Changes* supplies a mode of thinking for solving the current conflict between "nature and man," and can inspire us in the following three aspects:

Firstly, "The unity of nature and man" as a mode of thinking asks people not to regard "man" as an opposite object to "nature;" rather "man" is a part of "nature," and "the birth of man is from nature." Hence, to destroy "nature" is the same as to destroy "man" who will be punished by "nature." Therefore, "man" should "know nature" in order to make reasonable use of nature and should "reverence nature" and regard the work to protect nature as a holy obligation. Instead we emphasize "knowing nature" and blindly use this "knowledge" to exploit, conquer and even destroy "nature" disorderly. This is the extreme manifestation of "scientism," the omnipotence of science and technology. It denies the holiness of "nature or heaven," and consequently the transcendence of "nature or heaven," so that the spirit of humanism loses its foundation. The Chinese thought of "the unity of nature and man" thinks that "knowing nature" is one with "reverencing nature." "Knowing nature" but not "reverencing nature" regards "nature" as a dead thing, and cannot understand "nature" to be organic, productive, and vigorous. "Reverencing nature" but not "knowing nature" will regard "nature or heaven" as the mystical power outside of "man," and cannot help man benefit from nature. "Knowing nature" is united with "reverencing nature," and it is the important manifestation of "the unity of nature and man," which reflects the inner obligation of "man" to "nature."

The philosophical proposition, "the unity of nature and man," incarnates the complicated relationship between "nature" and "man," which not only includes how "man" should understand "nature," but also includes that "man" should reverence "nature" because of its holiness. This is the reason why Chinese Confucianism has not

become a universal religion (as with Buddhism, Christianity and the like), but still possess a certain “religiosity” and may explain how Confucian thought might fulfill a religious function in China. That is, Confucians think that the “inner” morality of “man,” which is mandated by “nature,” needs the personal moral cultivation to realize “transcendence from the ordinary to the level of sage.”

Therefore, “the unity of nature and man” is not only the recognition of “nature,” but also the realm of life that “man” should pursue. The reason is that “*tian*” (nature, Heaven) does not mean only nature, but also denotes “heaven” in the sense of holiness.” As an inner demand, “human nature” is asked to reach the transcendent sphere which is “equal with *tian*” (heaven, nature). In this sense, “man” and “nature” are not opposite; instead, “man” should be united with “heaven and earth.” For instance, Mencius said, “The people of the place where the superior man has visited will be influenced and educated; the impact at the place where the superior man has stayed is miraculous, and the sage acts along with heaven and earth.” The superior man realizes personal transcendence, which is a way of thinking, which not only gets rid of the troubled “the division between heaven and man” (the antagonism of heaven and man), but also opens a way for human beings to tend toward the ideal human sphere.

Secondly, we cannot regard the relationship between “heaven (nature)” and “man” as a kind of external relationship, because “heaven is man, and man is heaven.” They are inherently connected so that “man” cannot be separated from “heaven,” and “man” cannot survive without “heaven.” “Heaven” cannot be separated from “man,” for without “man,” the meaning of “heaven” cannot be embodied, and who will bear the responsibility for realizing “the way of heaven?” Awareness of the internal relationship between “heaven” and “man” is a key characteristic of Chinese philosophy.

At this point, Wang Fuzhi has an important remark. Reviewing scholars’ theories from of old, he said that they merely grasped the outer phenomena of the pre-Qin Confucianism, and thought that *Book of Changes* was only about “the way of Heaven.” But they did not know that *the Book of Changes* was also the root or foundation of “the way of man” since the Han Dynasty. Since Zhou Dunyi’s doctrine of “Taiji picture,” the doctrine is about the root (origin) of “the unity of heaven and man,” which explains that the birth of man is the result of

the change of “the way of heaven.” In this process heaven shares of its essence to “man” and makes him possess “human nature,” which is different from other things. Man can then discover that all the principles of moral human relations of “the way of man” (the rules of human society) are of the order of the yin-yang movement of “the way of heaven” (the law of the universe). “The way of man” and “the way of heaven” are united. “The way of man” is based on “the way of heaven” because “man” is a part of heaven (nature). The discussion of “the way of man” cannot be separated from “the way of heaven,” just as the discussion of “the way of heaven” also must take “the way of man” into consideration because “the principle of daily life” and of “the way of man” is the order of yin-yang movement of “the way of heaven.” So Zhang Zai said that *the Book of Changes* “contains the principle of heaven, and also includes the way of man.”

Thirdly, why does the Confucian philosophy hold that there is an inherently connected “internal relationship” between “heaven and man?” From of old, at least from the West Zhou Dynasty, there is an intellectual tradition which was described as: “the ear of heaven is the ear of my people, and the eye of heaven is the eye of my people.” The tradition can be traced from Confucius and Mencius to Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi, Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming. On this point, Zhu Xi may reflect Confucius’ consistent idea of “the learning of benevolence” in saying that “the man of benevolence” should have the heart of producing abundantly in the sense of nature, of tender affection for man and beneficence for things; the benevolent man’s heart includes four moral principles (benevolence, righteousness, rituals, and wisdom) and penetrates into the four beginnings of morals.” (Zhu, Vol.67) “The way of heaven” is continuously producing, and regards benevolence as the heart. “Heaven” (nature) has the function of making myriad things grow well, so “man” should follow the example of “heaven” (nature), and show kindness to man, and benefit myriad things. The reason is that “heaven and man are united as a whole,” so that “man” obtains the essence of “heaven” in order to become a “man.” Hence man should realize the vigorous producing function of “nature” (heaven) and “the tender affection for other man, and bring benefits to things. “The heart of heaven” and “the heart of man” are actually the same heart. “Man” has the responsibility to realize “the way of heaven,” and the significance of life is “the way of heaven.” The value of life is to realize “the destiny

(fate) of heaven," so the relationship between "heaven" and "man" is actually internal.

In discussing the proposition of "the unity of heaven and man" we understand it philosophically on the above points in order to perceive its real spirit, and value. It is a kind of world view, a way of thinking which is applied to the consideration of "the unity of heaven and man." Its significance is to endow man with an irresistible responsibility. "Man" can realize its own transcend-ence, and achieve the sphere of ideal "unity of heaven and man" only in the process of "imitating heaven (nature)" (enhancing it to the sphere of "heaven")

Of course, the thought of Confucian "unity of heaven and man" probably can not directly solve those specific problems of "the conflicts between man and nature" in human society. However, "the unity of heaven and man" as a philosophical proposition, or thinking mold holds that "heaven" and "man" cannot be separated as two parts; instead, "heaven" and "man" should be regarded as an inherent union. There is an internal communicating relationship between "heaven" and "man," which undoubtedly provides a positive manner of solving philosophically the relationship between "heaven" and "man."

## V.

"The conflict between persons" in contemporary society is more complicated than "the conflict between man and nature." The interpersonal conflict is related to the various conflicts between "self and others," "man and community," "nation and nation," "people and people," "region and region," for instance, the pursuit of material needs and power, the struggle for natural resources, and the expansion of possession and ambition cause the confrontations and war between nations, peoples, and regions, and the outcome of "imperial hegemony" and "terrorism." Excessive attention to the pursuit of money and the enjoyment of material goods, especially the ruling class corruption, and their oppression of ordinary people, cause the tense relationship between persons, inhospitality in society, numerous factions, and rampant gangsterism. In human society, children, youth, and the aged all have their own problems. The misunderstanding and hostility in daily life between persons, the isolation of souls leads to the disappearance of social harmony. This trend will result in the collapse of human society. Does Confucianism

provide some helpful intellectual resource for the various faults in contemporary society? In my opinion, Confucian "learning of benevolence" may have important significance for the formation of harmony "between persons," nations, peoples, and regions, or "the harmonious society."

The volume of "*nature coming out of fate*" in the *Guodian Chu Bamboo Slips for Writing* says that "Dao" (way) originates from affection (feeling, emotion), and affection is produced from nature. The beginning is close to affection, and the end is close to righteousness. It means that interpersonal relationship is initially founded on affection (feeling), and affection is produced from human nature. Therefore, at the start of interpersonal relationship, affection is more important (for example, the affection between mother and child). Later on, morality and justice (Dao or way and justice or righteousness) become more important than affection. Here, "way" denotes "the way of man," which means the law of interpersonal relationship, or principles of social relations. It is connected with "the way of heaven," but is different from "the way of heaven," which means the law of nature (or the world external to "man"). That "Dao originates from affection" means that interpersonal relationship is initially founded on affection and is the starting point of Confucius's "learning of benevolence." When Confucius's disciple Fan Chi asked him what is "benevolence," Confucius answered, "to love people." Where does the moral character, "to love people" come from? *The Doctrine of the Mean* quotes Confucius' saying, "The benevolence is the character of man, and it is foremost to love family. The moral character of benevolence is the born, and it is the most essential part to love one's own family."

But Confucians think that the spirit of benevolence can not just rest on the love of one's own family. The *Guodian Chu Bamboo Slips for Writing* records that "It is affection to love family sincerely, but benevolence is understood as a broad affection for ordinary people not only the affection for father. It is natural affection to love own family even extremely; when this love (affection) is extended to other people it can be regarded as "benevolence." There is also the record, "the filial piety should be extended to affection for ordinary people under the sky." However, the affection for family is the foundation of the affection for others. This means that Confucian "learning of benevolence" requires the extension of the affection for family to the affection of ordinary people. The principle, "put oneself in the place

of another," and the practice, "treat the aged with respect in my family, and extend that respect to other aged outside of my family. Treat the young with tenderness in my family, and then extend that tenderness to other youths outside of my family," are the reflection of benevolence. It is not easy to abide by the principle, "put oneself in the place of another." "The way of zhong (the full development of one's originally good mind) and shu (the extension of that mind to others)," which is the principle for carrying out "benevolence," is described as "you do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you," "if you wish to establish your own character, also establish the character of others, and if you wish to be prominent, also help others to be prominent." (Zhu Xi's *Variorum of the Four Books* explains "To realize one's good to the best is zhong, and the extension of one's good is shu"). If "benevolence" is extended to the whole human society, it is like the saying of Confucius, "To master oneself and return to ritual is benevolence. If a man (the ruler) can for one day master himself and return to the rites (ceremony), all under heaven will return to benevolence. To practice benevolence depends on oneself. Does it depend on others?"

In the past, "to overcome selfish desire" and "to revive the ritual" had ever been explained as two parallel aspects, but such understanding is not correct in my opinion. "To overcome selfish and to revive the ritual is benevolence" means that "benevolence" can be called only on the condition of "the surviving of the ritual" based on "the overcoming of selfish desire." Fei Xiaotong has a good explanation on this sentence, he said: "Only in overcoming selfish desire can ritual be revived. To revive ritual is a necessary condition for entry into society, and becoming a social person. To limit or to intensify one's selfish desire may be the key difference between eastern and Western cultures." This explanation seems reasonable. If one enters into the society, he must demand something of himself; for instance, to abide by the principle, "you do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you," for only then can one abide by the social criterion (or the ritual) and become a social person. It is the same for a nation; it must abide by the requirements of world conventions and the general rules for only then can the conventions and general rules be preserved. Fei Xiaotong thought that "the restriction of selfish desire" in Chinese culture is good for interpersonal relationship, while "the encouragement of selfish desire" in Western culture, which put

self in the higher place than other persons or other nations, will surely cause conflicts and war. According to Zhu Xi's explanation, the saying can be understood as "To conquer the selfish desire and return to the rituals, are the principle of heaven." He means that we should restrict our own selfish desire in order to conform to the rituals and criteria when we act. "Benevolence" is man's internal moral character ("affection is originated from nature"); in the sense of social life, "the ritual (ceremony)" is the external system which regulates people's behavior, and its function is to regulate interpersonal relationship in order to ensure interpersonal harmony. This is the meaning of "The importance of the use of rites (ceremony) is harmony." To demand to obey the ritual (ceremony) must be based on the internal heart's (mind) "affection for others," which is in accordance with the requirement of "benevolence."

So Confucius says: "To practice benevolence depends on oneself. Does it depend on others?" On the relationship between "benevolence" and "rites (ceremony)," Confucius had a clear remark, he said: "If a man is not benevolent, what has he to do with rites (ceremonies, etc.)? If he is not benevolent, what has he to do with music?" Without the heart (mind) of benevolence, the system of rites (ceremony) and music is deceptive, and cheats. Therefore, Confucius held that, the society can be harmonious and peaceful, if people consciously pursue "benevolence," and put "the heart (mind) of benevolence" according to certain criterion into practice in daily society. It is the meaning of "If a man (the ruler) can for one day control himself and return to the rites (ceremony), all under heaven will return to benevolence." Acts which put the belief, or pursuit of benevolence, into daily practice, are similar to seeking "to reach the greatest height and brilliancy and follow the way of the Mean" in *the Doctrine of the Mean*. "To seek to reach the greatest height and brilliancy" means that people should pursue the topmost principle, the ideal of benevolence, in life; "To follow the way of the Mean" asks people to realize the spirit of "benevolence" according to criterion into practice in daily life ("the doctrine of the mean, denotes the use of the mean"). "To seek to reach the greatest height and brilliancy" and "to follow the way of the Mean" can not be separated into two parts; it is Confucian uppermost ideal, "the way of innermost sageliness, and the outermost kingliness."

Today as we try to build “a harmonious society,” Confucius’ sayings are undoubtedly significant for us. There are many explanations on the meaning of “benevolence” in the *Confucius Analects*, but there is no word for “benevolent governance.” However, “to lead the people with virtue and regulate them by the rules of ceremonies (rites, property)” “to love people broadly,” “to elect the virtuous and able talents,” “to extensively bring benefit to the people and bring salvation to all,” and others are all about “benevolent governance.”

There are many discussions about “benevolent governance” in *Mencius*, its meaning is broad. Some of the explanations are not compatible with the requirements of contemporary human society, but two points are still significant for building a harmonious society and to achieve world peace. One is that “the practice of benevolent government” should ensure people have fixed property, he said: “The people follow the right way because they have fixed property and stable heart, and without fixed property, without stable heart.” He means that the reason for ordinary people is, everyone should have certain fixed property in order to ensure that they have certain moral concepts and principles of behavior. So Mencius said: “The benevolent governance should start from the delimitation of land.” He means that “the benevolent government should first ensure the ordinary people have their own land. We must ensure “the ordinary people have some fixed property” if we want to build “a harmonious society.” At the international level, every nation and people should be ensured of independently owning their own deserved wealth; the powerful nation should not exploit other nations’ wealth and resources and carry out power politics. The second point of Mencius’ “benevolent governance” calls for opposition to unjust war. He held that “Those will gain more support who carry out the kind and right way, otherwise, others will find scant support who lose the kind and right way.” Here, “the way” means “morality and justice.” There is a record in *Gongsun Chou*, he holds that the favorable weather is less important than advantageous terrain, and the advantageous terrain is less important than the support of people. He says:

It is not needed to confine civilians by national boundary, not necessary to protect nation by the dangerous mountain, and to threaten the world by the destruction of weapons. Those will gain more support who carry out the

kind and right way; otherwise, others will find scant support who give up the kind and right way. His family and relatives all oppose him, who get the least support, but all the people under the sky will come over and pledge allegiance to him if he get the most support. The just superior man will win if he launches a war against those who are opposed by all the supporting force, even by his family and relatives, or he need not launch the war.

The passage tells us that it is not necessary to apply national boundaries to restrict civilians, to depend on the advantageous terrain to protect a nation, and to rely on the weapons of great destruction to threaten the world. So Confucians usually divide war into two kinds, "the just war" and "the unjust war." Mencius says, "There is no just war in the Spring and Autumn Period," and "Those who lose the public support will lose the regime." This principle is still effective for the ruler of a nation. Jia Yi, early in the Han Dynasty, wrote an article, *Guo Qin Lun* (An analysis of the failure of Qin Dynasty). In this article, he summed up that the Qin Dynasty failed because "The Qin government did not carry out the policy of benevolence and righteousness after it had established a united nation, so it lost the sovereignty even though it had the power of the nation and had many advantages." And he quoted a proverb, "the past events are today's lesson." Is it the wisdom we should absorb today? Such Confucian thoughts should have some significance for the rulers of a nation, and for the ruling group of the developed nations in the world. "To manage state affairs and pacify the world" should be carried out through "benevolent governance" and "the kingly way," instead of "arbitrariness" and oppressing civilians.

Ever since Samuel P. Huntington presented his thesis on the conflict of civilizations in 1993, there have been a lot of discussions among scholars from all countries. In human history, it is not rare to find conflicts and war caused by cultural difference (for instance, the difference of philosophy, religion, values). Even on entering into the 21<sup>st</sup> century there is no world war, but regional war always breaks out. Undoubtedly, political and economic problems are important reasons, but culture is also one of the reason of the conflicts and war between nations, peoples, and regions to a large extent. In solving the conflicts and even wars due to cultural difference, perhaps Confucius's notion

of “harmony without sameness” might be an extremely important principle.

In Chinese history, there are two concepts, “harmony” and “sameness,” which are regarded as different, so there is the so-called “discrimination of harmony and sameness.” According to the records on *the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Duke Zhao the Prominent, Zuozhuan*, “Duke Zhao asked, “There is only Liang Qiuju is harmonious with me?” Yan Zi (Yan Ying) answered, “Ju is just the same with you. Is it harmonious with you?” The Duke said, “Is harmony different with sameness?” Yan answered, “It is different. It is alike with cooking a thick soup, which needs water, fire, vinegar, catsup, salt, and plum to cook fish or meat, firewood to burn, cook to season to assure the fine taste. If the taste is too mild, the cook will add seasoning, and if the taste is too thick, he will add water to dilute the taste. When the superior man has the soup, he will feel delicious. The relationship between the emperor and his officials is alike...Now Ju is different, because he always agrees with you no matter what kinds of your decisions are. It is like to apply water to improve the flavor of water, who can have it? If musical instrument always play the same tone, who can listen to it? It is the reason why sameness should not be advocated.” In *Zheng Yu, Guo Yu*, “The harmonious relationship between things is helpful to produce new things, while sameness can not. To add one with another is called harmony, so it is helpful to produce something new; while if the same thing is put together, all will lose their vital force. So the past kings apply earth, metal, wood, water, and fire to produce the myriad things.” Therefore, “harmony” and “sameness” is not the same. If the different and related things can harmoniously grow, then things will develop. If the same things are put together, the result is to suppress vital force. The highest ideal in traditional Chinese culture is that the “ten thousand things grow together without harming each other; their ways move in parallel without mutual interference.” (“The ten thousand things growing together” with “their ways moving in parallel” expresses “lack of sameness;” “they do not damage” or “interfere with each other”—this is “harmony.”) This can be a rich source of ideas for coexistence of multicultures.

Different nations and countries should carry out cultural exchanges and dialogues in order to achieve a certain kind of common understanding, that is, a process of mutual recognition from difference to some sort of commonality in a certain sense. This kind of

mutual recognition does not mean that one side exterminates the other and it does mean that one side is assimilated by another completely. It means the search for joint points where different cultures come together and develop together. This is the function of harmony. Therefore, we must diligently seek harmonious coexistence among different cultures through dialogue. Now, many scholars in China and the West have already recognized the importance of pursuing mutual understanding among different cultures through dialogues. For instance, Habermas puts forward the notions of "justice" and "solidarity." I think it should be significant to use them as principles of the relationship between different nations and cultures. Habermas' "principle of justice" can be understood as being that every national culture should be ensured as independent and self-determining; his "principle of solidarity" can be understood as being that one nation should hold the responsibility to understand other national cultures in a sympathetic attitude and should respect other cultures. Only through continuous dialogue and communication and other means, can good communication between different national cultures be established.

The German philosopher Gadamer, who passed away in 2002, pointed out that "understanding" should be extended to the level of "broad dialogue." It is for the sake of the enhancement of "understanding" to the level of "broad dialogue," that subject and object can be brought to an equal from an unequal status. In the other words, dialogue can be carried out truly and finished smoothly only under the condition of the mutual equality between the two sides. It can be said that Gadamer's subject-object sense of equality and his theory of cultural dialogue are importantly needed ideas in our age. It is very inspiring for understanding Sino-foreign cultural relationship and national relationship correctly and deeply. Whether it is Habermas' principles of justice and solidarity or Gadamer's theory of broad dialogue, both recognize the need for harmony without sameness as the premise. Only if we recognize that nations and states with different cultural traditions can achieve harmonious coexistence will it be possible for them to obtain equality of rights and duties. Only under such conditions can "broad dialogue" "truly and smoothly accomplish its ends." Thus, Confucius' principle of "harmony without sameness," based on the notion that "harmony is the most valuable,

should become a basic principle for handling relations among different cultures.

## VI.

If we use the Confucian notion of “the unity of Heaven and man” as thinking resource to solve “the contradictions between man and nature” and “the unity of self and others” to resolve “the contradictions among men,” then we may use the “integration of the inner and the outer” to moderate the contradictions within our own persons. There are all sorts of pressures in modern society. Particularly the unlimited pursuit of sensual enjoyment brings about a loss of psychological balance and a division in the human personality. The psychological imbalance induces spiritual disturbances, alcoholism, murder, suicide, and so on. This distortion of the human body and mind has become a sort of social disease with a serious effect on social peace. The reason is the withering of morality, so people no longer have a sense of harmony between body and mind. Many perceptive scholars have proposed theories and policies about how to cure this condition. From the perspective of traditional Chinese culture, a great deal of attention is given to this in the Confucian practice of the cultivation of the person and the nurture of the mind.

In *Nature is Originated from Destiny, the Guodian Chu Bamboo Slips for Writing*, it is said: “if you intended to know the Way, you should return to the innate goodness of yourself; this is called moral cultivation.” *The Great Learning* particularly stresses that people’s moral practice is very significant for the building of a harmonious society. In the first chapter of the book, it says: “The Way of learning to be great consists in manifesting clear character, renovating the people, and abiding (staying, resting) in the highest good.” Zhu Xi noted that: “the word, renovate, means remove from old. And if I am clear about myself and clean, I should help others to abolish the former pollution in the similar way as mine...To manifest clear character and renovate people should stay at the highest good and not change.” Therefore, *the Great Learning* holds that “From the Son of Heaven to the common civilians, all must regard moral cultivation as the root or foundation. There has never been a case when the root is in disorder and yet the branches are in order.” (Chen, 87) This means that in Confucians’ minds, if everyone (from the Son of Heaven to

common people) cultivates its morality well, “family” can be regulated, the “state” will be in order, and there will be peace throughout the “world.” Whereas if moral cultivation, the root or foundation, is disordered, it is definitely impossible to manage well the “family,” “state” and “world.”

In the *Doctrine of the Mean*, “Social governance depends on man, the choice should be made according to their moral cultivation. The standard of moral cultivation is the Way (the top way, harmony), and the heart (mind) of benevolence and love is necessary to realize a harmonious society.” Here, individual moral and cultivational connection with “benevolence” proves the consistency of Confucian thought. Confucian’s attention to “moral cultivation” is not aimless; instead, it is for the regulation of family, governance of nation, and the unity of the world, that is, for the building of a “harmonious society.” The ideal of the commonwealth of great unity in the *Records of Rites* is aimed to build a harmonious society politically, economically, and culturally. Confucians’ ideal of harmonious society is based on the enhancement of personal moral cultivation, so Confucians especially stress the personal cultivation of body and mind. Confucians think that life and death, riches and honor should not be the final goal of life; people should pursue moral perfection and knowledge.

Confucius said: “I am uneasy that people do not cultivate their moral character, do not learn and teach knowledge, do not behave according to righteousness, and do not correct their mistakes although they know they are wrong.” This saying tells us the way to be a man. It is not easy to cultivate our moral character because we must have a great dream, and a mind to serve the welfare of humankind. It is also not easy to study knowledge, because we not only need to improve our own wisdom, but also need to hold the responsibility of culture and education for society.

People always make various kinds of mistakes, but we should have the courage to correct our mistakes, this is helpful to the harmony of society. “Be apt to goodness” means we should make great efforts toward goodness everyday, renovate ourselves day by day, and then we can reach the state of “staying in the topmost goodness. All of the above are the reasons to be an upright person, advocated by Confucians. They are significant for us to maintain harmony between body and mind, the inner and the outer. So Mencius said: “To preserve one’s mind and to nourish one’s nature is the way to serve Heaven.

Not to allow any double-mindedness regardless of longevity or brevity of life, but to cultivate one's person and wait for destiny (ming, fate, Heaven's decree or mandate) to take its own course is the way to fulfill one's destiny." (Chan, p. 78, 1963) If one can preserve his compassionate heart, cultivate his moral character, and realize the demand of the way of Heaven, then the length of life is indifferent. But one must assure the identity between individual moral cultivation and the way of Heaven, which is the peace and calmness of the person and the establishment of destiny.

Confucian self-cultivation has a goal. The *Book of Changes* says, "Make use of personal moral cultivation in order to honor virtue." People's actions should benefit society, and settle down and get on with that pursuit. An individual undergoes self-cultivation in order to elevate his spirit and to "set his mind on Heaven and earth, establish his life's destiny, and continue to study to achieve sagehood, so that all things in the world are at peace." It is in order to "establish the great root or foundation and so carry out the Way." As far as the individual is concerned, he will be at peace with himself both in his interior thoughts and emotions and in his external relations. This is "the interest of Confucius and Yan Hui" pursued by the Confucians in the Song Dynasty. In a *Letter to Zhang Jingfu*, when Zhu Xi discussed "the meaning of the mean and harmony" with Jingfu, he said: "From now on, I know I have a safe place, that is, the place for the peace and calmness of a person, the establishment of destiny, and for the domination of consciousness in the vast transformation of the universe. So the key for us to establish our great root (foundation), and carry out the great Way is described as being that substance and function have one source, and there is no gap between the apparent and the hidden."

Confucians hold that it is very significant to attain the peace and calmness of a person and the establishment of his destiny for the harmony of body and mind, the internal thinking and emotion and the external factors. Therefore, Zhu Xi said: "If a person can be centered within himself harmoniously, even though the world at large is in chaos, the inner world, that is, its Heaven and earth and the myriad things, remains peaceful and unharmed. If someone is unable to attain this, even though there is order in the world at large, within oneself one will be perturbed, even if no harm comes to him from without. It is the same for a country or a family." If our internal and

external can be centered in harmony, the chaos of a disordered world cannot disturb our inner peace. If we are not centered and harmonious in our internal and external, even if there is a very well-ordered world outside, we will still be troubled, worried, perturbed. We must work hard at cultivating our own virtue whether the world at large is in chaos or in order. In this way we can fulfill our life's duty and when it is time to leave the world we can go with a sense of peace and fulfillment. So, the last two sentences in Zhang Zai's *Western Inscription* says: "In life I do what my duty as a member of society and as a member of the universe require me to do, and when death comes, I rest."

Confucians consistently give great attention to the peace and calmness of the person and the establishment of destiny. This is a demand of self-cultivation. In this way we can bring harmony to our own hearts and minds internally and to its external manifestations. Our words and actions will accord with the "principle of being human." In this way our persons will be at peace and our destiny established. We should eliminate all the obstacles in the way of our personal harmony. Zeng Zi says: "Every day I examine myself on three points: whether in counseling others I have not been loyal; whether in intercourse with my friends I have not been faithful; and whether I have not repeated again and again and practiced the instructions of my teacher." (Chan, p.20, 1963) As a man of honor, every day I should be on the alert regarding myself, and examine whether my behavior and doings accord with morality and justice. If there is something immoral and unjust, I should even sacrifice my life to realize humanity, and defend justice. So Confucius said, "A resolute scholar and a man of humanity will never seek to live at the expense of injuring humanity. He would rather sacrifice his life in order to realize humanity." (Chan, p. 43, 1969) Mencius said: "If I do not act in accord with humanity and justice, I choose self-abandonment." It is not easy to carry out the Confucian "principle of being human," but this is something people should ardently strive for. The purpose of achieving this personal peace is to bring about social harmony.

Sima Qian says: "For one today to make a record of the Way of the ancients is to make for ourselves a mirror; it is not that the two ages are necessarily identical in all things." We have been reviewing the thought of Confucius and his school in order to find out whether it contains resources significant for the present human society. This is

without a doubt something important. But the thought and ideas of the sages and worthies of ancient times are not able fully to solve all the problems of the present time; nor do they all accord with the demands of contemporary society. They can only show us a path for thinking, a hint on how to make use of these resources, giving us a new base for addressing the concerns of the present time. It is in this way that they can make a contribution to the building of a harmonious human society. "Though Zhou is an ancient state, its Mandate is ever new" (*Book of Songs*). Our Chinese nation is an ancient nation with 5000 years of history and culture. Our mission is to assure that our society constantly renews itself and to make a contribution to the whole of mankind.

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**Part III**  
**Daoist Philosophy**



## On *The Dao De Jing* (Tao Te Ching)

The *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) or *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*) is a very important book for studying Chinese philosophy. Its other titles, when it was written and by whom remain questions that scholars have long discussed. Some assert that it was written by Lao Ran (6th century B.C.) who was the teacher of Confucius. Most Chinese, however, believe that it was perhaps written later around the fifth century B.C. because some of its paragraphs criticize certain Confucians who lived around the Fifth century B.C. It is believed that someone living at that time put in writing the thought of Lao Ran. The *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) could not have been written as late as the *Zhuang Zi*, around the fourth century B.C., because there are quotations from the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) in the *Zhuang Zi*. About the third century B.C., a famous scholar, Han Fei, wrote a section entitled "The Interpretation of *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*)" in his book *Han Fei zi*. This is the earliest known interpretation of *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*). Since, from the Han dynasty till now, there have been more than one thousand different commentaries and annotations of this text. Foreign scholars pay great attention to the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) as well. The English translations of the text already number more than twenty and there are translations into many other languages as well. Of course, in such a long history many of these commentaries and annotations have been lost. According to the old Taiwan scholar, Yen Linfeng, there should be more than five hundred different copies still remaining; he has collected 345 in the series he edited. Among these the following five could be the most important:

- *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*) *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*), interpreted by Wang Bi. His interpretation created a new philosophical theory, known as "Mysterious Learning," around the third century A.D.

- *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*) *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*), interpreted by He Shang Gong. This is the earliest interpretation from the view of Daoist religion, around second century A.D.

- *Xiang'er Commentary on the Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*). This interpretation reflects the views of another faction of the Daoist religion around the third century A.D.

- *Dao De Zhen Jing Shu*, commentary of Emperor Ming Huang of Tang dynasty. This is the first text interpreted by an emperor.
- *Lao Zi Zhu*, interpreted by a great politician, Wang Anshih.

After 1949, many Chinese scholars tried to put the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) into the vernacular, such as *A New Translation of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)*, by Ren Jiyu, *Translation of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)* by Yang Liuqiao, and *Commentary and Translation of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) Written on Silk* by Xu Kangsheng, etc.

Regarding the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching) on Silk*, in 1973 many books written during the Han dynasty, in the second century B.C. on silk, the so-called Silk Book (*Bo Shu*), were excavated from Han Tomb No. 3 at Ma Wang Dui in Hunan Province. These silk books are of two different editions of the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)*, editions A and B, which differ in quite a few words, sentences and even in the number of characters.

These *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching) on Silk* are the earliest known texts of the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)*. In both editions there is no title, *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)*, but two separated titles: *dao* (tao) (meaning "way") and *De* (meaning "virtue"). We can understand then why in the history book, *Shi Ji* (meaning records of the Historian), the writer said that Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) wrote two pieces of book, one is *dao* (tao) and the other is *De*. Moreover, the order of the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching) on Silk* is quite different from the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)* circulated today. The former begins with *De* (while the latter does the contrary), which is the order of the *Interpretation of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)* written by Han Fei.

With the discovery of the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching) on Silk*, some long discussed problems were resolved. Now we know that the title, *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)*, was formed only after the time of Emperor Jin of the Han Dynasty (156-141 B.C.). "Jing" means "canon" or "Scripture," so *dao* (tao) and *De* became a canon later than many Confucian canons. Besides, there are 5,463 characters in the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching) on Silk* (second century B.C.) and 5,683 characters in the text of Wang Bi (third century A.D.). Later, the text of Doist religion usually includes only 5,000 characters, for which reason the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)* is called also *5,000 Characters Canon*.

The *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)* is especially important because it is one of the two trends which governed the ideology of the Chinese

people for two thousand years. As we know, for Chinese culture, philosophy, art and psychology the greatest influences have been Confucianism and Daoism (Taoism), and hence the canon of Daoism (Taoism), the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)*. When the Chinese people established their own local Daoist religion, their scripture was the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)*.

It seems reasonable to translate *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)* as *Canon of the Way and Its Virtue*, for in fact this book talks about two problems: first, the origin and essence of the universe, that is, the problem of the Way; second, how people can achieve the Way, or in other words how they can reach and understand the way, namely, the problem of Virtue.

In the period of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) in answer to the question of how all things in the universe were created most people held that they were created by Heaven or by the God of Heaven. As Heaven is the highest sovereign and has his own will, he is called the God of Heaven. According to the traditional ideology of Confucianism, Heaven is always a willful and distinctly highest sovereign power. But from the beginning Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) did not believe this. In chapter 4 of the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)* Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) said clearly that the Dao, the ancestor of all things, seems to have existed before the lord. It is very important to state the question in this way, because it is the first time that someone denied the consistent belief that all things were created by a God in Heaven and on purpose.

Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) asserted that the dao (tao) is the source of heaven and earth and everything. What is the meaning of the Dao? Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) tried to use many different adjectives to modify it. For example, he said: The thing that is called the dao (tao) is elusive and vague, deep and obscure (21), soundless and formless, (25). Therefore, it cannot be seen or touched, does not tangle with anything, does not desire to do anything, and is so huge that nothing cannot be included; yet it is so tiny that it can squeeze in anywhere. As such a source of the universe basically cannot be described by language, we have no choice but to name it dao (tao) inadequately. The descriptions of Dao, are only ways to make people understand. It must be made clear that the explanation of dao (tao) is different from dao (tao) itself; they are two different things and the former should not be mistaken for the latter.

What is the essence of the Dao? According to Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) the dao (tao) is the absolute supreme existence; no existence is earlier than the Dao. At the beginning of the universe the dao (tao) is undifferentiated: “There was something undifferentiated and yet complete, which existed before heaven and earth” (25), that is Dao. Therefore there is first the Dao, and then there is the integrated universe. Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) said: “The dao (tao) produced the one. The one produced the two. The two produced the three, and the three produced the ten thousand things” (42). It is often understood that One is the original material force; it produces the two—Yin and Yang—and the Three are their blending with the original force which blending produces ten thousand things. It should be noted that the evolution here is natural and has nothing to do with any personal purposeful will. This is the first systematic theory of the creation of the universe, it is a sort of cosmology. Although cosmology later developed much further, basically it was influenced by the viewpoint of the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) just outlined. Of course, there are other theories of cosmology in the classics of Confucianism, for example, the *Interpretation of the Book of Change* written around the third century B.C. But what the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) emphasized is that although the dao (tao) is the origin of heaven, earth and all things, dao (tao) produced them but never ruled them; everything developed and changed naturally. Therefore the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) is negative toward any purposeful or conscious ruling power, and for the same reason often describes the essence of dao (tao) as nameless, formless, having no action, no desire, etc.

Furthermore, Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) defines the essence of dao (tao) as Wu. All things come from being, and being comes from super being—Wu. All things in the world were produced from something with name and form; while things with name and form were produced by things transcending experience, time and space. In other words, Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) asserts that dao (tao) which transcends all sensory experience is the final cause of all things which exist in sensory experience. In this way, the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) touches the problems of ontology. Later during the Wei Jin Period (around third century A.D.) a scholar of mysterious learning named Wang Bi developed the thought of *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) from this side; he tried to use Wu, the super being that transcends experience, to prove

the rationality of existence in experience: As all things are produced by Wu so they are rational.

How can the dao (tao) be gained by human beings? The *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)* assumes that people should follow the example of the Dao, which means that people should have De. De means finding the way to reach the Dao. In the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)*, the supreme moral integrity is to take no action. The Sage said: I take no action, and the people of themselves are transformed. I love tranquility and the people of themselves become correct. I engage in no activity, and the people of themselves become prosperous. I have no desire, and the people of themselves become simple" (57). This, then, is to follow the example of the Dao, and a person who follows the dao (tao) is a sage.

But how can people know the Dao? Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) emphasized that the way to know the dao (tao) is totally different from the search for general knowledge. Usually, the more you know, the more you want. Since the dao (tao) is nameless and formless, you cannot know it as one knows things with name and form; the way to know the dao (tao) is to get rid of things with name and form step by step. By eliminating all things that bear names and forms, in other words, without any so-called knowledge, you can know the dao (tao) naturally.

How can we grasp the character of the Dao? Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) assumed that it is impossible to put the dao (tao) into any language. He in fact said: "The dao (tao) that can be told of is not the eternal Dao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name"(1). Therefore the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)* uses many metaphors to explain the Dao. For example, it says that the character of dao (tao) is just like water. "There is nothing softer and weaker than water, and yet there is nothing better for attacking hard and strong things."(78) "The great river and seas are kings of all mountain streams, because they skillfully stay below them."(66)

It is especially interesting that the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)* often uses a negative way to explain the Dao: nameless, formless, no activity, no desire—all are negative ideas. Usually, what the dao (tao) is makes sense by saying what is not the Dao, and what kind of character the dao (tao) possesses is described by saying what kind of character the dao (tao) does not possess." Reversal is the action of the Dao, weakness is the function of the Dao,(40) sages follow the Dao, what they pursue is just the opposite of what common people chase

after. For example, common people seek to be in their prime, but after things reach their prime they begin to grow old and perish. Therefore sages never seek their own prime. In order not to perish common people always compete with one another, that a sage does not. "It is precisely because he does not compete that the world cannot compete with him, so he can protect himself in this way and remain whole." In order to destroy, it is necessary first to give; in order to grasp, it is necessary first to give. This is called the subtle light. The weak and the tender overcome the hard and the strong. All these principles remain till the present very influential in Chinese action and thought.

*Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) is the most important canon of Daoist philosophy, as well as the most important scripture of the Daoist religion. Daoist religion—the only religion created by the Chinese nation—developed at the end of Han Dynasty in the first century A.D. Its main belief is that one can attain immortality, that one can rise to heaven with body and soul. This belief of the Immortals appeared much earlier than Daoist religion, during the third century B.C. But in the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*), we already find certain information. For example, in Chapter 59, we find "that the roots are deep and the stalks are firm, which is the way of long life and everlasting vision." In the Daoist religion people either explain the dao (tao) as a personified god or assume that if people know the Dao, grasp the Dao, they can attain immortality. The Xiang'er commentary, *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*), described the dao (tao) as qi—Vital energy. The supreme god of Daoist religion was accumulated by Qi. In other words, the Qi accumulated into the being that is the supreme god, Tai Shang Lao Jun. The He Shang Gong commentary *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*) *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) also said: if you can keep the dao (tao) in your body, if you do not waste your vital energy, do not torture your spirit, then, you can attain immortality. Thus, *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) guides people in finding their way to immortality.

## The Origin and Characteristics of Daoism

Religion is a social phenomenon and studying it with a view to understanding its historical development has special significance today. We can see similar trends in other countries where the rapid developments of science and technology do not in any significant way lessen the people's sense of, nor interest in, religion. Even the people of China, for some reason or other, show similar interests in the development of religion. This phenomenon is enough to raise several theoretical questions concerning the need for a better understanding of religion: what is the nature of religion? Does the human psyche require a religious faith? Is religion synonymous with religious belief? Is religious belief beneficial to social life? Is science complementary to, or inconsistent with, religious belief? Can religion be a modernizing agent? This paper does not pretend to deal specifically with these questions, but, why do we study the history of religions? Should an ideal history of religions be time-conscious? Can such a history help people think seriously about the problems of religion that exist in the world today? All historians of religions need to address themselves to these kinds of problems.

The religions which had been popular in Chinese history include Buddhism, Daoism (Taoism), Islam, Christianity and Animism. However, of all these religious traditions, only Daoism (Taoism) is indigenous to China. To be sure, Daoism (Taoism) is a Chinese religion; it has characteristics peculiar to the Chinese. Besides, it has exercised considerable influence on the development of Chinese culture and psychology, customs and habits, science and technology, philosophy and thought, medicine and hygiene, and even political life. Can our investigation into one of the more influential religions—the origin of Daoism (Taoism), its development and characteristics—help us deepen our understanding of Chinese culture, personality and way of thinking? Can it indirectly help us understand, more intimately, the theoretical and practical problems of religion in the world today? I think it can and toward this end the present discussion is an attempt to analyze and discuss the following issues.

### General Background

*The development of Daoism (Taoism) was an attempt to orientate the Han Chinese to their social, political, economic, moral and psychological lives at the end of the Eastern Han.*

Why did Daoism (Taoism) develop only at the end of the Eastern Han period? Historically, such Daoist ideas, as “immortality” and “sanctification of the bodies” had already existed during the time of the Warring States (Zhanguo). They became even more popular during the Qin and Han dynasties—why? We know that not just any kind of superstition can be called religion, although religion often embodies a good deal of superstitious elements. Neither can we say that any theistic discourse can become a religion, even if it is capable of extending its influence over a sizeable cross-section of the population. Its growth and development were directly related to the social life of the people, their history, and other objective facts. The development of Daoism (Taoism) during the Eastern Han may be attributed to the following factors.

*First*, the reality of social life at the end of the Eastern Han had laid fertile grounds for the growth of Daoism (Taoism). The social and political conditions, since Shundi of the Eastern Han, had begun to deteriorate. There was outside interference in the day-to-day administration and the administrative machinery was in the hands of a bureaucracy. Debauchery, unruly behavior and social strife, both from within and without, were the order of the day. Finally there were crop failures due to severe drought, and large numbers of people died in ditches (Chong Zhangdong, *Changyuan*).

Undue economic exploitations and political pressure at that time had made it impossible for the populace to lead a decent life; bankruptcy and emigration were common. The conflict between the ruling class and the ruled was intense and acute. According to historical records, from Shundi’s time, peasant uprisings were rampant. At that time, apart from the common class-interest that united them in social movements, their leaders resorted to magic and superstitions as organizing agents. That is why, in history books, the rebels after Shundi’s time were often called yaozei, or “the goblin thieves.”

Two conclusions may be drawn from the above discussion. First, a period of economic and political unrest, as well as spiritual and moral decay, provided an objective vantage for the development of religion.

Second, as the leaders of the peasantry had used magic and superstitions to rally support in their movements, they knew that these could be used as tools for mobilizing the people, thus paving the way for the widespread development of religion. As is always the case, social turbulence often caused great hardship and suffering to the lower class. Thus, when people became desperate they tended to hinge their hopes upon some kind of spiritual power, or *shenling*. This was one of the most common avenues through which people, in antiquity, reconciled themselves with their social reality. This also explains why a majority of the early Daoist believers were members of the lower social strata.

*Second*, the social conditions at the end of the Eastern Han had provided useful material for the founding of Daoism (Taoism). Since the time of Han Wudi, when Dong Zhongshu pointed out that “of the hundred schools, only Confucianism is the most revered,” Confucian thought had adapted itself to the needs of building a unified feudal society and serving as an ideology for the ruling class. From then on the development of Confucianism depended primarily on the teaching of a reciprocal relationship between heaven and man, followed by an increased interest in the development of theology and metaphysics. Though ideally a religion is theistic, not any form of theism is adequate or sufficiently meaningful to become a religion. This is because such a religion (namely, the religion of the masses) must include not only the worship of spiritual beings, but also possess a body of canon together with an enduring form of church organization, doctrines and dogmas, and an historical medium for the dissemination of religious knowledge. Generally, religion must see the world in two forms: the real and the supernatural. Based on this premise, human beings feel that they can only disengage themselves from the problems of social life in a supernatural world—believing that an ideal life can manifest itself only in the yonder shore of the supernatural world.

Despite the fact that Confucianism acknowledged the existence of Shen or God, especially during the Han dynasty, it had never thought it necessary that its ideals be fulfilled outside the world, but required rather that the ideals of “governing the state and pacifying the world” (*zhi guo ping tianxia*) be actualized in the real world, even though this were merely an illusion. Although religion had played a very important role in feudal China, it had never become a force to reckon

with. Instead it had, many a time, occupied a secondary position, which state of affairs clearly bespoke as well the dominance of Confucian ideology.

From the developmental point of view, after the Eastern Han, Confucianism could very well have become a religion, because its metaphysics together with the conception of the sacred could be easily converted into religion. However, Confucianism did not become a religion during the Han dynasty for the simple reason that it attempted to materialize the ideals of “governing the state and pacifying the world” in the real world. Thus, following the decay of the Han dynasty, Confucian ideology not only fell short of becoming a religion but its position as an ideology of the ruling class continued to decline. Because of this decline, Confucian thought had given way to the growth of Daoism (Taoism). History shows that, whenever the dominant ideology of the ruling class lost its power, it often signalled the growth and dominance of a countervailing religion.

Even though Confucianism had declined at the end of the Eastern Han, certain facets of its ideology could still be absorbed and put to good use by an ongoing religion. The fact that Confucian ideas are found in Daoism (Taoism) is clear proof that such assimilation did take place. For example, the idea of “the ultimate peace in the unity of the three (heaven, earth and man) in one” (tian di ren san heyi zhi taiping) shows that the Confucianists were concerned about political reality and the notion of sancai (three endowments) mentioned in *Yi Zhuan*. The idea that the sky and the universe were formed by breath (qi) could have derived from the knowledge of world creation as well as the yin-yang principles and the five elements mentioned in the apocryphal texts. All these ideas were closely connected to Han Confucian thought. That most of the scholars who studied the development of Daoism (Taoism) focused their attention on its relationship with Daoist sources and overlooked the nexus between Daoist and Confucianist ideas is a bias.

Daoism (Taoism) could have another source in its gradual mingling with the tradition of the saints. Although there was a connection between the Daoists and the saints of the early Qin, both seem to belong to quite different schools of thought. Until the beginning of the Western Han, the popular Huang Lao learning was essentially Daoist. It frequently emphasized the exemplary qualities of the sage and was thus deemed capable of exercising its power over

the state and the cosmos. That is why Sima Qian, in his preface, commented that the importance of the Huang-Lao learning lies in the doctrine of “self-actualization through non-action, and self-correction through expiation” (wuwei zihua, qingjing zizheng).

The Huang Lao Daoist learning underwent a change during the Eastern Han: part of its adherents sought the help of the gods installed in shrines, thus becoming unified with the saints. Huandi, for example, made sacrifices to Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) at the latter’s shrine with the aim to “preserve shen for the uplift of character and the ultimate ascent to heaven,” thus signalling the initial transformation of Huang Lao’s Daoist teaching. Also, as early as the end of the Western Han, there was already in existence what was known as “Huang Lao’s Dao” (the Way of Huang Lao) and, later on, the “Fangxian’s Dao” (the Way of the Saints), all of which actually belonged to the immortalist sects. Further, the saints’ underlying objective was to attain “eternal life” (changsheng busi) and to cause the bodies to be sanctified (routi chengxian). Thus, once it merged with the Daoist ideas of “attaining peace through inaction, and remaining in peace through abstinence” (qingjing wuwei, tiandan guayu), it increasingly began to attract the masses and became a powerful social force. Lastly, the basic tenets of Daoism (Taoism), such as “immortality” and “the sanctification of the bodies,” although derived from the Way of the Saints, became part of the Daoist system. Hence, its transformation also represents an important factor contributing to the growth of Daoism (Taoism).

From the above viewpoints, Daoism (Taoism) as a religion may be said to have deviated from the Confucianist and Daoist schools of thought. However, its source of ideas was inseparable from both. Hence, from the beginning, it had distinguished itself as a religious system in which Confucian and Daoist ideas supplemented each other. This system represents some of the characteristics typical of Chinese culture, psychology and way of thinking.

*Third*, the introduction of Buddhism into China had greatly stimulated the development of Chinese religion. From the time Buddhism spread to China during the Western Han until after the middle of the Eastern Han, it maintained a steady level of propagation. Buddhism, acting like a catalyst, escalated the development of Daoism (Taoism). Actually, the school of the saints was already popular during the Western Han, and disciples frequently had given tributes to Huang-Lao. This was evidenced in

the existing learnings of “Huang-Lao’s Dao” and “Fangxian’s Dao.” The former sanctified Huangdi and worshipped him in shrines dedicated to him; the latter talked about “non-death and everlasting life” (zhongshen busi). *Shiji* records that the teacher of the river elder, Le Jigong, learned about Huangdi. The book of Fengchan records that Huangdi became an immortal because of Fengchan. Yujie (more appropriately, Ganjie), who compiled the Daoist scripture *Taiping Jing*, suggested that the book was originally by Lao Zi (Lao Tzu). During Han Mingdi, Chu Wangying had already worshipped Huangdi and Foutu. Chu Wangying recited Huang Lao’s words and honored Foutu’s shrine. Huandi erected Huang Lao’s and Foutu’s shrines in his palace. The fact that Huang Lao and Foutu were worshiped manifestly shows that Huangdi was at that time regarded as a deity or a Buddha. Sainthood was in fact a form of sagehood. Living the life of an immortal is but a human discipline. There was no formal, nor enduring form of organization to be used as a base for the interaction of the religious community. But after the spread of Buddhism to China, it became an organized form of religion, possessing not only a set of teaching which differed from that of traditional China, but also an organized church, with a religious canon and a spiritual community, all of which served as a blueprint for the founding of Daoism (Taoism).

It is true that Buddhism had served as a model for the establishment of Daoism (Taoism). Of even greater importance is that Buddhism was alien to Chinese culture, and its propagation in China was greeted with protests by the bearers of Xia’s cultural tradition. This defensive attitude acted as a stimulus spurring the Chinese to strive even harder towards establishing an indigenous religion. When an ethnic culture encountered an alien culture it often gave rise to mutual absorption or rejection.

This situation was particularly marked in the case of the Chinese response to Indian Buddhism. We can provide evidence to show how it was actually reflected in the earliest Daoist scripture, *Taiping Jing*. In this scripture, we see how some Buddhist ideas, like *benqi* (the primal beginning) and *sanjie* (the three worlds), had their origins in the Buddhist canon. On the other hand, there were criticisms about Buddhism, for example, the talks that “the conduct of the four destructions collectively denigrates the spiritual way of heaven” (Shihui zhi xing, gong wuru huangtian zhi shendao). Moreover, upon

the establishment of Daoism (Taoism), its adherents circulated the story about Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)'s role in bringing about a renaissance among the northern Chinese (Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) huahu). This was designed not only as a blow to Buddhism but also as an attempt to boost the image of Daoism (Taoism). All this suggests a kind of antagonistic reaction against the entry of the alien culture.

Therefore, it is not at all surprising that the end of the Eastern Han period saw the need for the development of an indigenous religion. The founding of this religion could be traced to the existing tradition of the saints. The fact that it adopted Confucian and Daoist ideas as a basis for the development of Daoism (Taoism) is even less surprising. Once it emerged, it immediately became charged with an intense ethnic fervor and came into direct conflict with the alien Buddhist religion. The outcome is, precisely, a manifestation of an indigenously endowed Chinese culture.

### **The Development of Daoism**

*The Process through which Daoism (Taoism) developed into an organized religion is also a clear manifestation of how a religious community came into being.*

What is the nature of religion? It can be defined in a great number of ways. Even in Marx's writings, religion is conceived differently under different circumstances. He said, "religion is the opiate of the people," which is interpreted in terms of the use of religion as a way of hypnotising the masses. This statement came not from Marx but Feuerbach. It means that the purveyors of religion who claimed that it could bring comfort to humankind were not being honest. Lenin conceived of "religion as the workers' groaning sound," which is interpreted as relating to the agony of the proletariat. Brezhnev said, "Religion has a countless number of definitions....It may be interpreted as a form of relationship that helps to realize the existence of the mystical superhuman power, for humans believe that they can depend on this power." Brezhnev's definition seems to be more relevant and practical, but is there such a mystical power? How do we adjust to the existence of such a power? Why do people find it necessary to believe in such a power? Is belief in a mystical superhuman power superstitious? This raises some philosophical problems, viz., the problems of religion vis-a-vis superstition and belief.

Is religion a superstition? This question can be debated for a long time and no one knows when it will end, but devout believers most certainly will reject the pronouncement that “religion is superstition.” Why? It is because believers frequently rely upon certain ideal principles to interpret what often is called the “mystical superhuman power” in the form of ultimate “truth, goodness, and beauty” (zhen, shan, mei), or else they often look upon the ideals of “truth, goodness, and beauty” as a form of “mystical superhuman power.” They sincerely believe it to be true and try very hard to apply these ideals in their social life. Probably the belief in, and dependence upon, this ultimate “truth, goodness and beauty” in the guise of a “mystical superhuman power” is a matter of the human psyche’s response to specific social conditions. But believers of the “mystical superhuman power” assume superstition and religion to be two different things. To them, “superstition” can only be a trick played upon those who lack scientific knowledge, i.e. a manifestation of spiritual poverty due to a lack of ideals. Devotees who believe that the “mystical superhuman power” is a manifestation of “truth, goodness, and beauty” may perhaps accept the idea that “religion is synonymous with belief” but certainly will not accept that “religion is superstition.” According to them people should have faith: even the agnostics believe in agnosticism.

Religion and belief are undoubtedly related. Religion is based on belief, but whether belief is based on religion, in the classical sense, is a different matter. As a matter of illustration we can say that “we believe in the scientific explanation of atheism” or even accept that “we believe in Confucian philosophy.” Nonetheless, there is no doubt that atheism is not a religion, but a scientific doctrine. Even Confucianism may be said to have embodied certain religious elements, although it is not a religion. Therefore, we should distinguish not only between “religion” and “belief,” but also between “religion” and “religious thought.” Otherwise, almost any kind of philosophical discourse could be regarded as a religion, and if that be the case, it would be as good as abnegating the existence of religion.

Based on our understanding of the human psyche, we may postulate that human beings really need a certain kind of belief. The question is whether there is the need for a religious belief. If we could divide religion into two categories—one a scientific belief—and another a non-scientific belief-religion may be said, generally, to

belong to the latter category. What follows immediately will be questions like whether human spiritual life requires a certain kind of self-satisfaction obtained from a non-scientific discipline, or whether social life looks upon religious belief itself as a psychological need. This is too gigantic a problem to be discussed here. We can only postulate that for a non-scientific belief to become an organized religion, it must offer some kind of theoretical bases or support. Also, these arguments must be able to reflect the spirit of the time. If there were no religious teachings to be used as a theoretical system, non-scientific beliefs could become an established religion. Besides, as an established religion, especially one that had colored the history of the social masses, there must be a perduring church organization, a religious canon, a community of devotees, and a history of religion.

In Chinese history, there were thousands of the so-called “religious sects,” but not all of them could be regarded strictly as “religious organizations.” In fact, a number of them could only be looked upon as “superstitious cults.” If that be the case, what then may be thought to be an organized religion? We shall analyze the growth of Daoism (Taoism) first before illuminating the really meaningful form of religious organization.

An organized religion must have a canon with a philosophical base of its own. The religious teachings should not be nonsensical, but must contain a well-organized system of ideas for the advancement of humankind. The reason why Indian Buddhism has become an influential world religion is that it provides an impressive system of thought which is capable of enlightening the human mind. If Daoism (Taoism) merely confined itself to a haphazard way of thinking, as is represented in the *Taiping Jing*, it would have been difficult to become an established religion in China. Thus, from the end of the Han dynasty, through the Three Kingdoms, till after the Western and Eastern Jin, there emerged Daoists like Ge Hong, Lu Xiuqing, Kou Qianzhi, Tao Hongjing and others who, in an attempt to fulfill the requirement of the time, not only integrated some of the Daoist and Confucian ideas but also absorbed some of the Buddhist elements to enrich Daoism (Taoism).

A really meaningful and influential religious community must have a formal or more serious form of church organization. Even though the ideas of “immortality” and “the sanctification of the bodies” were subsequently incorporated into the Daoist religion, the

saints relied heavily on personal devotion without developing a distinctive church, and so they failed to develop a religion. It was not until the end of the Han dynasty that Daoism (Taoism) became an established religion with a permanent membership of disciples, together with a body of clergy and church leaders. However, the regimes of the Three Kingdoms and the Western Jin banned this organization, subjecting it to dissolution until the Eastern Jin when Du Zhigong and others revived it and once again set it on course.

An organized religion must also have a more permanent set of religious teaching and canon. Although Daoism (Taoism) had its own precepts and canon when it was first instituted at the end of the Eastern Han, they were rather simple and impermanent in nature. From the Eastern Han onward, Daoism (Taoism) gradually became more firmly established under the impact of Buddhism and with the tireless efforts of Lu Xiuqing, Kou Qianzhi and others.

An organized religion must have its own canon and scriptures for the guidance of its believers. Although there were a number of Daoist books, like the *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*) and the *Zhuang Zi*, before the Wei and the Jin dynasties, these books came to be accepted as scriptures only after being popularized by the devotees. All these books were written by Daoist philosophers of the early Qin, and they had hardly any connection with Daoist religion. It was due to the believers' attempt to look for historical evidences that they decided to upgrade them as scriptures. *Taiping Jing*, for example, was written before the inception of the Daoist religion. Hence, it served only as a groundwork for the development of Daoism (Taoism). However, by the time of the Eastern Jin and the Northern and Southern dynasties, when Daoism (Taoism) was firmly rooted and a church was organized, a large quantity of scriptures expounding the Daoist canon began to appear (Ge Hong's *Pao Pozi*, This period saw the appearance of three distinctive categories of scriptures: *Sanhuangjing* (the Three Emperors Scripture), *Shangqingjing* (the High Pure Scripture), and *Lingbaojing*, (the Spirit Protected Scripture). All these scriptures subsequently combined to form the "three caves" (sandong) of the *Dizhangjing*, namely: the cave of the real (dongzhen), the cave of the gods (dongshen), and the cave of the occult (dongxuan).

An established religion must have a spirit being, or *shenling*, as a specific object of worship and a history of its own. When Daoism (Taoism) was first instituted it had inherited part of the saints'

tradition. The Daoist disciples claimed that it was imparted to them by the immortals, mostly with Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)'s assistance. Until the Northern and the Southern dynasties, Daoist disciples created the "rank of the real being" based on the conception of the social hierarchy prevailing at the time. Tao Hongjing's *Zhenlin Yueweitu* (Real Spirit's Occupational Status Chart) divided the immortals into seven classes, the highest of which was occupied by the first three: the Primal Lord of Heaven (Yuanshi Tianzun), the Daoist Lord on High (Gaoshang Daojun), and the First Divine Daoist Lord (Yuanhuang Daojun). From then on, these three deities became the most honored in the objects of worship in the Daoist temples (daoguan). Since a religion always finds it necessary to undermine the existence of other competing religions, it has to create a history of its own in order to raise its own status. Thus, being an indigenous Chinese religion, Daoism (Taoism) had to tackle the entry of alien Buddhism. Besides emphasizing the differences between "Chinese" and "non-Chinese" (huayi zhi bian) to undermine Buddhism, Daoists also spread the story of "Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) huahu" and elevated Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)'s position to that of Buddha Sakyamuni's teacher. Consequently, both Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism) remained in conflict for a long time.

However, it was not until the Eastern Jin and the Northern and Southern dynasties that Daoism (Taoism) finally became an established religion. The various stages of its development may be summarized as follows. First, from the Eastern Jin onward, the Daoists began to revive their religion by reorganizing the Daoist community which had become scattered and unstable. At the same time, in order to overcome the inadequacy of Daoist teaching and theoretical formulations, Ge Hong and others had provided a body of Daoist canon and precepts. Thereafter, as an attempt to consolidate the founding of the Daoist church, a set of religious teaching was formulated; and in order to propagate Daoist teaching the required scriptures were made available. Lastly, so as to set the religion on a proper footing, a compendium of fairy tales and legendary stories was kept alive. The various phases involved in the development of Daoism (Taoism) may thus be said to be characteristic of the circumstances under which a religious body came into existence. One of our aims of studying the history of religion is to use it as a source for illuminating the various phases of its development so as to enable us to assess, more accurately, the role it played in society.

### Characteristics of Daoism

*As a form of religious philosophy Daoism (Taoism) has special characteristics which can be illuminated only through comparison with other religions.*

An established religion has characteristics which are distinctively different from those of other religions. Besides such external forms, as church organization, religious doctrines and canon, as well as its conception of the sacred, its characteristics should be reflected in the theoretical system which forms the core of the religion. This theoretical system usually contains a body of basic ideals and conceptual schema. For instance, the ultimate reality of the Buddhist belief, as embodied in the concepts of self-denial, transcendentalism and nirvana, is the insignia which distinguishes it from other religions. The three doctrines of the medieval Christianity—namely, “the existence of God,” “the resurrection of the soul” and “free will”—form its religious philosophy and conceptual schema. If that be the case, does Daoist philosophy contain any doctrines and tenets which differ from those of other religions? I think it does, especially in the earlier form of Daoism (Taoism). Whilst almost all religions ask the question, “what happens after the demise of a person?” Daoism (Taoism) wanted to know “why humans do not die?” This basic question serves as the key to the theoretical system of Daoism (Taoism). All this shows that it has characteristics different from those of other religions. The early form of Daoism (Taoism) held that its body of belief was made up of the tenet of “the ascent of the three in one,” that is, “the unity of heaven, earth, and man for the attainment of the Great Peace” (tian-di-ren, sanzhe heyi yi zhi taiping); “the blending of the essence, breath, and shen to become a saint” (jing-qi-shen, sanzhe hunyi er cheng shenxian). From this it evolves into “non-death and eternal life” (zhongshen busi), “resurrection of the bodies” (rouyi feisheng), and “transformation of the breath into the three pure ones” (qihua sanqing), thus forming the basis of Daoism (Taoism).

To understand the tenets of the Buddhist philosophy, one must know the meaning of nirvana. Hence, a Russian Buddhist scholar wrote a book analyzing the meaning of nirvana. In Mou zhongsan’s book, he analyzed the concept of nirvana from the Chinese Buddhist viewpoint. In studying Christianity, one should analyze the concept of “God.” Thus, Aurelius Augustinus (354-430) in his *The City of God*, formulated his thesis regarding the “godliness” of the “Almighty.” In

his *Shenxue Dazhuan*, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) put forward five parameters to prove that “God exists.” In Daoist philosophy, the basic concept is breath (qi), the existence of which may be proved by the following.

*First*, the unity of the three in one refers to the unity of heaven, earth and man, and the reason why “heaven, earth and man” can be unified is due to the fact that the breaths of Tian-di-ren are the same. The three Jing-qi-shen (essence, breath, and god) blend to become one, and the reason why Jingqishen can be fused in one is due to the fact that the breaths of the Jingqishen are the same.

*Second*, the so-called one breath giving birth to the three pure ones means the three most respected worthies of Daoism (Taoism) were the manifestations of the breath, or the three layers of the most sacred heaven were manifested by breath, or qi. This also shows how the basic concept of Daoism (Taoism) came to be formed.

*Third*, although dao (the way) is the highest form of Daoist doctrine. Its early period identified three circumstances under which the relationship between dao and qi was highlighted. The first circumstance was that dao is more basic than qi, but dao cannot be isolated from qi. Another circumstance showed that qi is more basic than dao, because Daoism (Taoism) used qi as its prime mover, for example, Liu Xie in his *Mie Huo Lun* (On the Extinction of Illusion), while citing *Sampolun*<sup>22</sup> (The Three Breakthroughs), said “qi is the prime mover of dao.” The third circumstance was the synthesis that dao is qi—for example, Tao Hongjing in his *Yangsheng Yanminglu* cited *Fuqijing* (Breathtaking Scripture) that “dao is qi.” In studying the philosophical basis of the Daoist canon, if one could analyze the meaning of qi and the conceptual base upon which it is built, one would be able to gain further insight into the various salient features of Daoism (Taoism).

Hegel in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* said, “the difference in cultures is due to the difference in the systems of ideas.” If we compare Daoism (Taoism) with other religious systems, the doctrines formulated by Daoist ideas, and the school of thought which formed the basis of these doctrines, we would be able to understand more clearly the characteristics of Daoism (Taoism). Although Daoism (Taoism) is indigenous to the Chinese, it actually owes its development to the inspiration of Buddhism when the latter spread to

China. Thus, we are able to identify the rival relationship between Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism) as one of its special characteristics.

The earliest Daoist scripture, *Taiping Jing*, on the one hand, shows that it was influenced by Buddhism. For example, it relates to the question of conformity, a concept which was already in use in traditional Chinese thought. But in *Taiping Jing* this was discussed in such a detailed and outstanding manner that it became obvious that it was influenced by the Hinayanist Zen Buddhist concept of “mind control” or “control of desire.” On the other hand, the scripture also shows that it was antagonistic to Buddhism. For example, *Taiping Jing*’s satirical expression, “the way of the four destructions” (sihui zhi xing), was clearly aimed at Buddhism. It also put forward the argument that “one’s burden is one’s responsibility” (chengfu) as a direct confrontation to the Buddhist concept of “reincarnation” (laishi baoying). After the Eastern Jin, Daoism (Taoism) gradually developed into a full-fledged religion. It had a theoretical system of its own, and consequently its differentiation from Buddhism became more and more pronounced. At that time, the differences between Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism) might be related to the following problems: (i) life and death and the form of god; (ii) the cause and effect of one’s deeds and misdeeds (yinguo baoying); and (iii) this-worldly and other-worldly orientations. By analyzing of all these issues, we would be able to appreciate the special characteristics of Daoism (Taoism) as a religion.

In comparing Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism), we may encounter yet another question: why does not Daoism (Taoism) become a world religion as did Buddhism rather than remaining merely a Chinese religion? From the historical point of view, it is possible that Daoism (Taoism) could have spread to Korea at the end of the Northern and the Southern dynasties. *Sanguo Shiji* (The History of the Three Kingdoms) recorded how Daoism (Taoism) spread to Korea at the beginning of the Tang dynasty but, shortly afterwards, Buddhism became popular in Korea and very soon it outran Daoism (Taoism), which thence forward ceased to retain its foothold there. During the same period, Daoism (Taoism) passed through Korea to Japan, where it might have exercised some influence on Japan’s Shinto, though this does not mean that the development of Shinto was due to the Daoist influence. Unlike Buddhism, however, Daoism (Taoism) also failed to spread its wing over Japan. In history Daoism (Taoism) had even less

influence on other countries (notwithstanding its continuing impact on Chinese devotees who made their homes outside China).

In my opinion, the main reason why Daoism (Taoism) could not become a world religion is that it not only contains defects in its system of beliefs and practices, but also carries a heavy load of sentiment which are peculiarly Chinese. The goal Daoism (Taoism) seeks to achieve is “non-death and eternal life” and “the sanctification of bodies.” All this differs from the monotheistic doctrine that “the soul does not die.” On the one hand, its theoretical arguments, such as “the sanctification of bodies” and “non-death and eternal life” are too crude and difficult to be absorbed. Consequently, Daoism (Taoism) had no alternative but to take in some Buddhist ideas, such as “when the form ceases, its spirit remains” (xingjin shen bu mie) and “the three kalpas’ wheel of karma” (somshi lunhui). Thus, the spread of Daoism (Taoism) has been seriously restricted, whereas wherever it goes Buddhism has been able to take the place of Daoism (Taoism) wherever the latter goes. On the other hand, Daoism (Taoism) is too closely related to science. For the sake of preserving life, ensuring “non-death and eternal life” and sanctifying the dead it emphasizes a great deal of physical conditioning for lifting the breath (qi) of material reality to the highest level. Consequently, China’s science and technology, especially medicine, came to be developed alongside Daoism (Taoism). Daoism (Taoism)’s use of science was bound to curtail its dynamism as a religion. Thus, the “non-science” and “anti-science” components, in conjunction with the basic qualities of science, began to contradict each other. Religion usually emphasizes “other-worldly orientations,” but Daoism (Taoism) seems to insist instead on “this-worldly orientations” instead. Its adherents believe that they could blend “the three (jing, qi, shen) to become saints” (sanzhe heyi er cheng xian). But as a religious system Daoism (Taoism) also advocates the unity of the three (tian, di, ren) in one to ensure the Great Peace (sanzhe heyi er zhi taiping) and for this reason can be a potent disruptive force in the political process. In thus fabricating the supernatural world of the saints, Daoism (Taoism) hopes to translate the real world into an ideal one—this undeniably is a conflict of ideas.

The study of the characteristics of Daoism (Taoism) is of great importance for it enables us to understand the difference between Daoism (Taoism) and other religions. By analyzing its characteristics we are able to illuminate the salient features of Chinese culture,

psychology and philosophy, as well as the direction of developments in science and technology, medicine and hygiene, and the ensuing shortcomings hidden therein. For a people to succeed in development, they must know not only the present and the future, but also the past. They must come to grips not only with the reality of political life and economic exigencies, but also with their traditional culture, religious belief and pattern of thought. Herein lies the reason why serious research must be conducted on Daoism (Taoism) so as to enable us to understand its role as a Chinese religion.

## The Daoist Religion of China

In Chinese history there have been various religions such as Buddhism, Daoism (Taoism), Islam and Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, but among them only Daoism (Taoism) is the religion of the Chinese people. To be more precise, Daoism (Taoism) is a religion of the Han people and has certain concrete features that come from this association. It has had a large influence on Chinese culture, psychology, customs, science and technology, medicine and hygiene, philosophy and even on Chinese politics and economics. How did the Daoist religion arise and what are its particular characteristics relative to other religions?

Daoist religion was born at the time of the Han Emperor Shun-di at the end of the first century A.D. At this time China already had a written history of about 2,000 years. At the end of the Warring States period (that is, the third and second centuries B.C.) there had existed people called "immortals" who claimed that by certain practices they could "extend their lives and not die." These "immortals" were only individuals practicing by themselves; they never formed any kind of religious organization. However, at the end of the Western Han period (at the beginning of the first century A.D.) Buddhism came to China from India. The entry of Buddhism had a transformative effect and sped up the foundation of a Chinese religion. Because Buddhism was a foreign culture entering China, however, it elicited a strong reaction among the Chinese people.

The interaction of Chinese culture with a foreign culture led to both borrowing and criticizing. We can see both of these in the earliest of the Daoist religious writings, the *Taiping Jing*. In this work Daoists borrowed such Buddhist terms as the "three realms," but also criticized Buddhists for their so-called "four practices." (These were the unfilial abandonment of father and mother to become a monk, the abandoning of wife and therefore the cutting off of future generations, the practice of begging, and the practice of eating excrement). The Daoists said that this was contravening the spiritual way of heaven. In particular, once established the Daoist religion set forth the doctrine of "Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) converting the barbarians" in order to criticize Buddhism. They said that Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), the original teacher of

Daoism (Taoism) in the Zhou period (the sixth century B.C.), had left China through the Hangu Pass and gone to India, where he had taught Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha. Therefore, the Buddha was the disciple of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu).

The founder of the Daoist religion is generally recognized to be Zhang Daoling. There are two views in the Chinese scholarly community as to where the Daoist religion originated. The scholar Chen Yinge claims that the Daoist religion originated in Shandong, Jiangsu and other coastal areas. Another scholar, Meng Wentong, claims that it originated in Sichuan and was influenced by the customs and practices of minority peoples there. I think that the Daoist religion originated in the coastal areas because the immortals were active in this area. Further, Zhang Daoling himself was from Feng County in Jiangsu and only later went to Sichuan, where he formally established the organization of the Daoist religion. It is quite possible that certain elements of minority peoples' customs were absorbed into his teachings at that time.

The Daoist religion that later developed in Sichuan and the Han River areas is called Five Pecks of Rice Daoism (Taoism) because people on entering the sect made an offering of five pecks of rice. It is also called Heavenly Teacher Daoism (Taoism) because the leader of this sect, Zhang Daoling, was called the Heavenly Teacher. Heavenly Teacher Daoism (Taoism) was passed on from Zhang to his son, Zhang Heng, and again transmitted to Zhang Lu, the latter's son. Zhang Lu established a Daoist kingdom in the Han River area, which he ruled for thirty years. Eventually he was defeated by Cao, to whom he surrendered. Zhang Lu's son, Zhang Sheng, fled to Longhu Mountain in Jiangxi where he became the fourth generation Heavenly Teacher. At the present time this sect of Daoism (Taoism) has already been transmitted to its sixty-fifth generation. The sixty-fourth generation Heavenly Teacher is in Taiwan. His nephew is on the Chinese mainland continuing the tradition as the sixty-fifth generation Heavenly Teacher. This young Heavenly Teacher, a man in his twenties, came to my home to study the Daoist religion.

After the Five Pecks of Rich school, in Yan (Hebei), Qi (Shandong), Jiang (Jiangsu), and Huai (Huaihe, Anhui), another sect of the Daoist religion was founded by Zhang Jiao called Taiping Daoism (Taoism). Zhang Jiao used the Daoist religion to organize an extremely large-

scale peasant uprising. When this was put down, Taiping Daoism (Taoism) largely disappeared.

In the Three Kingdoms and Western Jin periods (the third century A.D.) the Daoist religion was hemmed in by imperial rulers and developed very little. However, in the Eastern Jin period (fourth century A.D.) the Daoist religion began to develop speedily and many nobles adhered to it. For example, the most famous aristocratic families of the time for generations believed in Daoism (Taoism). The most famous calligrapher in Chinese history, Wang Xizhi, was also a follower of the Daoist religion. One story recounts that Wang Xizhi particularly loved geese and wanted to buy the dozen or so geese raised by a Daoist priest. The priest would not sell, and Wang asked a second and a third time. Finally the priest said that if Wang would copy out for the whole *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) he would give him the geese. So Wang copied the entire work.

An interesting development occurred in the Tang period (618-907), whose rulers had the surname Li. At this time the leaders of the Daoist religion were looking for a mythological figure they could venerate as the founder of the religion, and they came upon Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), who was also named Li. This was not a coincidence. First of all, even before the Daoist religion was formally established, Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) had been mythologized. Second, the Han dynasty had venerated Confucian thought as orthodoxy, which, of course, honored Confucius. The Daoists claimed that Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) was Confucius's teacher, thus hoping to overcome the Confucianists. Now, according to the *Shiji*, Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) was surnamed Li with a given name of Erh. Since the Tang emperors were also surnamed Li, in order to increase their own importance they said that they were descendants of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu). Because of this, the Tang emperors took the Daoist religion relatively seriously: emperor Xuanzong even wrote his own commentary on the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*).

After the Daoist religion was established, on the one hand, it struggled with Buddhism and, on the other, it absorbed Buddhist thought. But the Daoist religion also has its own definite characteristics. Many religions seek to understand or answer such questions as What happens to human beings after death? For example, Buddhists seek to answer the question: What can people do after death to keep from being reborn into this world? The Daoists, however, seek to answer this question: How can people keep from dying? The ideal

in the Daoist religion is for people to “extend their lives and not die,” to “fly up in this very body” — that is, to become an immortal.

Regarding this question the Daoist religion has certain theories. Daoists claim that people have both a spirit or soul and a body, both of which are constructed from *qi*. The *qi* that makes up the spirit or soul is called soul-*qi*. The *qi* that makes up the body is called form-*qi*. Only when the soul-*qi* and the body-*qi* are joined together in a single person do we have life. People should seek two things — to live forever and to obtain good fortune. If you die, everything is finished, so in order to seek to extend life, first, you must get a body that does not decay so that the spirit or soul will have a place to abide. Then seek a method for the soul to stay with the body, otherwise you will be dead and not be able to achieve any kind of good fortune.

Because of this Daoists seek ways to keep body and soul together, and Daoism (Taoism) has various methods to accomplish this purpose. The most basic of these are of two sorts: the outer pill and the inner pill. The outer pill consists of using various minerals, especially mercury, in order to concoct a potion. It is hoped that by ingesting various potions one can keep one’s body from decaying, and then the soul can continue forever in its midst. They claim that if you put a bronze mud on your feet and soak your feet in water for a very long time, you will not decay. If you can find the so-called golden pill, once you eat it your whole body will be able to live forever without decaying.

The inner pill is a series of practices that cause the *qi* within the human body to circulate through certain channels. This is called “working on your *qi*” and is the same kind of thing that is known these days as *qigong*. If the *qi* continually circulates in the human body, the whole body will be suffused with the light of an extremely fine *qi*. The body itself will become as light as *qi* and the person will be able to ascend to heaven, which is called “to fly up in this very body.”

When Daoism (Taoism) became a religion it had to have its own deities to venerate. At first the deity most venerated was the mythologized Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), called “Laojun” or “Taishang Laojun.” Afterwards, under the influence of Buddhism, very many other deities were added. Originally Buddhism had only Shakyamuni as the Buddha, but afterwards they said that before Shakyamuni there had been seven other Buddhas. Towards the end of the Northern and Southern Dynasties a Daoist priest named Tao Hongjing wrote a book

called *Zhenling Weiye Tu* in which he divided Daoist deities into seven levels. The highest level contained three deities. In the center was one called Yuanshi Tiandao. On his left was Gaoshang Daojun and on his right was Yuanhuang Daojun. Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), or Taishang Laojun, was placed below on the fourth level. Today in Daoist temples the formal hall is called the Hall of the Three Pure Ones, and most sects worship these three deities. However, not all Daoist sects are alike. Some still claim Taishang Laojun as the highest deity, saying that he existed before Heaven and Earth were created and that in different times he has different causes. Originally he was Pan'gu Xiansheng. Heaven and Earth were separated by him, and he has various spiritual powers.

The Daoist religion has one female deity of particular power who is named Xiwang Mu (Queen Mother of the West). Xiwang Mu existed as a deity before the founding of the Daoist religion. In the *Shanhaijing* (from the fourth to the second century B.C.) Xiwang Mu is not yet a female deity, but either of undifferentiated sex or male. Only after the *Mutianzi Zhuan* does Xiwang Mu become a female deity. This book recounts the story of the Zhou King Mu (of about 1000 B.C.) who went to the Kunlun Mountains to seek Xiwang Mu. In the earliest Daoist scriptures, however, where it is said there that the character "Mu" indicates the proof of the longevity of the deity Xiwang Mu is merely a deity of long life. Thus "Mu" here does not necessarily mean a female deity. Only in the Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties, when the Daoist religion set up Dongwang Gong as a counterpart to Xiwang Mu, did Xiwang Mu emerge as an important female deity.

The Daoist religion took the human body and its cultivation very seriously, as in such matters as exorcism, the inner and outer pill, and *qigong*. Because of this it has had a great influence on ancient medicine, pharmacology, chemistry and the nourishment of the human body. Many great Daoist leaders such as Ge Hong, Tao Hongjing and Sun Simiao were important scientists of Old China. Because of this, people today who research the history and development of Chinese science and technology cannot but study the history of the Daoist religion. The English historian of science, Joseph Needham, in his *Science and Civilization in China*, has relied extensively on the writings of the Daoist religion.

Daoists have written many works. The earliest collection of Daoist works, called the *Zhengtong Daozang*, has five thousand volumes. It

was compiled in 1445 in the tenth year of the Zhengtong Emperor of the Ming. Later, in the Wanli period, a supplement appeared. These are important resources for the study of the history of Chinese religion.

In China today Daoism (Taoism) is one of the important religions. About three thousand people who have formally become Daoist priests, and several important Daoist temples have been restored. In Beijing there is a Daoist temple, called the Temple of the White Clouds (Baiyun Guan), which was established in the Yuan dynasty (the thirteenth century) and belongs to the Guanzhen sect of Daoism (Taoism). Its Hall of the Three Pure Ones is very fine; it also has two areas for the display of historical objects of the Daoist religion. In Chengdu, Sichuan there is the Green Goat palace and in Wuahn the Temple of Eternal Spring, both of which have been very well restored and belong to the Guanzhen Daoist sect. In Xian a Daoist temple called Louguan Tai belongs to the Northern sect of Daoism (Taoism). It was first built in the Northern Zhou dynasty (fifth century A.D.), but what exists now was rebuilt in the Ming (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries). It is said that in the Louguan Tai, Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), before he left for the West, dictated the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*) to the gatekeeper, named Yixi.

Longhu Mountain in Jiangxi is the birthplace of the Zhengyi sect of Daoism (Taoism). Maoshan in Jiangsu is the birthplace of Tao Hongjing's Maoshan sect. Hangzhou has a Daoist temple in Geling where, it is said, Ge Hong refined the pill. At each of these Daoist temples are Daoist priests, young and old, male and female. At Beijing's Temple of the White Clouds a school of Daoist religion teaches priests how to read Daoist scriptures. Beijing also has a Daoist Association, a national organization publishing the *Journal of the Chinese Daoist Association*. At Sichuan University the Institute for the Study of Religion is dedicated solely to the Daoist religion and is editing a Daoist dictionary. Beijing University has established an Institute for the Study of the History of the Daoist Religion, where I teach. The Institute for the Study of World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing is doing a synopsis of the five thousand volumes of the Daoist canon. Two national conferences have been devoted to the study of the Daoist religion, one at Beijing University. Thus the study of Daoist currently is developing very quickly.

## Immanence and Transcendence of the Philosophy of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi<sup>1</sup>

While the Pre-Qin Confucians, primarily Confucius and Mencius, tried to transcend the restriction of self and the secular world, and to achieve the harmonious condition of uniting heaven and man by way of promoting their ethical ideal, the Daoists during that period, primarily Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, accomplish their transcendence by way of purifying their internal spirits and pursuing spiritual freedom. The way of transcendence for Confucianism is positive life-affirmation and better self-cultivation, but for Daoism, it is the negative disapproval for human desire and a decrease of man-made efforts. Although the two kinds of transcendences are different, their philosophies both focus on the “immanence,” which embodies their difference from Western philosophy.

That *Lao Zi* the Book was completed and is still controversial is not the issue to discuss in this paper. But generally we believe that it is before *Zhuang Zi*. Comprised of inner chapters, outer chapters and miscellaneous chapters, it is obviously written by more than one single person. But *the inner chapters* are generally regarded as the work of Zhuang Zi himself, those parts of the outer and miscellaneous chapters whose thoughts combine with *the inner chapters* may be considered as the thought of Zhuang Zi or of that school.

“Dao,” the most fundamental concept in Lao Zi’s philosophy, is rich in meanings in the book of *Lao Zi*, which I have already discussed in *The Religious Daoism in Wei and Jin Dynasties* 魏晋南北朝时期的道教 (Shaanxi Normal University Press, 1988, pp. 56-58); there is no need to say more. However, we can say that the most fundamental meaning of Lao Zi’s Dao is the eternal and universal principle of transcendence. The sentence “the Dao that can be described is not the constant Dao” in the Chapter 1 of *Lao Zi* means that the Dao (the constant Dao) is unspeakable and super-empirical, that is to say, “the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful.” But the formless and invisible Dao is the most

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese edition of this paper was published in *The History of Chinese Philosophy*, the January of 1992.

eternally authentic existence, as is put in the chapter 4 of *Lao Zi*. "The Dao is empty and inexhaustible. How deep and unfathomable it is, as if it were the ancestor of all things...How azure it is, as if it would ever so continue." That explains the relationship between the Dao and universe in terms of the eternity and universality of Dao. Dao is the origin of everything, which is to say Dao exists as the noumenon of all things in the world. But compared with things all over the world, it is fundamentally different. Chapter 40 of *Lao Zi* mentions that "all things under heaven sprang from it as existent; that existence sprang from it as non-existent." All things are "existence" with name, form and image, specific and stipulated, while "Dao" is nameless, formless and imageless, and not stipulated. Here "not stipulated" means it could not be captured in experience. Hence in the chapter 14 of *Lao Zi*, Dao is described as "can be looked at but cannot be seen," "can be listened to but cannot be heard," "can be strived after but cannot be grasped" and even cannot be put into words, for "with these three qualities, it cannot be made the subject of description." However, Dao is also "the form of the formless," "the image of the imageless" and takes non-existence as its image. As a result, "Dao" can be the root of all things, for formless makes all forms, imageless makes all images, and nameless makes all names. Here it must be clearly explained that although Dao as the noumenon and the eternal universal principle goes beyond the time, space, sense and experience, it could be called as nameless, formless and invisible, or "non-existence." This does not mean that it is really "non-existence," for it does exist as the metaphysical, eternal and universal principle and noumenon of all things. Due to its transcendence, Dao could be demonstrated only by "non-existence" (non-stipulation). Due to its "non-existence," Lao Zi often describes the characteristics of Dao by "natural non-action." As it is put in Chapter 25, "Man follows the earth; the earth follows heaven; heaven follows Dao. Dao follows nature." And in Chapter 37, "Dao in its regular course does nothing, and so there is nothing which it does not do." Only by "non-action" can everything be achieved.

It is controversial to say Dao is the universal principle or noumenon of all things, due to the different illustrations about the relationship between the Dao and all things in *Lao Zi*. Take "all things come from Dao" as an example, chapter 42 states that "the Dao produced one; one produced two; two produced three; three produced all things." This seems as if Dao is the origin that produces

all things and is in charge of all things. However, “produce” here may not be explained as “born” or “made,” but “achieve” instead. As a result, there may be another explanation for the above quotation: the unified universe exists only when “Dao,” the universal principle exists. Nevertheless, that does not perfectly live up to Lao Zi’s original meaning. Lao Zi always gives different explanations of Dao from different perspectives: while the Dao in “the Dao that can be described is not the constant Dao” is that of universal principle, metaphysical and ontological subject, the Dao in “the Dao produced one” is in terms of the composition of universe and associated with the theory of the cosmic composition. Lao Zi may have been a little confused about these two questions. However, we should not be so rigorous to ask a Chinese philosopher of 2000 years ago to present a philosophy system totally without paradox, so we may leave the question open. Still we may say that the Dao as the universal and metaphysical principle in *Lao Zi* is more important not only in Lao Zi’s philosophy but also in the whole Chinese philosophy.

Virtue (De, 德), the other important concept in *Lao Zi*, can be explained as “virtue” (nature) of Dao because of “Virtue is obtainment.” Only when based on the Dao can all things in universe be universal. Chapter 21 says: “the form of the great Virtue hinges on the Dao.” The “great” here means big including the meaning of all-encompassing and the varied things are based on the Dao. The “Virtue” of man, which is obviously part of the universe is rooted in the intrinsic nature of the Dao. It is said in chapter 51 that “all things are produced by the Dao, and nourished by the Virtue.” Dao is the principle on which all things exist, thus it is beyond them. Virtue is the foundation on which all things exist, thus it is the intrinsic nature of all things.

As a special part of the universe, can man transcend the restriction of selfhood and things by virtue of their special intrinsic nature? According to Lao Zi’s view, it’s possible for human-beings to transcend by their internal essence, but that is not for everyone. Chapter 23 of *Lao Zi* says: “Therefore those who pursue the Dao are identified with the Dao, and those who pursue the Virtue are identified with the Virtue; those who are failing in both these things are identified with the failure. Hence, those with whom he agrees as to the Dao have the happiness of attaining to it; those with whom he agrees as to the Virtue have the happiness of attaining to it; and those

with whom he agrees in their failure have also the happiness of attaining to it." Lao Zi makes his view clearly that there were three grades of human beings, and the highest grade can certainly purify themselves by means of Dao. As a result of this, they can blend with the transcendent Dao as an organic whole. Therefore Wang Bi said: "Dao produces everything by formlessness and non-action. Hence those who are pursuing the Dao take non-existence as their ancestor, convey their instructions without the use of speech, retain their power long and unbroken; things get the truth of Dao and blend with Dao; so Lao Zi said that they were identified with Dao." Here the annotation is meant to show that those who are pursuing the Dao should match the character of non-action and namelessness of Dao. Wang Bi annotated "those who pursue Virtue are identified with Virtue" as follows: "to obtain means to decrease. For "Few brings more to obtain," hence we call he obtains." Chapter 22 of *Lao Zi* says: "Few bring more to obtain while more brings more to confuse. Here, "few" is unequal to "non-existence," for chapter 48 says: "He who devotes himself to the Dao seeks from day to day to diminish his doing. He diminishes it and again diminishes it, till he arrives at non-action." Only when one has diminished himself to the stage of "non-existence," can he "be identified with Dao." Therefore, "those who pursue Virtue" means that only when one is able to comply with the principle of "Few brings more to obtain," can he keep the intrinsic nature (Virtue) he had got from Dao. Wang Bi annotated "those who are failing in both these things are identified with the failure" as follow: "Failure means more. More brings more to fail, hence we say he fails." Here the annotation is meant to show that "those who are failing in both these things" have lost their intrinsic nature as a result of the puzzle and cumbrance caused by numerous things, and naturally they blend with failure. From here we see that in Lao Zi's opinion only those who pursue the Dao are able to blend with Dao, which is to say that this kind of people who "diminishes it and again diminishes it" according to the intrinsic nature (Virtue) which is deeply rooted in "Dao," are able to be free from knowledge and desire, and then achieve transcendence.

As we have mentioned earlier, Lao Zi's Dao, as the nameless and formless eternal principle and the transcendental noumenon which goes beyond time and space, takes "naturally non-action" as its nature. As a result, if one wants to be identified with Dao, he must live

up to natural non-action, renounce any man-made features, purify the spirits and reach the transcendental realm which is beyond all restrictions of the secular world. For Lao Zi, "knowledge" has the man-made feature that the more we acquire knowledge, the deeper we sink into unnatural desire, and the farther we depart from Dao. Hence he says: "He who devotes himself to learning seeks from day to day to increase his knowledge; he who devotes himself to the Dao seeks from day to day to diminish his doing. He diminishes it and again diminishes it, till he arrives at doing nothing on purpose. Having arrived at this point of non-action, there is nothing which he does not do." Dao is beyond knowledge, because it is beyond the naming language. If we see it as a kind of knowledge mistakenly, it's no longer the "constant Dao" that "cannot be described" but the Dao that "can be described." So we should renounce all the knowledge we had received from the outside world instead of pursuing after it in order to be identified with Dao. Chapter 47 of *Lao Zi* says: "without going outside his door, one understands all that takes place under the sky; without looking out from his window, one sees the Dao of heaven. The farther that one goes out from himself, the less he knows. Therefore the sages got their knowledge without travelling; named things without seeing them; and accomplished their ends without any purpose of doing so." Dao does not belong to knowledge. Taking Dao as an object of knowledge is relativizing the absolute and secularizing the transcendence. The sages following the Dao need not pursue the outside world but "renounce the sagemess and discard the wisdom." It can clearly be seen that Dao is not about perception, but the purification of the internal egocentric spirit.

In order to "be identified with Dao," one should not only discard all the man-made knowledge but also renounce all the man-made virtue, desire and interest which are against nature. Chapter 18 of *Lao Zi* says: "when the Great Dao ceased, benevolence and righteousness came into vogue. When wisdom and shrewdness appeared, there ensued great hypocrisy. When harmony no longer prevailed throughout the six kinships, filial sons found their manifestation; when the states and clans fell into disorder, loyal ministers appeared." Things like "benevolence and righteousness" are man-made features, and do not live up to the principle of "naturally non-action." It has not only departed far from Dao but also destroyed man's nature. Only when the ethics imposed on man by the secular society are renounced,

can man recover the principle the Dao requires. Hence Lao Zi says: "If we could renounce our benevolence and discard our righteousness, the people would again become filial and kindly." The "filial and kindly" here refers to man's intrinsic nature conforming to "Dao." Chapter 12 of *Lao Zi* says: "five colors take the sight from the eyes; five notes leave the ears as deaf; five flavors deprive the mouth of taste; The chariot course, and the wild hunting waste make mad the mind; and objects rare and strange will change men's conduct to evil." The pursuit of "five notes," "five colors," "five flavors," "wild hunting" and "rare and strange objects" removes man's will from the intrinsic nature, that is why Lao Zi sees "plain and true" as natural beauty. ("You are simple and unpolished yet no one in the empire is able to rival your glory" in *Zhuang Zi, the Way of Heaven* can be seen as the footnote of Lao Zi's "stay plain and true.") Chapter 41 of *Lao Zi* says: "great sound sounds soundless; great semblance forms formless. The Dao is hidden and has no name; but it is the Dao which is skilful at imparting to all things what they need and making them complete." Only soundless sound can be called as great sound, formless form can be called as great form and nameless name can be called as great name. "Great" means all-encompassing here. Soundless sound sounds all kinds of sounds, formless form forms all kinds of forms, nameless name names all kinds of names, and only Dao is able to achieve these. One who wants to follow "Dao" must discard his preference for certain things, since preference comes hand in hand with consistency, which makes it impossible for people to be at ease under all circumstance and attain liberty. One can be identified with "Dao" and blend with "Dao" simply without preference.

In Lao Zi's opinion, after renouncing all the man-made features, all the earthly things will be cleared up and purified, and then man will be "free from selfishness and desire," seek for nothing and achieve the realm of spiritual liberty. Lao Zi considered the above as the spiritual realm of "achieve everything with non-action," which blends with the Dao. Lao Zi said: "The Dao in its regular course does nothing, and so there is nothing which it does not do." Wang Bi noted: "just follow nature," "everything begins from Dao and finishes at Dao." If we take Feng Youlan's four realm theories in *Xin Yuan Ren* 新原人 (new life philosophy) to analyze Lao Zi's thought, we may explain the above words in this way: at first man was in "the natural state," which conforms to human nature and Dao, however, this kind of state is an

unselfconsciously “being as it used to be” state and man makes no transcendence here.

After negating the utilitarian world and moral ethics (such as humaneness and righteousness), man’s awareness returns to “the natural state,” and that “natural state” is totally different from what is mentioned above from the perspective of realm of life. Then it will be the realm of heaven and earth blended with “Dao,” which is achieved by spiritual sublimation and purification. To achieve that transcendence, one has to depend on the sublimation of his intrinsic nature (virtue) to the full. Sublimation by Lao Zi is to deny all the things in the secular world with self-purification, rather than affirm anything. Therefore, the philosophy of Lao Zi could also be undoubtedly characterized by “internal transcendence.”

The first article of *Zhuang Zi is Free and Easy Wandering* 逍遥游 (*Xiao Yao You*), discusses that the transcendence of absolute freedom in spirit should be the supreme pursuit. How to achieve this is illustrated in articles such as *Discussion on Making All Things Equal* 齐物论 (*Qi Wu Lun*), *The Great and Venerable Teacher* 大宗师 (*Da Zong Shi*) and so on. According to Zhuang Zi, although it seems to be a kind of freedom that both the great bird, Da Peng, which could fly up on whirlwind to a height of ninety thousand li, arousing the spray to a space of three thousand li around, and the ancient philosopher Lie Zi who journeys on the wind, travelling eight hundred li per day, actually they are not absolutely free. Da Peng’s flying-up requires broad space while Lie Zi’s travelling relies on the wind, both of which “rely on something” (i.e. have certain external conditions). Therefore, only by “relying on nothing” (i.e. without any external condition) should we attain the transcendence of pure freedom. This “relying on nothing” means to exclude only any external conditions, but not internal conditions. As it puts in *Free and Easy Wandering*, “If someone can roam through the realm of the infinite by riding on the normality of the universe and grasping the change of the six elements, is there still anything he would like to rely on? So it is said, “the perfect man has non-self, the holy man has no merit, and the sage has no fame.” Here three issues have to be explained. First and foremost, Zhuang Zi considers that the perfect man needs nothing to rely on nothing (FYI: “the perfect man,” “the holy man” and “the real sage” are the same but named in different ways), as in reading this sentence “is there still anything he’d like to rely on?” That is the exact conclusion he wants to come to.

Secondly, are “riding on the normality of the universe and grasping the change of the six elements” still relying on something? Actually what Zhuang Zi mentioned here is not about the external condition “the perfect man” should rely on, but a kind of psychological activity according to which the internal spirit can transcend the external conditions to achieve the realm of the universe. Because only by the power of subjective spirit could we follow the order of nature and grasp the change of the six elements. Thirdly, then why could “the perfect man” transcend the external conditions by his internal spirit? The answer is that “the perfect man has non-self, the holy man has no merit, and the real sage has no fame.” The phrase “non-self” equals to “I have lost myself,” in *Discussion on Making All Things Equal*, which is to refrain oneself from achievement and fame, benefits and interests, right and wrong, good and evil, then ultimately the human body, in order to “coming and going alone with the spirit of heaven and earth.” The so-called “no merit” means “non-action,” the same with the “non-action” mentioned by Lao Zi, which means to abolish all the artificial confines and eliminate all the constraints in the secular world. The so-called “no fame” means to give up what you ever pursued, to transcend the secular and conventional world and accept whatever you encountered. As is put in *Constrained in Will (Ke Yi)*, “The sage lives his life according to nature, and when he dies, he integrates with the external things...He discards knowledge and convention, following the way of nature...Being empty and nothingness, quiet and peaceful, he lives up to the virtue of nature.” The real sage should be accommodated to nature. It is thus obvious that “non-self,” “no merit” and “no fame” all means “relying on nothing.” That is to say, “the perfect man” has to remove all the external constraints and “roam through the realm of the infinite” by the power of their internal spirit, in order to attain the free and easy wondering. “Roaming through the realm of the infinite,” is actually roaming through “the home of non-being.”

There is a dialogue between Nanguo Ziqi 南郭子綦 and his disciple Yancheng Ziyou 颜成子游 at the beginning of *Discussion on Making All Things Equal (Qi Wu Lun)*:

Nanguo Ziqi sat leaning on his armrest, staring up at the sky and breathing vacant and exhaling, as though his body had no restriction on his spirit and had lost himself. Yancheng Ziyou, standing by his side in attendance, said,

“What is this? Can you really make your body like withered wood and your mind like dead ashes? The man leaning on the armrest now is not the one who leaned on it before.” Nanguo Ziqi said, “You do well to ask this question, Yan. This time I have lost myself, do you understand that? You hear the sounds of man, but you have not heard the sounds of earth. If you have heard the sounds of earth, you have not heard the sounds of heaven!”

Skipping other issues also embodied in this dialogue, there are two questions related to the topic of this paper: Firstly, as a hermit, Nanguo Ziqi attains the condition that “as though his body had no restriction on his spirit and had lost himself,” which means he is no longer relying on anything even to discard himself. Ziqi’s “making his body like withered wood, his mind dead ashes,” which he called “I have lost myself,” shocked his disciple Yancheng Ziyou and urged the following question. Secondly, what is the realm of “I have lost myself?” Nanguo Ziqi does not give a direct answer; instead, he tries to inspire his disciple with dissimilarities among “the sounds of man,” “the sounds of earth,” and “the sounds of heaven.” We could not discuss these dissimilarities here in detail, but it is clear that by his illustration of “the sounds of heaven,” what Ziqi stresses is the disposal of all the external constraints added to the human being, which is the core of *Discussion on Making All Things Equal (Qi Wu Lun)*. Hence, Zhuang Zi considers opposites like large and small, beautiful and ugly, right and wrong, as artificial stipulations, these polemical opposites are mental shackles confining us to the secular world. So only when we transcend those distinctions can we attain the spiritual realm of perfect freedom such as “heaven and earth were born together with me, and the myriad thing and I is one.” The last paragraph of *Discussion on Making All Things Equal* tells a story of “Zhuang Zhou’s dream about a butterfly.” It is as follows:

Once Zhuang Zhou dreamt he was a butterfly, flitting and fluttering lightly around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He did not know he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou. But he did not know if he was Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or

a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou. There must be some distinction between them. This is called the transformation of things.

There must be some distinction between Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly, but one to which we should not cling too much because it is merely a physical distinction. If not, we would not be able to go beyond the opposites of life and death, right and wrong, and we will make ourselves the paradoxical opposite to all things in the universe, then how could we be free enough to achieve the transcendence of spiritual freedom? In order to transcend all the external things and attain "I have lost myself" or "non-self," the limited self should be the first to be transcended. "I have lost myself" equals to "non-self," which is depicted extensively in *The Great and Venerable Teacher*:

Yan Hui said, "I'm improving."

Confucius said, "What do you mean by that?"

"I have forgotten rites and music."

"That's good. But it's not enough."

Another day, the two met again and Yan Hui said, "I'm improving."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I have forgotten benevolence and righteousness."

"That's good. But it's not enough."

Another day, the two met again and Yan Hui said, "I'm improving."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I can sit in forgetfulness."

Confucius looked surprised and said, "What is 'the sitting in forgetfulness'?"

Yan Hui answered, "I abandon my body, discard my intellect, cast off form, do away with knowledge, and then become one with the infinite. This is what I mean by "sit in forgetfulness."

Confucius said, "If you become one with the infinite, you must have no more preferences. If you've been transformed with nature, you must follow its changes. If you really have achieved this, I'd like to become your follower."

This paragraph implies that "relying on nothing" is the precondition for "non-self" or "I have lost myself," which requires

negating all the external conditions and powers. Thereby, we should firstly ignore the secular moral concept, that is, “forget the benevolence and righteousness.” Negating “benevolence and righteousness” is constantly embodied in *Zhuang Zi*, such as “righteousness have altered their inborn nature by way of benevolence” (*Webbed Toes*), “wipe out and reject benevolence and righteousness, and then the virtue among people all over the world will reach the great homology” as the *Rifling Trunks* says. Because the concepts “Benevolence and righteousness” are artificial and goes against the human nature, which should be discarded. Doing so, people can restore their original nature and make everything be in their proper place, becoming an entity conforming to nature. Then we have to negate and forget “rites and music.” As it is put in *Horses’ Hooves*, “If virtue had not been discarded, how would we turn to benevolence and righteousness? If the inborn nature had not been abandoned, how would there be rites and music?” There is no need for things like “rites and music” if we could adhere to our true nature. For that reason, we should not “artificially use rites and music, benevolence and righteousness to comfort all the hearts on the price of replacing their original nature” (*Webbed Toes*). Since “rites and music,” “benevolence and righteousness” are disturbing and external things that deprive people of their inborn nature, it says in *The Sign of Virtue*, “Do not inwardly wound you yourself by likes and dislikes.” Thirdly, we should “abandon the body” and “cast off the physical form,” as *The Great and Venerable Teacher* says “have no regard for bodies,” and *Heaven and Earth* says “dispose of your body.” According to this, we should not “inwardly wound ourselves” by the external “benevolence and righteousness,” “rites and music” and the like, and should not be under the influence of our bodies, because to some extent, the bodies are external to our mind. It tells in *The Sign of Virtue*, “If virtue is preeminent, the body will be forgotten. But when men do not forget what can be forgotten, but forget what cannot be forgotten that may be called true forgetting.” We can forget our bodies while cannot lose the spirit of self (the inborn nature), and the true forgetting is when we lose our inborn nature (virtue), which would cut us off from nature (the great Dao). Fourthly, the influence of knowledge on the intrinsic spirit should be eliminated, that is so called “discard intellect” and “do away with knowledge,” which is the top priority for *Zhuang Zi*. *Zhuang Zi*, as well as *Lao Zi*, deems that “Dao” does

not belong to knowledge. It says in *Knowledge Roams North*, “No ponder and no plan leads you to know Dao,” and “Those who know do not speak; those who speak do not know. Therefore the sage practices the teaching that has no words. And Dao cannot be brought to light, and virtue cannot be forced to come.” Same with *Lao Zi*, “Dao” is the supreme concept in *Zhuang Zi*. Although there are many places discussing the universality, eternity and transcendence of “Dao,” it is still not the feature of this book. Instead, its characteristic lies in the demonstration of how those perfect men (the divine men or the real sages) could transcend in spirit and gain the freedom of “relying on nothing,” by actually acquiring “Dao.” That is from “cast off form, do away with knowledge” to “make his body like withered wood, his mind dead ashes,” they transcend utility, morality and life, have no internal or external constraints of right and wrong, good and evil, beautiful and ugly, then become one with nature and “identical with Dao.” Therefore, the extremely important method of attaining the absolute freedom in spirit is to “cast off form, do away with knowledge.” That is “the fasting of mind” in *World of Men*, similar to “the sitting in forgetfulness.” As it is put in the following dialogue:

Hui asked, “May I ask what the fasting of the mind is?”

Confucius said, “Concentrate and unify your attention. Do not listen with your ears, listen with your mind. Do not listen with your mind, but listen with your spirit. Listening stops with the ears, the mind stops with recognition of certain things, but the intrinsic air (Qi) is empty and has space for things. Dao comes along in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the mind.”

“Listening stops with the ears” means “it stops with the bodies” and the bodies are still not forgotten. “The mind stops with recognition of certain things” means “the inability to be empty and have space for things,” which is the preference of distinguishing things and self by “mind/heart,” known as inability to “discard intellect” as well. Only if one does not cling to his body and mind, and ignores everything internal or external that confines him could he be “empty and have space for things” like “the intrinsic air” (Qi, 气) does. “The intrinsic air” (Qi) is empty and spacious, and is the gathering of “Dao.” It is said by Zhuang Zi, “live due to centralized air,” “die due to the dispersed air” and “it is the way to the universe,” so “the intrinsic air” is empty and has connection with everything. The

characteristic of “Dao” is “emptiness.” Being natural, doing nothing, and affirming nothing, then we would not be burdened physically and psychologically, which will lead us to “the fasting of the mind.” The spiritual realm of “the fasting of the mind” and “the sitting in forgetfulness” is as supreme as “I have lost myself” or “non-self.” This proves that the philosophy of Zhuang Zi and Lao Zi are both to pursue the transcendence of absolute spiritual freedom. It is thus a philosophy with the feature of “internal transcendence.” In conclusion, “the perfect man,” “the divine man” and “the real sages” are absolutely free in spirit by way of transcending the secular world and attaining the ability to “sit in forgetfulness” or have “the fasting of the mind.” As it is said in *Heaven and Earth*, “(The divine man) reins the light, and is traceless. This is called the illumination of vastness. He lives out his fate, displays fully his temperament, and rests in the joy of heaven and earth without constraints. All the things return to their nature. This is called commingled darkness and lightness.” As depicted in *Constrained in Will*, “the sage lives his life according to nature, and when he dies, he integrates with the external things...He discards knowledge and convention, following with the way of nature...Being empty and nothingness, quiet and peaceful, he lives up to the virtue of nature.” And in *Fit for Emperors and Kings*, it depicts “the perfect man” as he can “ride on the light and empty bird out beyond the six directions, wandering in the realm of non-being and living in the broad and borderless field.” That is to say, “the real sage” rides on a bird which does not even exist, transcends time and space, and arrives at a place that also does not exist (“roaming in the non-existence”) and without constraints. This kind of transcendence is bound to be merely internally spiritual.

The philosophy of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi of Pre-Qin dynasty has a profound influence on Chinese thought and culture. Its thought pattern which is characterized by “the internal transcendence” affected not only metaphysics of Wei and Jin dynasties (cf. my essay “*On the Internality and Transcendence in the Metaphysics of Wei and Jin Dynasties*,” *Collective Essays of Colloquium on Literature and Thoughts in Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties*, Taipei, the press of literature, history, and philosophy, 1991), but also the Chinese transformation of Zen Buddhism (esp. Zhuang Zi’s influence) to some extent. For instance, Zen ignores all the constraints physically and psychologically. This is definitely related to the Buddhist doctrine, but

we can also see clearly here Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi's thought of "naturally non-action" (cf. my essay "*On the Internality and Transcendence of Zen Buddhist Philosophy*," *Beijing Social Science*, the 4th issue, 1990). The ideas of religious Daoism are related with believers in immortality since Pre-Qin dynasty, the school of Confucianism, and the theories of Yin Yang and the five elements in Han dynasties, but more directly with the philosophical Daoism. The immortal ideology of Daoism influenced the bureaucrat scholars in China, with the argument of "My Life Relies on Myself Rather than Heaven," by the method of the training by internal ways and taking the external pills to attain immortality. That is relevant to Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi's philosophy of "internal transcendence." Therefore, I think it is essential for Chinese philosophy and religion to analyze and explore the issue of "the internal transcendence" which features Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi's thought.

The three influential schools, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, which played such an important role in the history of Chinese philosophy and trend to confluence ever since Tang and Song dynasty, are all closely related with the feature of "internal transcendence." By way of self-cultivation, Confucianism attains the transcendence of surpassing the commonplace; by way of epiphany, Zen Buddhism attains the transcendence of eternity on the spot; by way of naturally non-action, Daoism attains the transcendence of spiritual freedom, thus the three "transcendences" are all "internal transcendence."

This kind of thought and culture characterized by "internal transcendence" are quite different from the Western religion (Christianity) and philosophy (both ancient Greek and modern philosophy). In ancient Greek philosophy, Plato and Aristotle divided the world mainly into two parts: the transcendental noumenon and the phenomenal world. From Descartes, the modern West also divides the world into two, while God with transcendence is needed more in Christianity. Four hundred years ago, Matteo Ricci, a Western Jesuit remarked about the advantages and disadvantages of Confucianism. He was complimentary but also pointed out that "I think the symptom of Confucianism lies in the cultivation of knowing virtue, which is often depicted. They ignore that they cannot make it with the limited attention span and without converting to the God of Christianity for his blessing. Therefore, there are few people who can achieve virtue."

Matteo Ricci deems that we must have faith in God since it is hard to achieve absolute transcendence only by the internal self efforts, and it must be pushed forward by a powerful external strength. According to that, I would like to propose a question: Why is it so difficult to build an objective and effective political and legal system in China while it seems to be quite easy for our Western counterparts? I think it has something to do with the Western religion and philosophy characterized by “transcendence.”

By saying that, I do not mean to weigh and judge the Chinese and Western religions and philosophy, since they all belong to the human culture and all have their own value. However, from the perspective of the development of Chinese culture, facing our history and recent society, shall we make our philosophical thought (culture) embrace “transcendence?” I think the answer should be yes. It may meet the requirements of modern social development better if Chinese traditional philosophy could absorb and harmonize Western philosophy characterized by “transcendence” and political and legal systems on that basis, and then make better self-improvement on a higher level. And in a global perspective, shall we build a philosophical system on a higher level which contains both philosophies of “immanence” and “transcendence,” in order to integrate eastern philosophy and culture with their Western counterparts? It may be the essential problem for people both in the field of Chinese and Western philosophy to discuss seriously, or so I think.

(Translated by Yan Xin)



**Part IV**  
**Buddhist Philosophy and Christianity**



## **The Introduction of Indian Buddhism into China: A Perspective on the Meaning of Studies in Comparative Philosophy and Comparative Religion<sup>1</sup>**

Here I do not intend to analyze or study the entire history of the introduction of Indian Buddhism into China; rather, I wish simply to investigate the relationships which existed between Buddhism, after it was introduced into China in the period of the Wei, and Jin, and the North and South dynasties, and the previously existing ideologies and cultures in China at the time, and to illustrate thereby the meaning of studying comparative philosophy and comparative religions.

### **The Introduction of Indian Buddhism into China and the Popularization of the School of Prajna Teachings (Banruoxue) in the Wei and Jin Periods**

#### *The Beginnings of Buddhism in China*

There are diverse theories regarding the timing of the introduction of Buddhism from India to China. There is, however, a general consensus that the introduction of Buddhism commenced with the dispatching of an envoy to the lands of the West by Emperor Mingdi of the Eastern Han dynasty during his reign of Yong Ping (58-75 A.D.) to seek the Buddhist teachings. According to even earlier legends the emissary Zhang Xian, who had been sent to the Western lands, "heard of the teachings of foutu (Buddha) and had been commissioned by the monarch of Da-rou-zhi to preserve and transmit the teachings of the *futu jing* (Buddha's classic, or sutra). Even disregarding this, I am convinced that the introduction of Buddhism into China predated the dispatch of the imperial envoy during the Yongping reign to seek out Buddhist teachings. In the eighth year of the reign of Yongping, Emperor Mingdi decreed that those criminals who had incurred the

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<sup>1</sup> Tang Yijie, "On the Significance to Study Comparative Philosophy and Comparative Religion through the Study on the Introduction of Indian Buddhism into China." *Zhexue Luncong* (Collection of Philosophical Discourses), no. 8, August, 1983, pp. 272-301.

death penalty might atone for their crimes by offering *jian* cloth to the state and thus escape the execution of their sentences. Prince Ying, a brother to Mingdi, sent in thirty bales of *jian*, whereupon the emperor issued the following explanatory edict:

Prince Ying of Chu has been reciting the refined teachings of Huang and Lao (Huangdi, or the Yellow Emperor, and Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) are together revered as the founders of the Daoist school of philosophy, and particularly of its so-called Esoteric or Immortal school—translator) and has worshiped at the benevolent shrine of Buddha. He has undertaken to cleanse himself and has fasted for three months, observing his vows to the gods. (In the Chinese Buddhist contexts, fasting does not necessarily mean abstinence from food altogether but usually refers to the assumption of an exacting vegetarian diet avoiding the taking of life, which is known as *zaijie*—translator). He has repented and should be considered to have expiated any crime he may have perpetrated or any suspicions he may have provoked. He is now, by way of atonement, submitting his property to add to the grand fete of the *Upasaka* (Buddhist disciples) and to the glory of the temples of Buddha.

The fact that Prince Ying worshiped Huangdi, Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), and Buddha at the same time and in the same fashion tells us that Buddhism certainly already had been introduced into China for quite some time prior to the eighth year of the Yongping reign. Therefore, it would be quite late to take the sending of the imperial envoy to seek out Buddhist teachings during the reign of Yongping to be the point of beginning of the introduction of Buddhism into China. Still, although Buddhism was not introduced into China after that event, it would perhaps be generally correct to say that it was only during, or even after, the reign of Yongping that Buddhism became a religion of some influence in China. After its introduction into China, Buddhism did not attain the height of its influence until the Eastern Jin dynasty, meanwhile undergoing several significant stages of propagation and evolution.

During the Eastern Han dynasty, Buddhism was propagated in China as one of several Daoist practices (*daoshu*) popular at the time. Daoist teachings and practices had gained great currency since the beginning of the Western Han dynasty and remained in vogue throughout the two Han dynasties. At that time all Daoist practices, whether the (philosophical) teachings of Huangdi and Lao Zi (Lao

Tzu) or the sorcerous practices of the magicians, were indifferently known as *daoshu* (Daoist practices or techniques). The techniques practiced and taught by the magicians covered a very wide area: worshipping at shrines and temples, ancestral worship, ways to immortality and longevity, and such methods as *jiushi* (long vision). According to the *Fangshu zhuan* (Biographies of the Magi) in *Hou Han shu* (History of the Later Han Dynasty), at that time, many people studied diverse things and the teachings of many schools such as “Numbers of Steps according to the Yin and Yang,” “The Writings of He and Luo” (Huang He, or Yellow River, and the Luo River), “The Tortoise and Dragon Graphs,” “The Methods of Ji Zi,” “The Book of Wei (Latitudes) and Hou (Seasons),” “The Talismanic Graphs of the Decision of the Bells,” and “The Book of Shi Kuang,” as well as such techniques as “Wind Horn,” “Transmutation and Transportation,” “The Seven Ways,” “Cardinal and Primal Breathing,” “The Seven Divisions of the Six Days,” “Divination for Chance Encounters,” “Omen of the Day,” “Firmness and Singularity,” “Instantaneity,” “Solitude and Emptiness,” and so on. The following passage explains the reason for this proliferation of these Daoist practices and methods at that time:

In the Han dynasty, since Emperor Wudi turned his favor toward the methods and crafts of the Daoists, scholars throughout the land who possessed the least learning on those subjects could not afford to miss taking advantage of the situation; they converged upon the royal court, each with his books and with his hands clasped together (in the sign of salutation). Thereafter, Wang Mang (The “usurper” who dethroned the Han emperor and founded the short-lived Xin dynasty from 8 to 23 A.D.—translator) usurped the throne by falsely assuming the mandate under the guise of receiving talismans for that effect secretly. Later on, Emperor Guangwudi (25-57 A.D.) was found to be fond of portents and oracles and believed in them. Thus the scholars who had learned to be attentive to the fashions and ways of the times strove to compete with one another on the field of these techniques and practices and ideas. Whenever they could, they would bring their crafts to the attention of His Majesty and would debate about the validity and relative virtues of these things whenever they could.

According to the records of the day, “Huang Lao” and Buddha were equally regarded as Daoist techniques. In the ninth year of the

reign of Yanxi of Emperor Huandi (166), Xiang Kai memorialized the emperor, saying:

We hear that shrines for Huang Lao and for Buddha have been erected in the palace. These teachings exhort people to purity of mind and tranquillity of the soul; they place inaction and quietude at the top of their list of values; they emphasize the value of life and abhor killing; they exhort people to restrain their desires and purge themselves of extravagant ways. But Your Majesty is shorn neither of desire nor extravagance, and your habits of killing and punishing people have extended beyond the bounds of reason. Since you violated their way, how can you expect to receive their mandate?

Even the disciples of Buddhism referred to their own teachings as the craft of the *dao* (tao) (Way). In *Li Huo Lun* (Discourse on the Disposition of Error) Mouzi wrote, "There are ninety-six types of people adhering to the teaching of *Dao*; of these, none is as great as or is more exalted than the teachings of Buddha. The *Sishi'er Zhang Jing* (Sutra of Forty-two Chapters) (a sutra often attributed to Kasyapa Matanga and Gobharana, the first Indian monks to "officially" arrive in China as envoys from a Buddhist state—translator) also referred to its own teachings as *fodao* (or, Way of Buddha). Furthermore, the Buddhist teachings at that time contained elements which coincided with, or bore resemblances to, the Chinese Daoist teachings, for example, when it taught:

*Arhan* (worthy men, or saints) are beings which can fly and are capable of transformation; their longevity is the *kalpa* (age) that is past, and they live and move throughout the heaven and the earth (Chapter 1 of the *Sishi'er Zhang Jing*)

and

those who have learned the Way should purge their minds of impurities and they shall instantly become pure and clean. (Chapter 35)

At such times, the Buddhist sutra came very close to the "immortality teachings" of the Huang Lao school of Daoism (Taoism).

At that time, the principle contents of Buddhist teachings were such things as "the imperishability of the spirit, or soul," *yin guo* (causes and effects as the basic method of understanding the

development of things) and *baoying* (retribution). For example, in the book *Hou Han Ji* (The Chronicles of the Later Han Dynasty) Yuan Hong wrote,

(Buddhism) also posits that when the person dies the spirit does not perish but would subsequently take on new form. For all one's deeds in life, whether good or evil, there will be retribution. For that reason one must value the performance of good actions and the cultivation of the *dao*, so as to persist, and continue to persist, in the tempering of the soulspirit, until it arrives at the realm of *wuwei* (inaction or quietude), and at that point one would become Buddha.

This was an idea that existed previously in China. In the Chinese form, the idea of the imperishability of the soul was expressed in the long held *you guei lun* (theory of the existence of ghosts). The poem *Wen Wang* (King Wen) in the *Da ya* section of *Shi Jing* (Classic of Odes) described the "presence of the three *hou* (secondary, or humane sovereign spirit) in Heaven" and the ascension to that realm of the refined spirits and ghosts (*jing ling*) (of mortals). In the chapter *Yang sheng zhu* (Lord Nurturer of Life) in the book *Zhuang Zi*, there was a parable which spoke of the "continuation of the flame even though the tinder has expired," and in the chapter *Jing shen xun* (Exhortation on the Spirit) in *Huai Nan Zi* the idea was posited that "the form indeed has its limitations, but the spirit does not dissolve. Therefore, (the relationship between spirit and form is one in which) something that is incapable of dissolving is adapted to something that does dissolve; the result is that there can be myriad such adaptations; one cannot in any way see these ways of changing and permutation as finite." It was precisely because of the prevalence of this thought, and in response to it, that opponents such as Huan Tan argued for the theory of "the simultaneous destruction of the form and the spirit," and Wang Chong suggested that "when a man dies he is not transformed into a ghost." These latter were all critiques of the idea of the "imperishability of the soul." The idea that the imperishability of the spirit or soul itself depended on the exercises of tempering and cultivation (in mystical or metaphysical ways) was a concept which also already existed in the tradition of China. As for the ideas of causes and effects and retribution, although these theories of Buddhism in

general were not entirely similar to previously existing Chinese theories, the popular forms that they assumed during the Han dynasty corresponded to certain ideas which the Chinese already held at the time, such as the idea in the *Kun Gua* (Changes through the Feminine Symbol) section of *Yi Jing* (*I Ching*) (*Book of Changes*) which held that “good fortune would come to those who performed good deeds, and ill fortune to those who are evil,” or that “the family which accumulates good actions will be rewarded with exceedingly great causes for celebration, whereas households which pile up evil deeds will have much cause for suffering.”

By the time of the transition between the Han and the Wei dynasties, owing to the gradual expansion of Buddhism, more and more Buddhist sutras were translated into Chinese. Translations at the time included both Hinayana (Theravedic, known in Chinese as *xiao cheng*) and Mahayana (*da cheng*) sutras. Consequently, the processes by which Buddhism was popularized in China fell into two main channels: the history of the An Shigao school, which belonged to the Hinayana category, and that of the Zhi Loujiacan school, which belonged to the Mahayana and emphasized the teaching of *prajna* (wisdom).

#### *The An Shigao of Hinayana School*

This emphasized the teachings of *dhyana* (meditation exercises, in Chinese, *chan*). In the first year of the reign of Jianhe of Emperor Huandi of the Han dynasty (147 A.D.), An Shigao arrived at Luoyang and began a prolific career in translating sutras. (An Shigao was the Chinese name of the Buddhist pandit who went to China from Parthia or Persia. The name An translates as tranquillity and may have derived from the monk’s Persian identity, since Parthia was, at the time, and for much of Chinese history, known to the Chinese as *An shi guo*, or land of tranquillity. We have no knowledge of the monk’s Persian name—translator.)

The most influential of his translations were the *An Ban Shou Yi Jing* (Sutra on the Maintenance of Thought by the Practice of *Anapana*) and the *Yin Chi Ru Jing* (Sutra on Entrance to Truth by Covert Maintenance). The first described a method for practicing *chan*, or meditation exercises; it was a book on breathing methods designed to “keep one’s thoughts in place,” which methods were in some ways similar to the breathing and respiration exercises and techniques

espoused by the Daoists, and particularly by the School of Immortals. The latter sutra was an exposition of the esoteric significance of names and numbers in the Buddhist canons and bore some resemblance to the line-by-line and phrase-by-phrase exposition of the classics, a method of scholarship known as *zhangju xue*. This was practiced in general by many Han Confucianist scholars in their various annotations and exegeses of the Confucianist classics, often attempting to find “true” meanings that were camouflaged by the words of the scriptures.

This methodology in the studying of the Hinayana scriptures continued in the An Shigao school until at least the third generation of his disciples, chief among whom was Kang Hui the Monk (Kang Zeng Hui), who lived during the time of the Kingdom of Wu (222-280). This school’s theory of life was fundamentally based on the concept of *yuanqi* (original breath). It maintained that “original breath” was the same as what the Chinese have called the *wu xing* (Five Elements, or Five Agents) or the *wu yin* (Five Negatives, or Five Feminine Qualities) (later this was translated into Buddhist terminology as the *wu yin*, or Five Inward Contents, similar in meaning and identity to the Sanskrit term *skandhas*, of which there were also five—translator). The *Sutra on Entrance to Truth by Covert Maintenance* explained the *wu yin zhong* (five *yin* species) thus:

The five *yin* species make up the body...this is similar to the original breath (*yuanqi*)...the original breath contains the escalation and demotion of all things, as well as their establishment and ruin. When it reaches its end it will begin again and will continue to go on through the *triloka* (Three Realms); it does not end, but is infinite; that is why it is called the *zhong* (species, or seed).

This brand of Buddhism believed that in the beginning the human being was made up of the accumulation and aggregation of the five *yin* (elements); thus the *Sutra on Entrance to Truth by Covert Maintenance* translated by An Shigao posited that “*yin* was the accumulation of all appearances.” The theory of *yuanqi* (original breath) had been popular in China since pre-Qin times, and it flourished in the two Han dynasties. Moreover, there was an intimate connection between the idea of original breath and the issue of the form-spirit relationship for it was maintained that whereas form was

made up of the *chuqi* (crude breath) the spirit was the *jingqi* (refined breath). Such a theory had a great deal of connection with the teachings of *yangsheng* (the cultivation and nourishment of life essence) as espoused by the School of Immortality.

In the book *Lü Shi Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Classic by Master Lu) the point was made that in order to become immortal and to achieve *jiu shi* (long vision) the *qi*, or breath, must circulate without impediment of any kind in the body; only then will the “refined breath (spirit) be rejuvenated everyday and the evil breath be daily abated,” so that “the spirit shall reside at peace within the form and one’s days and years shall be stretched to everlasting.” At that time, the adherents of the An Shigao school of Buddhism also learned to bring together the ideas of the five *yin* and *yuanqi* and claimed that, if one were able to coordinate one’s original breath well, one’s mind would be tranquil, at ease, and the body would be also free of sicknesses, whereas if the original breath were not well coordinated and if the *yin* and the *yang* in a person, and the five elements (*wuxing*), were not properly blended, the body would succumb to illness. The *Fo Yi Jing* (Buddha’s Medical Sutra), translated in the time of the kingdom of Wu by Zhu Luyan and Zhi Yue, said,

In the human body there are four illnesses: one is related to Earth, another to Water, a third to Fire, and a fourth to Wind. As the Wind increases, the *qi* (breath) arises; as the Fire increases, the heat arises; as the Water increases, the cold would rise; as the Earth increases, the strength (of the person) would wax. It is from these four (basic) illnesses that the four hundred and four illnesses have arisen. Earth belongs to the body, Water to the mouth, Fire to the eyes, and Wind to the ear.

Such sayings bore much resemblance to the medical theories popular during the Han dynasty, in which emphasis was given to the methods of creating a balance or coordination system within the body for the *yuanqi*. This was seen in terms of the need to orientate the development of the *yuanqi* in a good or correct direction and away from the evil or wrong direction. It was felt that, if the mind and the spirit were tranquil, the person would be able not to generate or create any desires or worries, and that it was only because the mind and spirit moved or acted, thereby generating thoughts, that all sorts of

worries and troubles were created. As to how all these various worries may be eliminated, the Hinayana school of *chan* or meditation believed that one simply had to nourish the mind and cultivate the spirit, in which the main thing was to “keep thoughts (*yi*) in their proper place” (namely, in the state of non-being, or the state prior to when thoughts were created). The meditation exercises were therefore intended to prevent the generation of thoughts or ideas by means of concentrating. The *An Ban Shou Yi Jing* said, “One must maintain one’s mind and keep it in place—i.e., before any thoughts have been generated. Once thoughts are generated the maintenance will have been broken.” The *Chu Jing* (Sutra on Abiding in That Which Is Fixed) translated by An Shigao told the following story:

Buddha said to the gathered *bhiksu* (mendicant disciples): You must learn to understand all things by sitting in meditation, but you must also learn to be able to speak the words of the Law. Those who cannot do so must block out their vision and screen sounds and learn to keep their minds in place and be good at listening only within themselves. In this way they may find their way (to Enlightenment or Buddhahood). When the congregated *bhiksu* heard Buddha make this proclamation, their hearts were glad and understood Buddha’s words, and immediately they found the way to becoming *Arhat* (saints).

The method of keeping one’s mind in place was known as *an ban* (anapana), in which *ana* referred to inhalation and *pana* referred to exhalation. This was similar to the *tu na* breathing exercises espoused by both the Huang Lao school and the Immortality school of Daoism (Taoism), both of which were popular in the Han dynasty. Thus, the *An Ban Zhu Xu* (Preface to the Annotations on Anapana) written by (the monk) Dao An explained: “By *anapana* we mean exhalation (externalization) and inhalation (internalization)” and “One can entrust one’s breath to *anapana* and maintain, or preserve, simply that which is achieved already.” If one could keep one’s mind in place, so the argument went, one’s mind and spirit would become clear and serene, and if one’s mind and spirit were clear and tranquil, one would become Buddha. Thus also Kang Hui the Monk said in the *An ban xu* (Preface to Anapana):

He who cultivates *anapana* has a totally clear mind; if he should raise his eyes, there is no darkness or gloom within the scope of his vision which he may not pierce...there is nothing so far away in the distance that he cannot see, no sound so obscure that he cannot hear. His understanding shall encompass the uncertain, the ambiguous appearances, and the false impressions and resemblances; he shall be completely free in his existence; he shall be big enough to contain within himself all that is within the bounds of the Eight Extremes and yet also small enough to penetrate the stem of a hair or a quill. He shall control the heavens and the earth, and stay the progress of time and longevity. His godly characteristics and powers shall be so fierce as to destroy Heaven's own arms, and he shall have the power to remove the *trisahasra* (the Three Thousand Things, or All Things) and all the temples on earth. The Eight Unthinking (Non-Thoughts) are unfathomable by even the Brahman, and the Virtuous Character of the God knows no limitations. This is the origin of the six *paramitas* (methods).

From the above, it is clear that the Hinayana *chan* (dhyana, or meditative) techniques espoused by the An Shigao school were certain ideas which had already gained popularity in China before that time through the espousal of the Huang Lao school and the Immortality school in Daoism (Taoism) and that what we have seen was an obvious attempt to use prevalent Daoist techniques (*daoshu*) to explain and popularize Buddhism.

#### *The Zhi lou jia qian of Mahayana School*

This system of thought was quite different as its Mahayana teachings emphasized *prajna* (wisdom). Zhi Lou jia qian had a disciple called Zhi Liang and a third-generation disciple called Zhi Qian; together they were known as the "Three Zhi's." Zhi Lou jia qian arrived in Luoyang in the last year of the reign of Emperor Huandi (167) and, in 169, translated the *Daoxing Banruo Boluomi Jing* (Prajnaparamita Sutra on the Cultivation of the Truth). Later, Zhi Qian retranslated this sutra as the *Da ming Du Wuji Jing* (Sutra on the Transition by Way of the Great Enlightenment to Infinite

Endlessness). This system of thought, espoused originally by Zhi Qian, emphasized that the fundamental principle of life was to make the spirit revert to its original, virginal truth or reality and that life would then conform to the *dao* (or the Way of Natural Things). With this postulate the ideas of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi exerted a profound influence over this particular school of Buddhism.

It becomes even more obvious that Zhi Qian's purpose was to make Buddhism conform to the school of Chinese metaphysics which at the time had as its core the ideas of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi when in the title of his new translation of the Prajnaparamita sutra "The Great Enlightenment" or "The Great Light" for "prajna." (Technically, the Sanskrit for the Chinese term *ming*, meaning brightness or enlightenment, is *vidya*, and not *prajna*—translator). This reflects the idea contained in the saying in *Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)* (or *Dao De jing*): "Zhi chang yue ming" (To know the constant is Enlightenment). Also, the translation of "paramita" as *du wu ji* (ferrying across to infinite endlessness) appears to refer to the arrival at the realm of oneness or unity with the *dao*. (Actually the term *du*, meaning to make a crossing or transition, is contained in the Sanskrit term *paramita* itself, which means ferrying across, and hence saving—translator). Therefore, in the annotations which Zhi Qian made for the first *pin* (folio) of the *Sutra on the Transition by Way of Great Enlightenment to Infinite Endlessness* we find the following passage:

The teacher (Zhi Qian's mentor Zhi Liang) said: The Bodhisattva's mind treads on the Great Way in order to be able to understand and empathize with the Way. The mind became one with the *dao* (Way). This takes no form; that is why it is simply described as the Void.

Here, the idea of mind "being one with the Way" seemed to be the same notion as that expressed in Daoism (Taoism) as "(having the spirit) revert no more to the *yin* corpus (i.e., the dead body), but join the *dao* (tao) in oneness." This was described in fuller detail later on in the *Fo shuo si wen qing jing* (sic?) (There seems to be a typographical error in the Chinese text at this point. We have not been able to identify this particular sutra as it is here presented, or even a term in Buddhism corresponding to the phrase *si wen qing*. Perhaps the term *zi* was mistaken for the character *qing* here. In Buddhism, the term *si zi qing* refers to the so-called Four Self-Injuries, i.e., four ways in which

people bring damage to their own bodies and minds. It is possible that there may have been a sutra on the subject—translator) translated by Fa Hu (Zhu Fahu). This idea also bore resemblance to the notion of “simultaneously accomplishing the Deed of the Way” (*yu dao ju cheng*), which was described and proposed by Ruan Ji in his *Da Ren Xiansheng Zhuan* (Biographies of Great Men and Forebears). The sentence “There is no form; therefore it is described as the Void” is very similar to Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)’s dictum, “The Constant Way has no form.” Therefore, it was understood that the mind and the spirit also have no traceable form.

According to people such as Zhi Qian, the human mind-spirit originated from the Way, and only various post-natural influences (such as temptations of desires and appetites) made it impossible for the mind-spirit to return to the state of being one with the Way. In order to be free of these limitations and trammels, therefore, the mind-spirit must empathize with the Way and must understand it. If the mind-spirit was capable of understanding its own original source, it would be able to once again become one with the Way, and thus become Buddha. In fact, this uses the ideas of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi to explain the tenets of Buddhism.

During the time of the Wei and Jin dynasties, the metaphysical ontology of the Xuanxue (Daoist metaphysics) school, which accepted Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)’s and Zhuang Zi’s ideas as its framework, was very popular. Its main focus was the questions of *ben-mo* (the relationship between the fundamental and the incidental) and *you-wu* (existence and non-existence). The ideas of *prajna* in Buddhist thought came very close to this sort of metaphysical thought. Therefore, at the time, it was convenient and expedient for Buddhist monks to use this sort of Chinese (Daoist) metaphysics to explain Buddhism. The methodology and approach that they adopted was a metaphysical method of the Xuanxue school which moved gradually from the principle of *geyi* (study of meanings) to the principle of *de yi wang yan* (discarding the word when the meaning has been attained) or *ji yan chu yi* (extrapolating the meaning which originates from, and transcends, the word which was its temporary abode).

One very notable phenomenon of the period was that there were many similarities between the ways in which the great monks of Buddhism perceived things and the way in which the great scholars (of the Daoist metaphysical school) looked at the things of the

universe. Moreover, they seemed to take pride equally in being free of worldly matters, in being unconventional, unconfined by normal ethical constraints, and “above it all.” While the famous scholars employed the so-called *san xuan* (Three Metaphysical Observations) to develop and promote their *xuanxue* (Daoist metaphysics), the great monks of the period similarly used the doctrine of *san xuan* to explain the principles of Buddhism. In the Western Jin dynasty a renowned monk, Zhi Xiaolong, befriended such great scholars of the day as Ruan Zan and Yi Kai and became known to the people of the time as *Ba da* (He Who Reached Far in All Eight Directions). In the Eastern Jin, Sun Zuo wrote the book *Dao xian lun* (On the Good People in the Dao) in which he compared seven famous monks to the legendary “Seven Scholars of the Bamboo Grove.”

At the time, many Buddhist monks became extremely well-versed in the teachings of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi. It was said in the historical record that the Monk Fahu (Zhu Fahu) “was well-read in all the Six Classics, and has been widely exposed to the teachings of all the Hundred Schools (of the pre-Qin period).” Furthermore, the Monk Zhi Dun praised the Monk Yu Falan for “having a comprehensive understanding of the meanings of the *Xuanxue*.” Zhi Xiaolong claimed that he himself “became a free spirit capable of roaming without restriction (*xiaoyou*) when he achieved the goal of *paoyi* (the Daoist principle of maintaining singularity, or becoming one with and undifferentiated from the Dao) and arrived at *mie* (nirvana, or extinction) by way of the cultivation of tranquillity.” The Monk Dao Qian (Zhu Daoqian) “roamed freely for thirty-some years teaching and preaching; in some cases he transmitted the teachings of the Vaipulya sutras; in others he explained the doctrines of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi.” The Monk Zhi Dun was “fond of the teachings of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi” and annotated the chapter “Xiao yao you” (The Roaming of a Free Spirit) in the book *Zhuang Zi*. The Monk Dao An made a comparison between the (Daoist) doctrines of *ke dao* (the Way of Possibilities) and *chang dao* (the Constant Way) and the Buddhist doctrine of the two *satya* (*er ti*). (The two *satya*, or two forms of noble statements of the truth sees dogma as existing in two forms—or the universal truth as able to be expressed in two dichotomized ways—one, the *samvritisatya* or vulgar and common statement in which truths are expressed as if phenomena are real, and, secondly, the *paramartha-satya*, or true statement by the enlightened

who has already understood the true unreality and non-existence of phenomena translator—translator). When the Monk Hui Guan annotated the *Fa hua jing* (Saddharmapundarika sutra, or Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law) he studied the teachings of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi. The Monk Hui Yuan was known also for having “broadly studied the Six Classics, and (he) was particularly adept at interpreting the teaching of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi.”<sup>2</sup>

At the time, the majority of the famous monks preached the doctrine of *prajna*, and, as we have seen already, they were also prone to discuss, if not advocate, the teachings of Lao and Zhuang. Indeed, objectively for the most part the Buddhist teachings introduced into China from India and other “Western countries” at the time belonged to the *prajna* school, but there were other factors which rendered the popularity of the *prajna* school in China at that time far from accidental.

In the article *Bei nai ye xu* (Preface to the Vinaya, or Discipline, Pitaka), the Monk Dao An wrote:

Of the twelve volumes herein collected, the most voluminous is the collection of Vaipulya sutras. This occurs because in this country the teachings of Lao and Zhuang have already gained much headway among the people. (These teachings) are quite similar to the teachings of the *fangdeng* (*vaipulya*) sutras; there is much that they share in common. That is why the people have already adapted their behavior and ways of life to the teachings (of our sutras).

The “vaipulya” teachings belonged to the category of the *fangdeng* (or *fangguang*, both being the general categorical title give to the Mahayana sutras). The *prajna* (wisdom) teachings also belonged to the category of *fangdeng*. From Dao An’s explanation we can see that the popularity of the *prajna* teachings in China during the Western and Eastern Jin Dynasties had a great deal to do with the influence of Daoist metaphysics, or *xuanxue*. However, even so, the major *pin* (segments) among the *prajna* sutras, namely, the *Fangguang banruo boluomi jing* (The Prajnaparamita Sutra Emitting Light) and the *Guang-*

<sup>2</sup> See Tang Yongtong’s essay “Du renwu zhi” (On Reading Biographies) in *Wei Jin xuan xue lun gao* (Draft Essays on the Daoist Metaphysical Teachings of the Wei and Jin).

*han banruo boluomi jing* (The Prajnaparamita Sutra Praising Light) did not become truly popular until the early years of the Eastern Jin. That is why the *Jian bei jing xu* (The Account of the Gradual Fulfillment of the Sutras) said:

Although the great *pin* has appeared for some decades, at the time of its appearance the learned people for the most part did not study it or practice it. One wonders why the various masters should have done so?...However, this situation has gradually changed, and since (through translation) the major *pin* has arrived *in toto* (in China), there is not a single pandit today, of either East or West, who does not make it his career and goal to teach it.

The *Guangzhan Banruo Boluomi Jing* was produced in translation by Zhu Fahu in the seventh year of the Taikang reign (286), and the *Fangguang banruo boluomi jing* was translated by Zhu Falan in the third year of the reign of Yuankang (291). Both became popular only in the early years of the Eastern Jin dynasty (i.e., circa 320). This popularity was intimately related to the socio-historical conditions of the period. Since the Wei dynasty and the beginning of the Jin dynasty there had been a continuous enlargement of the power and influence of the ruling cliques made up of the *menfa shizu* (grand noble families and gentry clans). One can say that this influence reached its peak in the reign of Yuankang (291-299 A.D.) The subsequent “rebellion of the Eight Princes,” the invasion of the northwestern minority nationalities and their domination of the Central Chinese Plains, and the southward move of the royal house and central government of the Jin dynasty of the Sima family accelerated the degeneration of the ruling cliques. By this time, this ruling power structure had become extremely helpless and pessimistic about its own fate and the destiny of society. It was natural, therefore, that they then turned their attention to the problems of life, death, and liberation of the individual. This was also one of the reasons for the increasing popularity of the two religions—Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism)—toward the end of the Eastern Jin dynasty.

A society wherein people are seeking a world which transcends the mundane and real provides a very important context and purpose for the emergence of religions. For religions they are able to propose to people that solutions can be found in their own particular worlds of

fantasy for the many sufferings which exist in such common measure in the real society where they cannot be resolved, including such problems as living and dying. Buddhism is no exception to this generalization. After the introduction of *prajna* Buddhist teachings into China, it remained in a stage of translation until the Eastern Jin dynasty. That is, the Chinese Buddhist monks had not yet formed their own understanding or interpretation of the *prajna* teachings. In the Eastern Jin, however, sects and subgroups which represented different understandings of the teachings of *prajna* Buddhism began to emerge. Later, it was as discussions and responses to the schools of *prajna* teachings which has emerged since the Eastern Jin dynasty. The Monk Zhao (Seng Zhao) wrote the *Bu zhen kong lun* (Treatise on the Fallacy of the Doctrine of True Nothingness or Non-existence) to criticize the refute the three schools, namely, the *ben wu* (Original Nonexistence or Nothingness) school, the *zhi se* (Identity of Appearances) school, and the *xin wu* (Non-existence of the Mind) school; during the Song dynasty Tan Ji wrote the treatise *Liu Jia Qi Zong Lun* (On the Six Schools and Seven Sects); and the Monk Jing (Zeng Jing) wrote *Shi Xiang Liu Jia Lun* (The Six Schools of the Sect of the Reality of Appearances).

We do not propose to spend much time in this essay in discussing in any detail the various *prajna* teachings popular at that time, but two notable issues were the very questions which had occupied the center of attention in the Daoist metaphysical teachings (*xuanxue*) of the Wei and Jin periods, namely, the questions of *ben-mo* (relationship between the fundamental and the incidental) and *you-wu* (substance and unreality, or existence and non-existence). These were the very same questions posed by the various schools of *prajna* Buddhism popular at the time. In the following paragraphs I shall attempt to illustrate this problem by taking, in turn, the three schools contradicted and criticized by the Monk Shao in *Bu Zhen kong lun*.

*The meaning of the doctrine of the non-existence of the mind* (*xin wu yi*). In *Bu Zen Kong Lun* the Master Monk Shao wrote:

By saying that the mind does not really exist they (the adherent of this doctrine) are actually saying that the mind does not have existence in any thing, but they do not actually say that all things do not really have existence. This doctrine is good in that it leads people toward tranquillity of the spirit, but it is faulty in that it is

really things, rather than the mind, that are empty and non-existent.

According to Ji Kang (Chi Kang), in the *Er ti yi* (The Meaning of the Two Statements):

Those who espouse the dogma of the non-existence of the Mind have for too long taken the truth of this doctrine for granted. Even before the time of the Great Pandita Kumarajiva, and going as far back as to the time of the Masters Dao An and Zhu Fahu, this dogma has existed. Those who speak of the non-existence of the mind cite the sutras, saying: "Those who say that the nature of appearance is empty and non-existent are in fact clear that appearances cannot by themselves be empty and nonexistent but are empty or non-existent in the mind. It is because one can achieve this emptiness of vision (of the mind) that one can say that appearances are non-existent. In the final analysis, however, the appearance cannot be non-existent." Master Shao dispelled this dogma; he understood its goodness to lay in its exhortation to the tranquillity of the spirit, but he also faulted it for its ignorance of the fact that it is matter, or things, which are non-existent. To achieve tranquillity of the spirit one must indeed understand the emptiness, or non-existence, of the mind; in this respect the word of that dogma is good, but, in claiming that appearances may not themselves be non-existent, this dogma has exposed its own weakness.

The idea here is to claim that "the significance of the dogma of the nonexistence of the mind" is that "the mind, not the appearances (of matter), is empty and non-existent." To say that it is not the appearances which are nonexistent is to say that "all things are not (necessarily) non-existent." In the Tang dynasty, in his annotations to *Shao Lun So* (Commentary on the Arguments of the Grand Monk Shao), Yuan Kang wrote, "It (the dogma of the non-existence of the mind) affirms that matter has substance and is not non-existent;" "it did not understand that the nature of matter is non-existence; (the Monk Shao) called this its fallacy." To "not understand that the nature of matter is non-existence" is to understand the nature of matter as

substance, or existence—this is an idea that bears much resemblance to the thought of Guo Xiang.

(Although a Daoist metaphysician), Guo Xiang opposed the notion of “taking *wu* (non-existence, or non-being) as the point of origin.” He believed that *wan you* (all that is, or all existence) does not originate from *wu* (non-existence) or have *wu* for its original ontological reality. To Guo Xiang, *you* (existence) is the only real being, and it exists on the basis of the fact that each matter has its own *zi xiang* (particularity of nature of self-nature). Therefore, he said, “Each matter, or thing, has its nature.” To speak of the non-existence of the mind would therefore be to project the emptiness, or non-existence, of the mind into all things. Yuan Kang annotated this notion, saying, “(To say that the mind is non-existent) is to say that one must also not generate a definite, appropriating mind on the basis of matter; this is what is meant by emptiness or non-existence.” This, too, was rather similar to the ideas espoused by Guo Xiang.

In annotating and commenting on the seven “inner” chapters of the book *Zhuang Zi*, Guo Xiang wrote a set of essays which explained, from his viewpoint, the meaning of the title of each of those chapters. In three of these essays, Guo espoused the idea of “the non-existence of the mind (*wu xin*).” The essay on the chapter *Ren jian shi* (The Inter-human World), for example, said, “Only those who have no existence of the mind and are not self-serving can go wherever the changes lead and yet not feel the burdens (of change).” The essay on *Da zong shi* (The Great Ancestor and Teacher) said, “Out of the great expanse of the universe and the richness of all things, there is only one thing which is worth learning from, and of which it is worth one’s while to become master, and that is the emptiness, or non-existence, of the mind.” In the essay on the chapter *Ying di wang* (Response of Emperors and Princes), Guo said, “Those who have no existence of the mind and have learned to allow changes and transformation to come whither they will and lead whither they will are worthy of becoming emperors and princes of men.” According to these sayings, it is evident that Guo Xiang believed that the sage has no existence of the mind and simply follows the (natural) course of matter and is therefore capable of “going wherever changes may lead, and feels no burden.”

Nonetheless, although we may say that the (Buddhist) doctrine on the non-existence of the mind resembles Guo Xiang’s thinking on the subject in many ways, we have no evidence that the doctrine was

directly derived from Guo Xiang's system of thought. We can say only that at that time, under the prevailing influence of *xuanxue* (Daoist metaphysics), Buddhism often focused on the same problems on which this school of *xuanxue* concentrated.

*The meaning of the doctrine of the Identity of Appearances* (ji se yi). It was Zhi Dun (Zhi Daolin) who advocated the doctrine of the Identity of Appearances. It was said that he wrote about twenty essays (on the subject), including the *Shi zhi se ben wu yi* (The Buddha's Notion of the Identity of Appearances Originating in Nothing), the *Ji se you xuan lun* (Treatise on the Free Roaming in the Realm of Metaphysics of the Doctrine of the Identity of Appearances), the *Miao guan zhang* (The Chapter on the Wondrous Vision or Meditation), and the *Xiao yao lun* (Treatise on Free Roaming). Most of these have been lost and only fragments remain. In the segment *Wenxue* (Literature) in the book *Shi shuo xin yu* (New Specimens of the Talk of the Times) Zhi Dun's essay *Miao guan zhang* (Chapter on the Wondrous Vision or Meditation) was cited in one of the notes, and in this citation (the article to which it was attached was itself lost) a certain fragmentary passage read as follows:

The nature of appearances is that appearances do not exist naturally or in and of themselves. Since appearances do not exist naturally or in and of themselves, there are appearances that are kong (empty, or insubstantial). That is why we say: Appearance (se) is empty, and yet appearance is also separate, or different, from emptiness.

Furthermore, in the *Shao Lun Shu* (Commentary on the arguments of the Grand Monk Shao) the Monk Hui Da was quoted as saying:

The Master of the Laws (*fashi*) Zhi Daolin said, in the *Ji se lun* (Treatise on the Identity of Appearances): I believe that the saying: "The identity of appearances is emptiness, not that the appearances perish, but that they are empty, or nonexistent" is a most correct statement. (This saying is derived from the text of the *Wei mo jing* (*Vimalakirti nirveda Sutra*.) Why? Because the nature of appearances lies in that appearances are not by themselves naturally appearances. Although they are appearances, they are empty.

The saying that “appearances are not by themselves appearances” meant that physical phenomena do not have their own nature or character (*zixing*, or self-nature). The saying, “appearances do not exist by themselves or naturally” meant that there are no supporting materials or substances behind things in the natural state. By “self-nature” (*zi xing*) we are actually referring to “substance in itself” (*zi ti*) or ontological substance (*ben ti*). If things did not have their own substances, although there are myriad separate and diverse phenomena, they are all not real. This is the reasoning behind stating that “although they are appearances, they are empty;” i.e., although there are myriad diverse phenomena, there is in reality not a single true substance. In the time of the Wei and Jin dynasties, the term *kong* (emptiness) was often conceived to be interchangeable with the term *wu* (non-existence, nonbeing) and *xuanxue* scholars (metaphysicians) (or adherents of the Buddhist religion who were influenced by the ideas of *xuan xue*) of the day often also argued that *kong* (emptiness or insubstantiality or unreality), or, interchangeably *wu* (non-existence) was the ontological substance of all things. (This, for instance, was the contention of the *ben wu yi* (Doctrine of the Non-existence of Origin), with which we shall be soon dealing.) Therefore, on the point that it made regarding the absence of ontological substance behind matter, or things, Zhi Dun’s idea also came very close to the ideas of Guo Xiang.

The notion of “the non-existence of substance” (*wu-ti*) proposed that behind *se* (phenomena or appearances) there is no ontological substance in the *kong* or *wu* (i.e., the *kong* (emptiness) or *wu* (non-existence) is not actually ontological substance for the *se* (appearances). Although there is phenomenon, there is no ontological substance, and thus “appearances are also separate from emptiness.” Since there is no ontological substance to appearances, one cannot say that it is only when appearances have perished that they become “empty” (or, revert to emptiness)—hence the saying: “Not that appearances perish, but that they are empty.” From this angle, Zhi Dun’s *Ji se lun* (Treatise on the Identity of Appearances) could have been more appropriately called the *Je se ben wu yi* (Doctrine of the Identity of Appearances Originating in Nothing). From one angle, Zhi Dun’s idea appeared to be quite similar to Guo Xiang’s thought, as when they seemed to hold in common a belief that there is no ontological substance behind things. From another facet, however,

their ideas were different. Zhi Dun's belief, as we have seen, was that, if things did not have ontological substance behind them, it meant that things were "empty" to begin with.

From the angle of their separate interpretations of the essay, *Xiao yao you* (Free Roaming) in the book *Zhuang Zi*, it becomes even more obvious that there were differences between Zhi Dun's ideas and Guo Xiang's thought. According to the "Zhi Dun zhuan" (The Biography of Zhi Dun) in *Gao Zeng Zhuan* (The Biographies of the Great Monks).

Liu Xizhi *et al.*, when discussing the chapter *Xiao yao bian* of the book *Zhuang Zi*, said: "Each must accommodate its own nature and only then can it roam totally freely." Dun (Zhi Dun) disagreed, saying: "That is wrong. Jie (a tyrant, and last ruler of the Xia dynasty) and Qi (a notorious bandit and rebel of the late Spring and Autumn period) are by nature cruel and ruinous. If it were indeed all right, and necessary, for each to accommodate its own nature, would not Jie and Qi also be free roaming now?" On that (Zhi Dun) retired to write his own annotation of the *Xiao yao bian*.

The idea of "each accommodating its own nature and thereby becoming a free roaming spirit" was, of course, precisely the dominant thought in Guo Xiang's own annotation and interpretation of the *Xiao yao bian*. In the prefatorial note of his commentary to this chapter of *Zhuang Zi* in which he laid down his arguments by way of explaining the chapter's title, he said:

Although things may differ in size, if they were each placed in its own appropriate place, where it fits the circumstances, each matter would be able to let loose its own nature and each thing will be suited to its ability; each will be in its proper portion, and all things will be equally free to roam. How then can differences be driven between things?

Moreover, the first annotation in Guo Xiang's annotative commentary on *Xiao yao you* read, in part,

Zhuang Zi's general idea was that one must be essentially free to roam and travel totally free of confinements. One must therefore obtain oneself—be independent—by putting oneself in non-action. Therefore the smallest is also the greatest. One must hence understand the principle of fitting one's nature to one's portion.

From the above, we can see that it was precisely to this idea of Guo Xiang's that Zhi Dun objected. What then were Zhi Dun's own views on "the freely roaming spirit?" The full text of his commentary on the *Xiao yao bian* is no longer extant. However, a fragment of it was cited by an annotation in the *Wenxue* (Literature) portion of *Shi shuo xin yu*.

*Xiaoyao* (free roaming) means the fulfillment of the enlightenment of the mind of the Ultimate Man. The Young Master Zhuang established through the Word the Great Way, by putting his ideas into the words of the roc (*peng*) and the wren (*yan*). The rock pathway of life is a broad one; to accommodate it he has to lose himself outside of his own body; the wren, on the other hand, is but close to the ground, yet it jeered at that which was far away and high up in the heavens. He had a sense of arrogance and conflict in his own mind. The Ultimate Man rides on the wings of the Propriety of Heaven and is glad; he roams in the realm of Infinity and is entirely footloose. To objectify objects and not be objectified by objects is to roam freely and not return to one's condition; to contain a sense of *xuan* (the metaphysical principle) and not to engage in action, to move swiftly and yet without any haste, is to roam freely and be able to go wherever one wishes. That is what is meant by *xiaoyao*. If one had a desire in one's mind which has to be met, and if one is content with meeting the desires whose fulfillment meant contentment, then, though one's happiness may appear similar to natural naivete, it would, in fact, be nothing but like the desire of the thirsty for the contentment of a single drink. How can one lose the sense of luxurious food simply because one has been filled up by one good dinner? Or can we put an end to the reality of the grandeur of the ceremonial wine after we have imbibed some rich quaff? The Ultimate Man does not speak of *xiaoyao* (free roaming) until he is truly satisfied.

It was Guo Xiang's belief that, although things differed in magnitude, they were equal in terms of the ability to "roam freely" under the principle of "each according to its own nature." From this opinion Zhi Dun differed. In his point of view, whether or not one was capable of roaming freely depended on one's perspective. If one could "objectify all objects and not be objectified by objects" (i.e., be in control of all things and not be oneself trammled by things), and "contain a sense of *xuan* (the metaphysical principle) and not engage in action, be swift without being in any haste" (i.e., respond objectively to all things and yet not ask, or need, anything of things;

respond to change but not change oneself, then one would be capable of “free roaming” that is indeed worthy of that description.

On the other hand, Zhi Dun believed that, if one were to “roam” only to satisfy the requirements of one’s own nature and portion, then it would be nothing more than a hungry man seeking a meal or a thirsty man asking for the gratification of a drink. To him, such low levels of demand and satisfaction cannot be considered “free roaming.” Therefore, only that which satisfies the Ultimate can be called “roaming freely.” Zhi Dun thought of “satisfying the Ultimate” as “riding the wings of the Propriety of Heaven” (according to *Zhuang Zi*’s text, the proper citation should have been “the Propriety of Heaven and Earth”) and “being glad, traveling in the realm of Infinity and being completely unconfined.” This meant living in the universe and yet not being limited by the limited world, and absolutely transcending of the world of matter and being unconfined, unfettered in thought. That is what he meant when he said, “To roam freely is to attain the full enlightenment of the mind of the Ultimate Man.” In Zhi Dun’s view “roaming freely” depended solely on the ability of the mind of the Ultimate Man to transcend the limitations of time and space.

Another essay that Zhi Dun wrote, known by the title *Ji se you xuan lun* (Treatise on Free Roaming in the Realm of the Metaphysical by the Doctrine of the Identity of Appearances) is also no longer extant. It is possible to deduce, however, that it contained a theory which was derived from a combination of his “doctrine of the identity of appearances” (*ji se yi*) and his doctrine of “free roaming” (*xiao yao yi*). If the Ultimate Man was able to realize the principle that “appearances are not by themselves appearances” (*se bu zi se*), then he would be able to “objectify all things and not be objectified by them,” to “contain a sense of the principle of the metaphysical and not engage in action, to be swift and yet not in haste;” such a person would “roam freely everywhere and be able to go wherever he wishes.” In other words, such a person’s mind would be fully capable of transcending all the limitations of time and space. Therefore, in Zhi Dun’s view, to become Buddha meant, in fact, to roam freely and to become completely unconfined by convention—this was precisely the same goals which the *xuanxue* (Daoist metaphysics) scholars strove to achieve. From this viewpoint, there is, between his “doctrine on free roaming in the realm of the metaphysical by the principle of the identity of appearances” (*ji*

*se you xuan lun*) and his “doctrine of the identity of appearances originating in nothingness” (*ji se ben wu lun*), no inconsistency of theoretical contradiction.

From the above analysis, we can see that the questions discussed in Zhi Dun’s doctrine of the identity of appearances were the same as those which were raised in the circle of *xuanxue*. Furthermore, from his own views on the question of *xiao yao* (free roaming), we can see that he was himself a *xuanxue* scholar (Daoist metaphysician). Although his views differed from those of Guo Xiang, they were in fact quite close to the original ideas of Zhuang Zhou (Zhuang Zi).

*The Meaning of the Doctrine of Original Nothingness (ben wu yi)*. From the *Liu jia qi zong lun* (Treatise of the Six Schools and Seven Sects) written by the Monk Tan Ji, and the *Zhong lun shu* (Commentary on the *Prannyaya mula sastrika*, or Treatise of the Meditation of the Mean) written by the Monk Ji Kang (Chi Kang), the *ben wu yi* (doctrine of original nothingness) bifurcated into two major channels. One was the *ben wu zong* (School of Original Nothingness) and the other was known as the *ben wu yi zong* (the Variant Sect of Original Nothingness). The former school espoused the form of the doctrine as championed by the Monk Dao An; the latter was espoused by the Pandita Shen (or Fa Shen, a.k.a. Zhu Daoqian). In reality they resembled each other in major ways and differed only in minor areas. Here, therefore, we shall not dwell on the differences but analyze only Dao An’s “doctrine or original nothingness” (*ben wu*) in order to illustrate the relationship of this doctrine to the teachings of *xuanxue*.

In the *Zhong lun suo*, Ji Kang (Chi Kang) wrote:

Before the arrival of Kumarajiva the Pandita, there were three schools of Buddhist teachings in Changan (the Tang dynasty capital of China). One was the school of the Monk (Shi) Dao An, which was represented by his teachings on Original Nothingness, in which he argued that *wu* (nothingness, or non-being) existed prior to all creation and that *kong* (emptiness or non-existence) was the beginning of all forms. He also argued that what was holding people back (from their enlightenment) was the sense of *you* (existence, or being) when *you* is in fact a product rather than a point of origin. If people could only rest their minds in contentment with Original Nothingness, they would be able to quell all devious

thought....To understand this significance is to maintain tranquillity in the universal enlightenment of Original Nothingness. All the myriad *dharma* (fa, or things) have, as their original nature, emptiness and extinction; that is what we mean when we say Original Nothingness.

This quotation suggests that Dao An first of all posited that the prior existence of all *dharma*, together with all their forms and phenomena, was *wu* (nothingness, or non-being) and *kong* (emptiness or non-existence). However, *kong wu* (non-existence and emptiness, or non-being) was not the same as *xu kong* (void). Dao An, therefore, said “*Wu* (non-existence) existed before the original transformation (or creation); *kong* (emptiness) was the beginning of all forms (formed substance); that is what we mean when we speak of original nothingness. This does not mean that it was from a (specific) void that all things were given birth.” (See the citation of Tan Ji’s *Liu jia qi zong lun* in the *Ming Zeng Zhuan chao* (Handcopy of the Biographies of the Renowned Monks).) Therefore, when (Dao An) argued that “the *wan you* (all things) were generated from *kong wu*” (emptiness and non-existence), the term *kong wu* did not mean *xu kong* (void); the meaning, rather, was that *kong* (emptiness) or *wu* (non-existence) was the original ontological substance of *wan you* (all things). Only in this way could it exist “prior to all existences” (*wan you*).

It should be noted that Dao An’s understanding of the *Kong zong* (Emptiness Sect, or Sect of Non-being) in Buddhist *prajna* teaching was not quite in conformity to that sect understanding of its own teachings, in which “original nothingness” seemed to have been taken to mean that “all *dharma* did not originally have a nature unto themselves (*zi xing*),” or, in other words, nothing has a real ontological substance in itself. (We shall have more to say on this issue later.) Instead, Dao An’s doctrine of original nothingness can be said to have borne certain resemblances to Wang Bi’s idea of “accepting *wu* (non-existence) as the origin” (*yi wu wei ben*). In fact, it may be closer even to the ideas of Zhang Zhan. Like Wang Bi, Zhang Zhan posited “non-existence as the origin” (*yi wu wei ben*), but when he spoke of *wu* (non-existence) he seemed to have been referring to something outside of (and over and above) *you* (existence). For example, he said: “Because there is such a thing as Ultimate Non-existence (*zhi wu*), it can therefore be the origination and source of all changes and

transformations (from which came creation).” He also said: “That which is not born can therefore be the origin of all that is born.” In these illustrations, Zhang Zhan affirmed in his mind that there was, above and beyond *wan you* (all existence), a transcendental Absolute which served as the Origin from which and by which all existence is born.

This viewpoint differed substantially from that of Wang Bi. Wang believed that, although “non-existence” (*wu*) was the ontological substance of “existence” (*you*), it did not exist outside of *you*. He said: “Non-existence cannot be without name; it must have cause in existence.” Also, Wang believed that substance (*ti*) cannot be divorced from usage (*yong*). He said: “We shall take non-existence for usage; we cannot abandon non-existence as substance alone.” On the other hand, Dao An, when he talked of Original Nothingness, saw *wu* (non-existence) as existing prior to *wan you* (all existences, or all being). He was, therefore, closer to Zhang Zhan’s ideas. Furthermore, Dao An, in a way similar to Zhang Zhan, even used the “theory of the Original Breath, or Spirit” (*yuan qi lun*) to explain the construction of the Universe and the formation of all things. It was thus recorded in Tan Ji’s *Liu Jia Qi Zong Lun*:

In the first place, thus spoke the Founder of the Sect of Original Nothingness: *Ru lai* (He That Was as He Came, i.e., Buddha) came to prosper the world. He taught the doctrine of Original Nothingness to extend his teachings. That is why the profound *vaipulya* sutras all contain enlightenment on the doctrine of the original nothingness of the *wu yin* (the five negative elements, or agencies). For the longest time, the doctrine of original nothingness has been accepted and broadened....How so? Prior to primal and Covert Creation, there was nothing but the frame. It was when the Original Spirit or Breath began to mold and transform that the myriad phenomena began to be endowed with forms....This is not to say that it is out of Emptiness that the many things were born. What holds people back is that they remain stagnated (in their understanding) in the realm of the *you* (being) which is merely the product, or result (and not the origin). If a person is capable of investing his mind in the Original Nothingness, he would be able to shed this very burden.

This is what we mean when we say that, if only one would pursue and exalt the origin, the inconsequential ends would be put to rest.

By *wu* (non-existence) Dao An meant the Original Spirit or Breath (*yuan qi*) which he conceived to be a frame without form or phenomenon. This viewpoint was consistent with the interpretation which the Buddhist monks, from the Han-Wei period up to this time, held with regard to the notion of the formation of the universe, and followed from those interpretations. The Monk Kang Hui, when he translated the *Liu Du Ji Jing* (Collected Sutra of the Six Paramitas) wrote, in its volume 8, under the *Cha Wei Wang Jing* (Sutra of the Observations of the Covert Meanings of the Words of the King):

What we have observed has rendered us profoundly aware that, when Man was in a primitive original state, he was born of the Original Nothingness. Then the Original Breath became differentiated: that part which was solid and strong became earth, that which was soft became water, that which was warm became fire, and that which was mobile became wind....These four things met in harmony and the Knowing Spirit was born. Arising, it became enlightened as to its capacities and senses, and it ceased to desire, becoming thus empty of mind, and the spirit was reverted to Original Nothingness. This Breath, or Spirit, of the Knowing and the Origin was delicate, subtle, and imperceptible.

Again, in the *Yin Chi Ru Jing Zhu* (Annotations to the Sutra of the Entrance to Truth by Way of Covert Maintenance), the *wu yin zhong* (Five Negative Elements species) were described as being "akin to the *yuan qi* (original breath or spirit)." Therefore, the idea was not that "all existences" were born of "emptiness," but that "all existences" came about as the result of the transformation of the Original Breath or Spirit which had neither form nor phenomenon. All things were born of this formless, phenomenon-less Original Breath or Spirit, and man was no exception.

The argument continues that Man was confused because he was holding on to the various forms and appearances which had temporary existence, but if he was able to comprehend that *wu* (non-

existence) existed before the myriad transformations, and that *kong* (emptiness) was the origin of the many forms, he would be able to revert to his own source, transcend life and death, become delivered, and merge as one with the universe and all things, that is, attain the *dao* (tao) (way) and revert to the *yuan qi* (original Spirit). Therefore, in Dao An's doctrine of Original Nothingness, the key to deliverance was to eliminate the incorrect understanding of things. In nonaction and absence of desire and purity of the mind one would be able to achieve that state of being "commensurate with the Ultimate Emptiness and roam with the Creator Force in tranquil and serene happiness." (See *Ren Ben Yu Sheng Jing Zhu* (Annotations on the Sutra on the Origin of the Life of Man in Desires).)

The way to deliverance described by Dao An was almost identical to that proposed by Zhang Zhan. Zhang believed that if man were able to relinquish all tenets and understand the origins and the ultimate destinations of life and death—i.e., that Man came from the Ultimate Emptiness and shall return unto that Ultimate Emptiness, Man would be able to attain deliverance and become the Ultimate Being, which has attained the *dao* (tao) (way). Furthermore, the Ultimate Being is one "whose mind has been re-joined, re-connected with the Original Spirit or Breath, and whose body, covertly, was in harmony with the Yin and Yang." (See the book *Lie Zi Zhu* (Annotations on *Lie Zi*).)

In the *Bu zhen kong lun* (Treatise on the Fallacy of the Doctrine of True Non-existence) the Monk Shao criticized the doctrine of Original Nothingness, saying:

The advocates of Original Nothingness align their sentiments on the side of *wu* (nothingness) and then write their words of teaching to support that argument. They refute, to begin with, the notion of existence and say that *you* (existence or being) was in fact *wu* (non-existence). Even if one refuted the notion of non-existence will nonetheless still be nonexistence. The original meaning of the Buddhist canons is that *fei you* (not being) is not really being and that *fei wu* (not non-being) is not really non-being. Why must one insist on refuting the notion of being and say that "this being is not," or refute the notion of non-being and say that "non-being is not?"

What this passage says is: The school of Original Nothingness maintains a biased affinity for *wu* (non-being). They accept the idea that nonbeing is the ontological substance of reality, and all its arguments are based on this philosophy of non-being. Therefore the adherents of this school do not recognize *you* (being); rather, they believe that being cannot be divorced from non-being; i.e., they accept “non-being as the origin.” They believe, moreover, that non-being itself could not be separated from non-being; i.e., they maintain the notion of the fundamentality of non-being, insist upon it, and see non-being as true non-being. However, according to the original intent of the Buddhist sutras, what is important, and to be maintained, was that “not being” is not truly being (*fei you bu shi zhen di you*), and not non-being is also not truly non-being (*fei wu ye bu shi zhen di wu*). Why, therefore, should anyone insist that “not being” meant the non-being of any particular thing or that “not non-being” meant the absence of any particular non-being?

(From the above) it appears that the Monk Shao took the original intent of the Kong zong (Emptiness school) of *prajna* Buddhism as his point of departure in criticizing the doctrine of Original Nothingness and its adherents for their insistence on *wu* (non-existence) and their failure to comprehend that “non-being” was itself a *jiaming* (false name, or illusion) and not a real being. His argument, ultimately, was that only “the refutation of both being and non-being” was the true principle taught by Buddhism. In doing so, in the *Bu zhen kong lun* (Treatise on the Fallacy of the Doctrine of True Nothingness) the Monk Shao criticized not only the doctrine of Original Nothingness itself, but also Wang Bi’s idea of “valuing nothingness” and Guo Xiang’s idea of “exalting being” as well, and thereby developed (not just Buddhist teachings but also) the teachings of *xuanxue* (Daoist metaphysics) of the Wei and Jin periods.

*The Meaning of the Doctrine of Non-Real, Non-Existence or Emptiness (bu shen kong yi)*. It can be argued that the criticism contained in the Monk Shao’s *Bu zhen kong lun* of the three schools of *prajna* Buddhism which were popular in China at that time was based on the original intent of the Indian teachings of Buddhist *prajna*. By positing that “emptiness is not real” (*bu zhen kong*) he suggested that all things do not truly exist, or that all things not truly are, but rather, the existence of all things is unreal, and that that is why we can call (existence) *kong* (emptiness or unreality). In other words, “emptiness” equals

“unreality.” This was the Chinese expression of the fundamental premise of the Kong zong (Emptiness school) of Indian Buddhist *prajna* teaching, namely, the premise that “all *fa* (*dharma*, or things) do not have ontological self-substance” (*zhu fa ben wu zi xing*).

The Monk Shao said that the *Zhong lun* (Treatise on the Mean) posited the paradox that while, from one angle, “all *fa* (*dharma*) were not existent,” from another angle, “all *fa* were also, and at the same time, not non-existent.” He argued that to understand this principle of “not being and yet not non-being” would be to understand the ultimate truth. This is because, he argued, although there were very many things of various forms and appearances, under analysis they can all be found to be formed only by causes and effects and their combinations and have no *zi xing* (self-nature, or ontological substance, or reality in and of themselves). This would therefore be “non-existence.” On the other hand, although all *dharma* had no real ontological substance, there were nonetheless phenomena in many diverse forms and appearances, and *dharma* was therefore also “not non-existence.” Hence, he argued, one cannot say that there are no things, but only that there are no *real* things.

In what way, then, can there be such “unreal existence” (*jia you*)?

According to the Monk Shao’s interpretation of *Zhong lun*, all things are formed of the combinations and permutations of causes and effects and therefore have no ontological substance. However, once made up by the combination of causes and effects, things also then become “not non-existent” and cannot be said to be fundamentally non-existent. By further applying logical reasoning to this issue, the Monk Shao concluded that this principle was the very basic truth. If “being” was “real being,” he argued, “being” would have existed at the beginning and should exist to the very end, and there would have been no need to wait for the combination of causes and effects to bring “being” into existence. If, on the other hand, “non-being” was real non-being, “non-being” itself should also have existed at the very beginning and to the very end, and there would also have been no need to wait for the combination of causes and effects to bring about “non-being.”

If one were to accept that “being” cannot be “being in itself,” but had to wait for the combination of causes and effects to bring it into being, then one would be able to realize that “being” was not “real being.” (He said), “Being is not real being; therefore, though there is being, we do not say that there is real being.” At the same time, one

must also say that there is “not non-being.” If there was real “non-being” it would be monolithic and totally immobile (*zhan ran bu dong*) (i.e., totally incapable of transformation) and no phenomenon could then be generated. Only such a totally immobile “non-existence” could be called “real non-existence.” Therefore, if we were to say that “all *fa*” (*dharma*) were “truly nonexistent” there would not be the generation of all *fa*, and nothing would come of causes and effects. Since “all *fa*” do come as a result of causes and effects, then one cannot say that there is real “non-existence.”

Both in terms of contents and methodology, one can say that the Monk Shao’s *Bu zhen kong lun* was closer in meaning to the original intents of Indian Buddhist *prajna* teaching. It was not by accident that his doctrine of the *Bu zhen kong lun* came about; it was, rather, because by that time two conditions had already come into existence. The first was the fact that Kumarajiva was already in possession of the various sutras that provided full explanation (to the Chinese) of the *prajna* teachings, such as *Da zhi du lun* (Treatise on the Paramita, or ferrying across by way of the Great Wisdom), *Zhong lun* (Treatise on the Mean), *Bai lun* (The Hundred Treatises), and *Shi er men lun* (Treatise on the Twelve Sects). This made it possible by that time to have a clearer understanding of the teachings of the Indian *prajna* school of Buddhism. The second was that contemporary developments in the teachings of *xuanxue* (Daoist metaphysics) made it possible for such theories as “non-being and yet not nonbeing” (*fei you fei wu*) to appear in the Chinese mind and exert an impact on Chinese thinkers (more on this later).

### **The Interaction between the Imported Ideological Culture— Buddhism—and the Previously Existing Ideological Culture of China**

The question of the importation of an alien ideological culture and its interaction with an existing native ideological culture is a very complicated one, and there is great significance in studying this problem. Our country’s philosophical thinking (and, in fact, its entire culture and society) underwent a major transformation in the time of the Wei and Jin dynasties and the North and South dynasties; it can easily be said that the introduction of Buddhism was one of the most significant causes of this transformation. As for China Buddhism was an alien ideological culture, it is very helpful to study the interaction

between the two and the process by which this alien ideological culture integrated with China's own pre-existing traditional ideological culture. This would include its development from being formalistically attached to the body of China's traditional ideological culture, to emerging with its own characteristics which clearly conflicted with and were contradictory to China's ideological culture, and finally to becoming an integral part of the Chinese ideological culture.

The formation of an ideological culture is certain to have its roots in social history; thus in the history of the world various ideological cultures have emerged which are separate and different in both type and form. To understand the characteristics of an ideological culture and the level of its development, one must compare it with other ideological cultures. If we were to compare the Buddhism introduced into China during the period of the Wei, Jin, and North and South dynasties with what existed at that time as China's native traditional ideological culture, we would be able to understand more profoundly not only the characteristics and level of development of that traditional Chinese ideological culture, but also the reasons for which an alien ideological culture was able to be assimilated by the Chinese. The method of analytically studying the comparisons between the ideological culture of one nation (or country or region) and that of another is known as comparative philosophy, which is guided by Marxist thought.

Another significant phenomenon which emerged in the period of the Wei, Jin, and North and South dynasties was the Daoist religion. This was formed in the late years of the Eastern Han dynasty and acquired its own theoretical system. Although it can be said that the formation of the Daoist religion was influenced or stimulated by the introduction of Buddhism, it was nonetheless a religion peculiar to the Chinese, particularly to the Han people, and was bound, therefore, to have characteristics which set it apart from Buddhism. Prior to the Wei and the Jin, Buddhism had just been introduced and in the early stages of its introduction had been grafted to the already existing body of the *daoshu* (Daoist techniques and crafts). Hence, the contradictions between the two religions, although already real, were not obvious or outstanding. Since the Wei and Jin, however, because the Daoist religion's own system of thought and theory had gradually formed and because Buddhism, as an imported alien ideological culture,

needed to shed gradually its own earlier attachment to the pre-existing native ideological culture, the contradictions and conflict between the two religions became daily more acute and intensified. If we were to analyze and draw comparisons (between these two religions) on the issues upon which they debated, it would be easy for us to see more clearly the characteristics of the Daoist religion as well as the mutual influence which their two religions had upon one another in the midst of their contradictions and polemical struggles. This is the task of those who undertake the study of comparative religion. At this time, we ought also to develop and promote this field of investigation, so that we may form a comparative study of religions, guided, also, by Marxist thought.

What were the most notable characteristics in Buddhism after it was introduced into China and as it became popularized and developed in China? What are the ones we should study and what general laws (of development) can we extract from (such a study)? What conclusions can be drawn? In the following discussion we shall suggest three major problem areas for analysis.

#### *Adaptation to Tradition*

When Buddhism was introduced into China at first it was grafted upon the body of pre-existing Chinese ideological culture; then it gradually developed on its own and began to exert its own influence on that culture and Chinese society. It should be understood that Buddhism did not have a great deal of influence immediately after its introduction.

After being introduced into China in the Han dynasty, Buddhism at first attached itself to the *daoshu*. In the Wei and Jin period, because of the popularity and influence of *xuanxue* (Daoist metaphysics) Buddhism switched and was attached to the latter. During the time of the Han dynasty, the central tenets of (Chinese) Buddhism were "the imperishability of the soul, or spirit," and "causes and effects." These were ideas that were already originally carried within traditional Chinese thought, or, in some cases, were at least similar in ways to certain ideas which already existed in Chinese philosophical traditions. Furthermore, the Hinayana methods of *chan* meditation (*dhyana*) which were preached at that time also generally were quite similar to the breathing exercises taught by the Huang Lao School of Daoism (Taoism) and the Immortality (*shen xian jia*) school. By the

time of the Wei and Jin Daoist metaphysical teachings had become popular, and, since Kong zong (the Emptiness sect) of Buddhist *prajna* teachings was somewhat similar to these Daoist metaphysical teachings, this branch of Buddhism was therefore able to gain popularity by attaching itself to the body of *xuanxue*. However, it was not until Kumarajiva translated the sutras and commentaries (*sastras*) such as the *Zhong lun* that the Chinese understanding of the teachings of the Kong zong of Indian Buddhist *prajna* philosophy came close to capturing the original intents of those teachings. From the above brief description, we can see that, when Buddhism was first introduced into China, it had first to exist as an attachment, or graft, on the body of some previously existing ideology, and only thus was it able to achieve popularity of its own.

There is one question here which needs to be raised and calls for some discussion. When Zhi-lou-jian translated the *Dao Xing Jing* (Sutra on the Practice, or Way, of the Truth) in the year 179 A.D., there was in it a *pin* (segment, or folio) known as the *ben wu pin* (segment of Original Nothingness). This appeared long before the (*xuan xue*) ideas of *gui wu* (exalting nothingness) and *yi wu wei ben* (taking nothingness as the origin) which are identified with He Yan (190-249) and Wang Bi (226-249). Does this then mean that Wang and He's idea of "taking nothingness as the origin" was a product, a result of the influence of Buddhism? We do not believe that this is the answer; it would accord with the facts of the historical record to think that Daoist metaphysical thinking (r, *xuanxue*) was generated only under the influence of Buddhism. First of all, the formation of Daoist metaphysical thinking responded to the social needs at the time. Moreover, the emergence of *xuanxue* should be considered in the light and context of other intellectual developments, either of the period or slightly earlier. These include the development of the teachings of *ming li zhi xue* (on names and principles) and the distinction between *cai* (ability) and *xing* (nature, or character) which appeared during the interim period between the fall of the Han and the rise of *Wei*, as well as the revival of various schools of Confucianism, Daoism (Taoism), the School of Names (*Ming jia*) and Legalism, and their mutual intersection and influence. This makes it possible to see that, from the angle of certain inevitable trends in ideological and intellectual development, this emergence of *xuanxue* was a product of the natural processes of China's indigenous intellectual evolution.

We have not found any convincing evidence that Wang Bi and He Yan were influenced by Buddhism. Even if one or two pieces of evidence were to be discovered indicating that Wang, He, and company may have been in contact with the Buddhism of the day, either directly or indirectly, nonetheless we must still maintain that the ideas of *xuanxue* were products of the development of preexisting indigenous Chinese ideas themselves. Furthermore, there is a great deal of evidence showing that by and large, during the Han-Wei period, the Chinese officer-scholar gentry did not in the least think highly of Buddhism. For instance, Mouzi in *Li huo lun* (Treatise on the Disposition of Error) said for the record that “the people of the age, and scholars, mostly sneer at it (i.e., Buddhism) and defame it,” and, “we have not heard that, among the rules and teachings accepted by the five talents or among the discussions taken up in the Forest of Confucianist Scholars, the practicing of the ways of Buddha is valued or self-disfigurement is esteemed.”

One thing serves to illustrate this point even more clearly and conclusively, namely that, while in the *prajna* Buddhist teachings of the time the term *ben wu* (original nothingness) was used, it did not mean the same thing as Wang Bi’s idea of *yi wu wei ben* (taking nothingness to be the origin). In the various *prajna* sutras, the idea of *ben wu* was taken to mean that “all *fa* (*dharma*) do not have ontological self-substance” (*zhu fa ben wu zi xing*)—that is, that all things did not, in and of themselves, have real substance. This, in fact, negated the notion that there was original substance to things. When Wang Bi spoke of *ben wu* (original nothingness), on the other hand, he meant that “nothingness was the original substance”—that is, ontological reality—of existence (*wu shi you di ben ti*).

The Buddhist teachings that were imported into China in the Wei-Jin period were for the most part teachings of the Mahayana *prajna* Kong zong (Emptiness school). Its fundamental premise was that “all things did not originally have ontological substance, or self-substance” (*zi xing*). In this, the term *fa* (*dharma*) referred to all things, material but also spiritual. These were known as *adharmas* in the Buddhist sutras. In the *Da bo you jing* (Great Collection of Prajna Sutras), volume 556, we find the following passage:

Take ourselves, for instance; we are, ultimately, not life.  
We are *jia ming* (false names or unreal names) (i.e., we are illusions, or falsehoods.) We have no *zi xing* (self-nature,

or nature in and of ourselves). Likewise, all *dharma*—they too are nothing but false names, and no nature in and of themselves. What is *se* (appearance)? It cannot be assumed and cannot be born. What is *shou* (acceptance, or destiny) or *xiang* (thought) or *xing* (action) or *shi* (perception, or understanding)? They, too, are incapable of being assumed or being born.

The Kong zong (Emptiness school) of *prajna* teaching believed that while people have always held to the notion that there was something which could be called *you wuo* (having oneself, or self-existence), i.e., *zi ti* (self-substance), they have done so without realizing that “self” was nothing but the combination produced by the five elements (*wu yin*) of *se* (appearance), *shou* (acceptance or destiny), *xiang* (thought), *xing* (action), and *shi* (perception or understanding). They were indeed wrong to have believed that there was such a thing as “self.” How could “self” exist apart from or independent of these five elements? Therefore, it argued, the term “self” was really nothing but a hypothesis, an unreal name (*jia ming*), and did not contain any self-nature. Not only was this true of people but of all *dharma* (things) as well. Therefore, the *Guan si ti pin* (Segment of the Meditation on the Catvariarya satyani, or Four Noble True Statements) in the *Zhong lun* argued:

The various causes and effects generate the *dharma*. The idea of self is but an idea of emptiness, and also a false name. This is the meaning of the Central Way, or the Mean.

The argument here, apparently, was that, since all things were generated by causes and effects, there is in reality no such thing as *zi xing* (self-nature, or real self-substance) but only *kong* (non-existence). The idea of self, therefore, is itself a “non-existence.” However, although things did not contain “self-substance,” there are, nonetheless, all sorts of separate phenomena in the world after all. What then are such things? To say that they do not have real existence; still possible, however, are all sorts of *unreal* existences or phenomena. For purposes of convenience, the argument went, these are given hypothetical, or false, names. The *Fangguang banruo jing* (Prajnaparamita Sutra Emitting Light) said:

Buddha spoke thus to Subhuti (One of the Ten Major Disciples of Buddha, said to have been the best exponent of the Sunya, or Doctrine of the Void—translator): Names are not real; an unreal designation is given and is known as a name, or as the five *yin* (elements) or as a human being, man or woman.

The Monk Shao, in *Bu zhen kong lun*, provided the following explanation:

The *Fangguang* (sutra) said: All *dharma* have false designations which are not real. For example, Man is the product of the transformation of illusions; this is not to say that there is no man who is the product of the transformation of illusions, but simply that Man who is the product of the transformation of illusions is not really Man (i.e., there is no reality to Man who is produced by the transformation of illusions).

This raises a secondary question which must be discussed here. Does the idea of *kong* (emptiness or non-existence) in the saying “self, as it is expressed, is *kong*, or empty or non-existent” (*wuo shuo ji shi kong*) signify the position that while things, phenomenologically speaking, did not really exist, there was, nonetheless, an ontologically real “non-existence” (similar to Wang Bi’s ontologically real *wu*, or non-being) which itself was true? This, we shall see, was not the viewpoint of the Kong zong (Emptiness school) of *prajna* Buddhist teaching. To the adherents of the Kong zong, *kong* simply referred to the absence “of ontological self-substance in all *dharma*.” This arose because the dictum “*dharma* is produced or generated by causes and effects; the statement of self is itself non-existent” was proposed for the very purpose of dispelling people’s insistence on holding to the idea of real ontological substance in all things. But if people were simply to switch to insist on (the idea of the reality of) non-existence, alluded to in the sentence “the statement of self is itself a non-existence,” then the purpose would be defeated, because people would still be insisting on the reality of something-i.e., of “non-existence.” That is why, the Kong zong believed, it was necessary to add: “Even this (non-existence itself) is but a false name.” Hence the formulation, completed, would be: Not only are the names of things,

i.e., phenomena, *jia ming* (false names) and merely hypothetical; *kong* (emptiness, or non-existence) itself is a false name also.

Volume 556 of the *Da Bo You Jing* contained this parable:

At one time, the various sons of heaven asked He Who Appeared in Goodness (a name for Buddha): Is it possible to be in Nirvana and still revert to the realm of illusion? He Who Appeared in Goodness replied: If there was a thing (*dharma*) that overcame Nirvana and yet, then, reverted to the state of illusion, what would Nirvana then be?

One must, therefore, not only understand that all *dharma* do not have real ontological substance; one must at the same time not insist on (the reality of) non-existence. The *Da zhi du lun* (Treatise on the Ferrying Across by Means of the Great Wisdom) said:

The situation is like the taking of medicine. Medicine can dispel the sickness. When the illness has been dispelled, the medicine should also be expelled. If not, then an illness will be acquired. *Kong* (non-existence) is something that was used to dispel all our troubles, but we should be wary lest *kong* itself remain to plague us. Therefore, what we suggest is that we must use *kong* to shed *kong*—that is, we must understand the non-existence of non-existence itself.

This means that the assertion of “non-existence” was for the purpose of dispelling the insistence on existence. When and if the notion of existence has been dispelled, the time would come for one to know that “non-existence” is itself an illusion, an unreality, or false name. Yet one cannot say that all is “non-existence” (because there is still, for example, Man who is the product of the transformation of illusions). To understand both of these aspects would be to achieve the *Zhong dao guan* (True Meditation of the Middle Way, or Mean). It was, however, not until the late years of the Eastern Jin dynasty, after Kumarajiva had already translated such treatises as the *Zhong lun*, that this idea of “not existence and yet not non-existence” (*fei you fei wu*) was truly accepted and understood among Chinese Buddhists and epitomized in the *Bu zhen kong lun* of the Monk Shao.

Prior to the time of the Monk Shao, the general understanding which the Chinese monks had regarding *prajna* teaching was on the whole derived from the perspectives of the Daoist metaphysical (*xuanxue*) thought which was popular at the time. This is something we have already discussed. To further substantiate this argument, let us now analyze again some of the problems raised in connection with Dao An's theory of Original Nothingness. We have, earlier, cited the following passage from Ji Kang (Chi Kang)'s *Zhong Lun Shu* (Commentary on the Treatise of the Mean):

When Master An expressed (the doctrine of) Original Nothingness, he meant that all *dharma's* original nature was emptiness and extinction. That is why he said "Original Nothingness."

Is this not the same idea as that contained in the saying: "All *dharma* do not originally have any ontological self-substance?" In fact it is not. The sentence here, "all *dharma's* original nature is emptiness and extinction," meant that emptiness and extinction made up the original nature of all *dharma*, or, in other words, all things have emptiness and extinction for their original nature or ontological substance. This was an interpretation that could be traced as far back as the Monk Hui Da's *Shao lun Shu* (Commentary on the Arguments of the Monk Shao). There he criticized Dao An's theory of Original Nothingness by saying: "(He, Dao An,) was simply unable to realize that originally all *dharma* was nothing; and therefore he called original non-existence real, but resulting existence vulgar." The same idea was contained in An Cheng's *Zhong Lun Shu* (Commentary on the Treatise of the Mean), which said: "The *Bie ji* (Alternative Record) says" "The true statement (*zhen ti*) is the origin of the vulgar statement (*shu ti*)." That is why we say that Non-existence existed prior to the Original, or Primeval, Transformation." From all the above illustrations, we can see that, in Dao An's understanding of *kong* (non-existence) or *wu* (non-being), he still took them to be the ontological substance for *you* (existence).

Why did such a set of circumstances come about? Because, as Engels pointed out, tradition is an immense force of conservatism. It appears that every ideological cultural tradition is bound to have its conservative aspect which resists imported alien ideological cultural influences. For that reason, an imported ideological culture must first

adapt itself to the requirements and demands of the originally existing native ideological culture and be grafted onto its body. Those elements within the imported ideological culture which are relatively close to the original native ideological culture or which resemble it will be easier to be propagated; only then, after the grafting and the initial propagation, will it be possible for the various parts of the imported culture gradually to infiltrate the original culture and exert some of their own influence, until eventually (the imported culture) modifies, or effects transformations in, the original ideological culture.

*The Enrichment and Intensification of Tradition*

When an imported ideological culture is capable of having a relatively great impact on the country (or nation or region) to which it was imported, in addition to the real and practical societal needs, this would often also occur because the imported culture in general approximated a potential or possible product of the evolution—or certain aspects of the evolution—of the original indigenous ideological culture itself.

It is possible to trace a line of development in the ideas of *xuanxue* (Daoist metaphysics) from Wang Bi and He Yan's ideas of *gui wu* (valuing nothingness or non-being) which were based on the notion of "taking non-being as the origin" to Guo Xiang's idea of *cong you* (exalting being) which was based on the notion of "all things generating themselves" (*wan wu zi sheng*). Subsequently, the ideas of Zhang Zhan emerged during the time of the Eastern Jin, which were exemplified in the saying, "Things are generated by themselves spontaneously and instantly, and yet they share one common origin in non-being" (*fu er er zi sheng, ze ben tong yu wu*). What then followed in this line of development was the notion of "not being and yet not non-being" (*fei you fei wu*). This was similar to the doctrine of "not real non-existence" (*bu zhen kong*) in the Kong zong (Emptiness school) of prajna Buddhist teaching. Why was it possible for Wei-Jin Daoist metaphysics to develop into the idea of "not being and yet not non-being?" One may say that this was a "potential" product of the evolution of Wei-Jin Daoist metaphysics, or, in other words, it can be said that such an evolution was not only not antithetical or contradictory to the essence of Wei-Jin Daoist metaphysics; it was in fact an enrichment of Wei-Jin Daoist metaphysics.

Beginning with Wang Bi and He Yan, and particularly in the case of Wang Bi, Wei-Jin Daoist metaphysical thought carried out rather penetrating examinations and logical reasoning on the question of the relationship between *you* (being) and *wu* (non-being). Wang Bi used the idea of *ti* (substance) and *yong* (effect, function, usage, or phenomenon) to illustrate the relationship between being and non-being. He posited that “non-being cannot be without expression, and therefore must have cause in being.” Therefore he believed that, while “non-being” was the ontological substance, it was contained in “being” and had expression in “being.” Therefore he viewed substance (*ti*) and use (*yong*) as essentially one and the same thing. However, since there was an emphasis in Wang Bi’s system of thought on the absoluteness of “non-being,” the idea of “exalting the origin and ending the result” (*cong ben shi mo*) emerged. This brought about an inconsistency in Wang Bi’s system of thought. From the perspective of this *cong ben shi mo* idea, it can be said that there was a notion of negating the being, or, an idea of “not being.” Through Xiang Xiu and Pei Wei, Wang Bi’s idea of *gui wu* (valuing the non-being) later made the transition to Guo Xiang’s idea of *cong you* (exalting being).

In Guo’s view, being was the only existence, and there was nothing that existed over and beyond *wan wu* (all things) and that could have served as the ontological substance for *wan you* (i.e., a Creator substance). He believed that the existence of all things was based on their respective “self-nature” (*zi xing*) and that this self-nature was generated spontaneously and instantaneously. For this reason he argued: “Non-being is non-being; that is it. It cannot generate being.” In this way he directly challenged and refuted the idea of an ontologically substantial non-being. This idea in itself contained the notion of “not non-being.”

In the Eastern Jin dynasty, Zhang Zhan wrote a commentary and annotations to the book *Lie Zi*, and in it he attempted to bring together in his own way the ideas of Wang Bi and Guo Xiang. On the one hand he argued that “all beings (*qun you*) have the Ultimate Void (*zhi xu*) as their ancestor (*zong*),” i.e., *wu* (non-being) or *zhi xu* (the Ultimate Void) was the basis for the existence of *you* (being). This was his idea of *wu* as ontological substance. To him, Non-being was neither created nor perishable; it does not come together and does not dissipate, whereas all being is created and is perishable, and clusters and dissipates. Moreover, he believed that all species (*wan pin*) have their ultimate

test in their ultimate perishability and, therefore, are “not being.” Yet, at the same time, Zhang argued that all things were instantaneously and spontaneously created—their existence was neither purposeful nor conditional. This had the potential or possibility of leading toward the idea of “not non-being.”

Nevertheless, in the case of Zhang Zhan, these two ideas were put together mechanistically and were mutually incompatible and contradictory. His system of thought was not one which was tightly woven. And yet, incidentally, it was at this juncture that *prajna* Buddhist teachings, in particular those of the Kong zong, posited the idea of *fei you fei wu* (not being and yet not non-being), which itself was far more solid and tightly argued in theory and reasoning methods. For that reason, one can say that the doctrine of the *Bu zhen kong lun* (Treatise on the Fallacy of Real Nothingness) proposed by the Monk Shao was a development of the ideas of *xuanxue* (Daoist metaphysics) after Wang Bi and Guo Xiang. Although the ideas of the Monk Shao came directly from Indian *prajna* Buddhist teaching, they in fact became an important component of Chinese philosophy itself and helped to make up the following circle in the development of Wei-Jin *xuanxue*-Wang Bi-Guo Xiang-the Monk Shao.

Why was such a development possible? One may ascribe it to the demands or requirements of the heritage or continuity of ideological cultures (as they came into contact with one another). As long as the development of an ideological culture is not drastically interrupted, what follows must be the product of a continuous evolution from what preceded it. The development of preceding ideas often would contain several possibilities, and the idea(s) which would continue to be developed, representing the subsequent parts of the development, would be bound to take the shape of one or another of these possibilities. If an imported alien ideological culture can, on the whole, adapt or conform to a certain aspect of a potential or possible development of the original indigenous culture and ideology (or fit into a trend or tendency of one of the possible developments), not only will it be itself developed and thus exert relatively great influence in itself, but it may even become directly a component part of the original indigenous ideological culture and perhaps even to some extent alter the course of the development of that original ideological culture.

*Relative Excellence and Real Contribution*

If an imported alien ideological culture affects the original indigenous ideological culture, and if this is not a temporary influence but a long lasting one, in some aspects or even in all aspects in general it would have to achieve a higher level of development than that of the indigenous culture. Only in this way can the imported ideological culture serve as a stimulus to the native culture and affect the development of the native culture itself.

Whether or not the level of development and sophistication in reasoning achieved by the Kong zong (Emptiness school) of Indian *prajna* Buddhist teaching was generally higher than that of China's own native and traditional ideological culture which existed at that time is a question which may not be realistically and honestly resolved until very careful and meticulous analysis has been made. This is not a problem which we may attempt to discuss here. However, in one specific aspect of its ways of reasoning and philosophizing, namely, its analysis of the questions of being and non-being (*you wu*), the Kong zong of *prajna* Buddhism, in postulating the dialectical thesis of "not being and yet not non-being" (*fei you fei wu*), clearly demonstrated a superior level of theory and reasoning in comparison with the ideas of Wang Bi and Guo Xiang, although its own ideas, like those of Wang and Guo, were drawn from the general source of idealism. In terms of development, although it appeared to have been derived out of Wang Bi and Guo Xiang's *xuanxue* thought, the Monk Shao's doctrine of *bu zhen kong* (not real emptiness) was closer to the original intents of the Kong zong's teachings and should be acknowledged as having made certain advances beyond Wang and Guo's ideas.

As I see it, it was after the baptism of the introduction and assimilation of *prajna* philosophy introduced from India that the idealist philosophies of the Chinese tradition became themselves a truly influential and meaningful system of thought. In them, the doctrine of the Creator (a spiritual ontological substance which created Heaven and Earth and all things) no longer occupied a central position. In its stead, abstract concepts such as *li* (principle) or *dao* (Way), which determined, rather than personally created, the existence of Heaven, Earth, and all things, were put into the position of first or primal importance. In another case, it was the mind that was put into that position, as in ideas which posited that "mind equals principle" (*xin ji li*) or "the principle is possessed in the mind" (*li ju yu*

*xin*); i.e., the notions that the principles of Heaven, Earth, and all things were all present in the mind. It was only after such idealistic concepts were developed that the fundamental forms of China's traditional idealist philosophy were set. This itself set the stage for the emergence of the *li xue* (neo-Confucianist philosophy of Principle) in the Song and Ming dynasties, whether it be the Cheng and Zhu (Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Xi) school or the Lu-Wang (Lu Xiangshan, Wang Yangming) school.

However, for an imported alien ideological culture, even one with a relatively higher level of development in reasoning, to have a great and long-lasting impact on the country (nation or region) to which it is introduced, it not only would have to subject itself, nonetheless, to the limitations of the political and socioeconomic conditions of the host country, nation, or region, but it must also be in possession of the first and second sets of conditions described in the afore-discussed sections. This is particularly true of ideological cultures, especially if the original, indigenous ideological culture did not experience an abrupt and radical interruption, or if such an interruption was not to be caused by the introduction of the alien culture. Only in such a way could the new culture affect the original culture in a profound and long-lasting way. Without these conditions, no matter how advanced or superior the imported ideological culture may be, it would be difficult for it to strike roots into the soil of the host country and over the long run exert any deep influence. For example, the *Wei shi* (Vidjñana, or Consciousness Only school) teachings of Buddhism introduced (later) by the (Tang dynasty) Monk Xuan Zang, and the related teachings of *vidjna* (*yin ming*, or *hetuvidya*, or *nyaya* teachings) which were introduced at about the same time and in conjunction with the Consciousness Only school, were also superior in the levels of their reasoning and development, and yet, though they gained much ground in establishing a reputation for themselves for a time, they did not eventually have a very long-lasting impact on the development of Chinese thought as a whole. Even though specific categories of thought in the Consciousness Only (*Wei shi*) school, such as the dual categories of *neng* (ability or possibility) and *suo* (identity or proper placement), were individually absorbed into Chinese thought, on the whole the *Wei shi* school did not become an integrated component of the Chinese traditional ideological culture, and to this

day we still have the tendency to think of the Wei shi (*vidjnana*, or Consciousness Only) teachings as an Indian ideology.

Out of the three points of argumentation outlined above, we may draw out one proposition: that it is meaningful, at least in one aspect, to focus the comparative study of philosophies on the general and historical laws which govern the extent to which an imported alien ideological culture may influence (the ideological culture(s) of) the country, or nation or region to which it was introduced, and on the conditions without which such an influence may not take place. In comparing and analyzing, for example, two ideological cultures which stemmed from different traditions we must understand, first, the characteristics and level of development and reasoning which have been achieved by the original indigenous ideological culture (i.e., that which, of the two, is the host culture) and, second, the differences and similarities between these two cultures, their mutual influences, their assimilation and conflict, the amelioration of their conflict, and so on.

As we study the introduction of Buddhism from India to China in the first century A.D., and its subsequent development we must ask its meaning for the practical way of life today. The tendencies in the development of current world ideological cultures are manifested as patterns conflict and harmony between many different ideological cultures stemming from many different traditions. The instability, contradictions and conflicts in the world today may also be ascribed, in addition to certain other (political and economic) factors, in part to differences in ideological and cultural (i.e., philosophical and religious) traditions. The contradictions between the Arab and Islamic world, on the one hand, and the West, on the other, for example, are themselves fraught with philosophical and religious factors. At the same time, because of the increasing frequency and intimacy in terms of intercultural contacts in today's world, the propensity for mutual interaction and influence and for harmonization and assimilation between various ideological cultures is also very obvious.

In particular, the broad spread of Marxism throughout the world today has provided many new lessons to be learned and emulated in the relations between ideological cultures which stem from different traditions and backgrounds. Marxism itself was generated in Western Europe under historical conditions peculiar to Western Europe and therefore as an ideological culture it was alien to many other parts of

the world. Out of this, problems have surfaced in the relationship between Marxism and the various indigenous ideological cultures of the places to which it has been introduced. Even though Marxism is a proletarian philosophy and the cause of the proletariat is not confined by national boundaries—(Marxism) is the ideological weapon with which the proletariat and the revolutionary peoples of all countries carry out their revolutionary struggles—in order for Marxism to take root in any country (or nation or region) in a certain sense it will still have to become integrated with the native ideological culture of that country (nation or region). Or, shall we say, it must undertake critically to carry on the legacy of that original indigenous ideological cultural tradition. Unless this is achieved, Marxism will not be able to exert any real influence.

Is it possible then for Marxism to be enriched and furthered in its development by, say, the study of the relations between Marxism and China's traditional indigenous ideological culture? We believe so. In the essay "The Task of the Youth League," Lenin said: "It is only when we have indeed understood fully the culture which is created through the entire developmental process of humanity at large, and are capable of transforming this culture of the past, that we can proceed to construct a truly proletarian culture." Undoubtedly Marxism is a methodology which will guide us in dealing accurately with our various ideological cultural traditions. It is "not a doctrine, but a methodology. It provides, not ready-made dogma, but points of departure for further investigation and a methodology which may be employed in such an investigation" (see *The Complete Works of Marx and Engels* [Chinese edition], vol. 39, p. 406). It should be acknowledged that in the history of human civilization each nation or people had, and has, its own special contribution to make. If we were to study, with the correct method, these contributions, we would be able to render accurate assessments regarding them and turn these assessments into parts of the legacy of the spiritual civilization of humanity, which we are to inherit. It is not the intent of Marxism to reject the spiritual cultures which have made contributions to the human society; rather, it hopes to absorb them, and transform them, and in the process continue to enrich and develop itself.

### **The Comparative Study of Philosophies and Religions**

The present age is vastly different from past ages. As the world marches into the 1980s, developments in science and technology and social progress have made the interaction between the various countries and nations of the world immensely different from that of the past when the world was still in a stage of feudalism. These objective circumstances compel us to absorb imported alien ideological cultures more quickly. What methods can we use to turn those parts of alien ideas which are of use and value to us more speedily into integrated parts of our own ideological culture? One important method would be to engage in the comparative study of philosophies. In the past, the absorption of alien ideological cultures as a natural and spontaneous process was often slow and sluggish, and incidental and accidental factors tended to have a great deal of influence on the process. If we were to carry out such work today in a conscious and deliberate fashion, we are bound to be able to absorb the valuable and refined portions of an alien ideological culture more speedily. This problem applies to Marxism as well. If we are able to deal correctly with the relationship between Marxism and our own ideological cultural tradition, so that Marxism may become even more compatible with the circumstances and sentiments of the people in our country, if we may create a Sinicized Marxism, then it not only would take deeper and stronger roots in China, but would also more effectively absorb and retain the good and valuable parts of Chinese ideological cultural tradition and expel those which are valueless or corrupted so that our country's fine spiritual culture may be further developed. Therefore, the establishment of comparative philosophical studies under the guidance of Marxism is a most important task for us. The question is, how we should undertake the study of comparative philosophy?

#### *The Search for Common Laws*

In comparatively studying two ideological cultures from different traditions we should attend to the discovery of certain common laws which govern the evolution of human ideological culture.

The study of comparative philosophy, like the comparative study of religions and literature, has a specific meaning of its own. The study of comparative philosophy does not mean simply the comparison between two, any two, philosophers (taking, for instance, Zhu Xi and

Wang Shouren [Wang Yangming]), any more than the study of comparative religion means the simple comparison of any two Buddhist monks (say, Zhi Dun and Dao An). Comparative philosophy or comparative religion refers to comparing two systems of philosophical thought which stem from different traditions, or two religious systems that come from different sources and origins. Therefore, such comparative studies must be comparative analyses of two different countries (such as China and India) or regions (such as East and West) or nations (such as the Chinese people and some other nationality).

Philosophy is the most general science in the study of Nature, society, and human reasoning, and the laws which govern the development of human thought are, fundamentally speaking, similar or for the most part identical. Thus, when we have understood the laws which governed and sustained the evolution of the philosophical thought of a certain ideological cultural tradition, analyze the philosophical thoughts of another ideological cultural tradition promises to be of great help. In "On the Problems of the Dialectical Method," Lenin said:

(These are) the circles which describe the history of philosophy: The Ancient World: Dialectics from Democritus through Plato to Heraclitus; The Modern Age: Feuerbach to Hegel (through Berkeley, Hume, and Kant); Hegel to Feuerbach to Marx.

In his "Outline to Hegel's 'Notes on the History of Philosophy'" Lenin also said:

It is possible to see the history of philosophy in terms of circles...Each type of philosophical thinking equals a smaller circle on the big circle (spiral) of the evolution of human thought.

Hegel's idea of "the history of Philosophy as a circle," which Lenin cited in the above-mentioned essays, is not only a law which summarizes the development of Western thought, but also a profound reflection of the general law of the history of the development of philosophy and of thought in the universal sense. If we took this idea to be a compass to guide us in studying the laws which governed the development of traditional Chinese philosophy, we could see that, in

general, traditional Chinese philosophy was also made up of three major spirals? The first would be the philosophy of the pre-Qin period: From Confucius to Mencius to Xun Zi (through the philosophies of other schools of the time); the second would be Wei-Jin *xuanxue* (Daoist metaphysics): Wang Bi to Guo Xiang to the Monk Shao; the third would be Song-Ming neo-Confucianism: Zhang Zai to Zhu Xi to Wang Fuzhi. Between these three circles, which are to be seen as being put together as spirals, there would be the connecting tissues of development—the Han Classical scholarship (*jingxue*) which made up the transition from the first circle to the second one, and the development of Sui-Tang Buddhism, which made up the transition from the second circle to the third. Together these three ascending circles would make up a vast circle which would express the whole of Chinese philosophical tradition: from the pre-Qin and Han philosophy, whose primary substance was Confucianism; to the Wei-Jin and Sui-Tang philosophy, whose primary substance was *xuanxue* (metaphysics) built on the foundation and framework of the ideas of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi as well as a gradually Sinicized Buddhism; to the neo-Confucianism (Song-Ming Confucianism), which absorbed the thought of both Daoism (Taoism) and Buddhism, and on that basis developed (Confucianism) to a higher stage of evolution.

In the book *Comparative Religion* F. B. Jevons cited one example which quite clearly demonstrated the general significance of the study of comparative religion. He said that it was difficult to understand, or explain, the demotion of the Thunder God in the religion of ancient Babylon from his original status to the rank of a demon. The answer seemed to lie, he also said, in the study of comparative religion and its methodology, because in the history of the development of various religions we often encounter in the history of the development of various religions, the phenomenon of deities of an earlier religion being demoted to another rank in a new religion when the older, earlier religion is overcome and replaced. In this case, the method of the study of comparative religion provides us with a rational explanation for such a phenomenon as the demotion of the Thunder God of Babylon to the rank of a demon.

At the present time, the methods of comparative studies generally fall into two categories: namely, “parallel studies” and “influence studies.” The former refers to conducting comparative studies

between two different ideological cultures which do not have direct or indirect influences upon one another, and yet between whom there obviously are comparable points. In this case, the task would be to discover the similar as well as the dissimilar phenomena between the two and to demonstrate common laws and dissimilar, individual qualities. The latter is to conduct comparative studies where there are direct or indirect mutual influences, or, in some cases, unilateral influence, in order to discover the shared phenomena as well as points of dissimilarity so as to demonstrate the contradictions, conflicts, assimilations and compromises that exist between them.

No matter to which category it may belong, when a comparison is made it should not simply draw one or two elements from the ideological culture of a country, nation, or region and study them in comparison with a few sayings or one or two isolated phenomena from the ideological culture of another country, nation, or region. This would be what is known as piecemeal comparison which, strictly speaking, has hardly anything to do with the study of comparative philosophy or comparative religion. The comparative study of two different ideological cultural traditions ought to be conducted on the basis of a rather comprehensive and exhaustive comparison of a problem or problems found in both traditions. Only in this way can we discover the phenomena (within each) which reflect the presence of laws, and only then can we be led from knowledge or its absence to knowledge regarding this particular law of the development of human ideological culture, and from the understanding of the individual to an understanding of the general.

*Attention to the Specific Characteristics of a Culture*

In undertaking to study comparatively the ideological cultures of two different traditions, we should base conclusions on the special characteristics and features of both of these cultures. Only when a certain ideological culture is compared and analyzed in the light of a different ideological cultural tradition that its own special characteristics and features can become clarified. It is impossible to express the special characteristics of an ideological culture when it is studied only by itself or internally.

In the first and second part of this essay we discussed the fact that, although there were apparent similarities between metaphysics (*xuanxue*) in China during the Wei-Jin period and the *prajna* teachings

of Indian Buddhism, they ultimately were separate and not the same, each having its own special characteristics. We were able to draw such a conclusion because we had made a comparative study of these two ideological cultures which stemmed from separate traditions. For example, we came to know that the analysis which Wei-Jin *xuanxue* made of “being” and “non-being” was made from the angle or perspective of “existence,” that is, from the perspective of the relationship between “ontological substance” and “phenomenon,” with the latter being seen as the various expressions of ontological substance. Indian *prajna* Buddhist teaching, on the other hand, often analyzed *wu* (or *kong*, or non-existence) and *you* (being) as a pair of abstract concepts. Therefore, although both may have appeared to be speaking of *ben wu* (nothingness or origin), when Wang Bi employed the term he was referring to the idea of *yi wu wei ben* (taking nothingness to be the origin)—i.e., non-being (*wu*) being the substance behind being (*you*)—whereas when *prajna* teaching used the same term it referred to the idea that “all *dharma* did not have original self-nature” (*zhu fa ben wu zi xing*). In this latter formulation, *wu* (or *kong*, or non-existence) did not refer to substance, but rather (to the idea) that all things did not have real self-substance (*zi ti*) and therefore that the existence of all things was merely illusory. Furthermore, the method of reasoning behind Wei-Jin metaphysics and that behind Indian Buddhist *prajna* teaching were also different. The tendency for the Indian Buddhist *prajna* teachers was to employ an analytical method to reason out their viewpoints whereas the Wei-Jin *xuanxue* metaphysicists would reason by way of the philosophical methods represented by such sayings as: *de yi wang yan* (Once the meaning, or intent, is attained, the words may be forgotten) and *ji yu chu yan* (The meaning resides outside of the words, which are only its temporary abode).

For example, in the Kong zong (Emptiness school) of *prajna* Buddhism, the postulate “all *dharma* did not originally have self-nature” (*zhu fa ben wu zi xing*) would often be analyzed in the following logical manner:

(1) When things are analyzed at the utmost level of minutiae, further analysis would, presumably, bring the object of analysis to the realm of *lin xu* (the neighborhood of Void or Nothingness). That is, further analysis would bring about the logical conclusion that the object of analysis does not really have substance or a self—thus the

saying: "Observe and contemplate the minutiae of things; when the final minutiae is reached, there would be found no substance."

(2) When one analyzes things from the angle of the relationship between time and object, one will understand that neither *wu xiang* (material or physical phenomenon or appearance) nor *xin xiang* (mental or psychological phenomenon) is real. First, all things are generated instantaneously and also perish equally instantaneously, that is, all things are no sooner generated than they perish. Second, nothing lasts at all, that is, not things are first generated and then perish, but that they are generated and perish all at once: generation and perishing happen at one and the same time. For these two reasons therefore things cannot be said to have any real self-substance.

(3) The analysis of the object itself leads inevitably to the conclusion that it is made up of the combination of causes and effects and therefore it does not have any real ontological substance of its own. Since all *dharma* does not have real self-substance, all things or phenomena are therefore without original existence—thus the saying: "not that appearances (phenomena) perish, but that they are non-existent."

The method which the Wei-Jin *xuanxue* (Daoist metaphysics) scholars, such as Wang Bi, used to argue for their idea of "having origin in non-being" (*yi wu wei ben*) was very different from that of the *prajna* Buddhists. In the *Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) Zhi Lue* (An Outline of the Intentions of *Lao Zi [Lao Tzu]*), Wang Bi said:

The cause for the generation of a thing and the fulfilling of its achievement is this: It must be born of the Formless (*wu xing*) and have origin in the Name-less (*wu ming*). The Form-less and the Name-less is the origin of all things. It is neither warm nor cold, neither *gong* nor *shang* (*Gong* and *shang* are sounds of special characters—translator); its sound cannot be heard; one cannot see its expression if one were to look at it, nor know it by feeling, nor taste it. This is made of a primal combination of forces; as a phenomenon it does not have a form, as a noise it has but a little sound, and in terms of taste it does not have any presentation. It is for this reason that it can be the origin of all species and objects. It exists as an embryo, in which all Heaven and Earth is contained and

all parts of Heaven and Earth are connected. There is nowhere it cannot go, and yet it will not be directed. If something is warm, it cannot be cool; if something is *gong*, it cannot be *shang*. Once things take form, they are inevitably divided; sounds, too, naturally belong to separate divisions. Therefore, if something that is a phenomenon has form, it cannot be the Great Phenomenon; the sound that has noise cannot be the Great Sound. Nevertheless, if the Four Phenomena did not have form, the Great Phenomenon cannot be free. If the Five Sounds did not have noise, the Great Sound cannot arrive. If the Four Phenomena do take form, and yet objects are not made to submit to a master, the Great Phenomenon will be free; if the Five Sounds have noise but the mind does not follow them, the Great Sound will arrive.

In Wang Bi's view, Heaven and Earth and all things have many forms and appearances. What is one thing therefore cannot be any other thing at the same time; if something has a specific form, it cannot take another form. Thus, it is only the Form-less that can accomplish any form, only the Sound-less that can become any sound, only the Non-being (that which is not any specific being) that can accomplish being (can become anything). It is because Non-being can become, or accomplish all being that it can be the foundation of the existence of all existence. Therefore:

All things under heaven are born of "being." The beginning of being is in having non-being as its origin. If one desired to accomplish "being" one must first revert to "non-being" (see *Lao Zi [Lao Tzu] Zhu*) (Annotations on *Lao Zi [Lao Tzu]*).

All things under heaven are specific and concrete existences with forms and phenomena. That these things with forms and phenomena can come into being, or be generated, is because they have "non-being" as their ontological substance; only then can this substance be expressed as many specific things with many forms and appearances. For example, it was argued, the water of the sea is manifested in waves and billows of many different colors and shapes. That it can be

manifested in these many phenomena is precisely because it has its origins in water. Therefore, in order to preserve all things of various forms and phenomena, one must grasp the “non-being” which is their ontological substance.

However, the “non-being” which is the ontological substance is not a “thing” which exists outside of “all things.” Although one can say that “a phenomenon which has form is not the Great Phenomenon,” unless “the Four Phenomena have form the Great Phenomenon cannot be free.” Therefore, it is only when one can understand things through specific forms and phenomena, and yet not be confined by the specific forms and phenomena, that one can grasp “the phenomenon which is without phenomenon” (*wu xiang zhi xiang*), or, “the scenery outside of the picture” (*hua wai zhi jing*). It is only when one can understand through specific sounds and yet not be insistent on, or confined by, specific sounds that one can grasp “the sound that has no noise” (*wu sheng zhi yin*) or, “the sounds outside the chords” (*xuan wai zhi yin*), and it is only through the understanding of language (words) and yet not insisting on language that one can attain the “meaning without words” (*wu yan zhi yi*) or, the “meaning outside the words” (*yan wai zhi yi*).

From the above we can see quite clearly that the method with which the argument “taking non-being as the origin” (*yi wu wei ben*) was made by Wang Bi was very different from the analytical approach adopted by the Kong zong of *prajna* Buddhist teaching. The approach taken by Wang Bi was the method of *de yi wang yan* (attain the meaning and lose, or forget, the words) which is a peculiarly metaphysical method of the *xuanxue* scholars.

When we have compared and studied the various aspects of the *gui wu* (valuing non-being) school of Wei-Jin *xuanxue*, as exemplified by Wang Bi, and the Kong zong (Emptiness school) of Indian *prajna* teaching, we shall be able to see more clearly each school’s characteristics and its level of development. Only on such a basis can we clarify the relationship between Buddhism and Wei-Jin Daoist metaphysics during the period immediately or shortly after the introduction of Buddhism into China.

In issue no. 1, 1980 of *Zhexue Yanjiu* (*Philosophical Studies*), an article was published on “A Brief Discussion on the Theories of Early Daoist Religion on the Questions of Life and Death and Form and Spirit.” In that essay, comparisons were made of the Daoist religion and

Buddhism during the period of the Wei, Jin, and North and South dynasties, focusing on their respective views regarding life and death, and the question of *jietuo* (emancipation, or, in the Buddhist case, more commonly known as deliverance; in Sanskrit, *mukti*, or *moksa*). The article pointed out that on these questions between these two religions, both of which were popular at the time, there were three major differences:

(1) On the question of life and death, the Daoist religion advocated adopting the notion of “everlasting life” (i.e., non-perishing) as the goal, whereas Buddhism advocated taking “eternal extinction” (i.e., non-life) as the goal. Daoism (Taoism)’s idea of emancipation advocated the transformation of mortal flesh into immortality by way of an integration of the body and the spirit such that this integrated substance may live on in non-perishable eternal life and in so doing be separated from the trouble-laden world of the present and enter the spiritual world of fantasy and illusion. Buddhism, on the other hand, believed that the source of the pains of human life was the “life of being,” which was the state in which the spirit was connected to the body. Within this state of “life of being,” until the spirit achieves *Nirvana* it must always return in the cycles of incarnation. Only by transcending these cycles of incarnation becoming separated from the body and returning to everlasting extinction, can the spirit be delivered from the sea of bitterness that is human life.

(2) On the question of form and spirit, Daoism (Taoism) advocated the achievement of immortality by having the spirit and form become one. Buddhism advocated having the form and spirit separated from one another and thereby achieving Buddhahood. Buddhism believed that, unless the spirit became separated from the form, it would not be able to escape the cycles of incarnation and could not be delivered: to be delivered the spirit must be separated from the form, and, in response to its own completed destiny, enter extinction and perish. Daoism (Taoism) believed that the path of transcending life and death and becoming liberated did not lie in this sort of completed destiny or extinction but in the immortalization of the flesh and for the flesh to become immortal it cannot, and must not, be separated from the spirit.

(3) As to the methods of achieving liberation or deliverance Daoism (Taoism) advocated the tempering of the form, whereas Buddhism advocated the nurturing of the spirit. As Buddhism believed that the achievement of Buddhahood depended on enlightenment and

realization, the chief means of achieving *Nirvana* was to cultivate the inner mind and enhance one's own realization or awareness. As Daoism (Taoism) believed that the achievement of immortality depended on the accumulation of successes and attainments, its chief means of achieving liberation was to temper body and mind, nurture life, and be assisted by external matter (foreign substances).

From these three points of comparison, we generally can know the characteristics of the Daoist and the Buddhist religions in China during the period of the Wei, Jin, and North and South dynasties. Daoism (Taoism)'s goal was the achievement of immortality. Though this was an impossibility, because of this people's attention was directed toward the tempering and nurturing of the functions of their own bodies and spirits (e.g., the *qi gong*, or breathing exercises) and to the study of external matter such as the manufacturing of pills and elixirs (foreign substances) whose assistance they counted upon for the achievement of the goal of immortality. The goal of Buddhism was to achieve Buddhahood. Though this, too, was obviously an unattainable goal, nevertheless it directed people's attentions toward the analysis of psychological activities and to the study of the cognitive processes.

Therefore, we have been able to discover that in Daoism (Taoism) there was, and is, much material related to understanding of "the way of materials" and to knowledge concerning the human body that is worthy of our own efforts of analysis and investigation. For example, the book *Dao Zang* (The Treasury of the Way) comprised of 5,000 to 6,000 volumes all of which, unfortunately, have yet to be systematically organized and studied, contains a wealth of information on such things as breathing exercises, medicines and herbacology (pharmacology), chemistry, hygiene, and physical education.

On the other hand, there are also over 10,000 volumes of Buddhist sutras (including sastras, annotations, and other exegetical treatises) in Chinese. In many areas, such as the analysis of psychological and psychic activity, of the processes of knowledge and cognition, the analysis of the relationship between subject and object, the analysis of concepts, perception and conceptualization, and the logical process known as *vidjnana*, or sometimes *hetu-vidya*-these Buddhist canons have much to add to our enlightenment. If we could but purge from

these Daoist and Buddhist materials those parts which are unscientific, fabulous, fantastic or superstitious and analyze the remaining parts which are of positive value, it would be a most meaningful endeavor.

One of the purposes of studying comparative philosophy or comparative religion is to discover, through comparison and analysis, the characteristics of individual ideological cultures of various traditions, to identify and establish their peculiarities so that people may correctly understand and assess the status and role of these particular ideological cultures in the development of world history, and to ascertain the contributions they have made. The great treasure trove of human ideological and intellectual culture inevitably is made up of the good and superior parts of many individual ideological cultures, each with its own tradition and characteristics. If an ideological culture did not contain any special characteristic of its own, it would be difficult for it to make any contribution to human intellectual civilization. On the other hand, a culture which becomes the ideological culture of a nation, or a part thereof, is bound to have its own special characteristics and therefore is bound to make some contribution to the ideological culture of the human race as a whole.

### **The Isolation of Old Topics and New Issues**

Finally, in the comparative study of two ideological cultures of different traditions we should attend to the discovery and re-discovery of problems to be mulled over and solved, and to proposing new topics or lessons for investigation and study.

Jin Kemu, in his article “Shi lun fan yu zhong di ‘you yi chuanzai’” (A Tentative Discussion of the Terms, or Expressions, for “Being, Unity and Existence” in Sanskrit) pointed out that there are several roots, or radicals, for the expressions in Sanskrit that stand for the notions of being, unity, or existence. The more common ones, he tells us—and there are two of them—are *as* and *bhu*. These are both translated in the Chinese language as *you* (being). For example, in the translation of the *Zhong bian fen bie lun* (The Treatise on the Differences between the Mean and the Extremes) (written by Vasubandhu) made by Chen Zhenti, and in the translation of the *Bian zhong bian lun* (The Treatise on the Debate Between the Doctrines of the Mean and the Extremes) made by Xuan Zang, the term “sattvau.” was consistently translated as *you* (being). However, *bhava* (having, or possession), one

of the *dvadasanga pratityasamutpada*, or Twelve *yinyuan* (*nidanas*, or combinations of causes), was also translated as *you* (being). As refers to existence or being in the simple, abstract sense, or, if you will, the static, absolute sense, whereas *bhu* refers to existence in the transforming or specific sense, or in the moving, relative sense.

We also know that in ancient Greek philosophy, particularly in the Aristotelian system of thought, “substance” was also divided into two categories: primary substance and secondary substance. The two possessed different meanings. The former does not refer to simple and pure matter, nor to the general form common to the various matters, but to the individual units of matter and their forms. The second meaning of substance (or, secondary substance) referred, on the other hand, to the general form, or concept or category of matter, which becomes individualized in each separate matter.

Does this fact—that, while in Sanskrit, corresponding to various linguistic radicals, the terms for “being, unity, and existence” have different meanings, and that the term “substance” in the Aristotelian system of thought also has various meanings—enlighten us in any way? In the Chinese translations of the Buddhist canons the term for existence and being, which had different meanings in the original, all were translated as *you*. In Chinese traditional philosophy, then, did the concept conveyed by the term *you* also have various meanings? When Pei Wei, in his *Cong you lun* (Treatise on the Exaltation of Being) spoke of “self-generating and inevitably existent in substance” (*zi sheng er bie ti you*) did the term *you* there refer to specifically existent matters or to the general existence of matter? Again, in the usage of Guo Xiang’s *Zhuang Zi Zhu* (Annotations on *Zhuang Zi*) did the term *you* sometimes refer to the specifically existent matters and sometimes to the general existence of matter? These are all questions which call for further investigation and require deeper analyses of the meaning(s) contained in the term *you* in traditional Chinese philosophy.

In his book *Ti yong lun* (On Substance and Use), Xiong Shili proposed that the essential and fundamental difference between traditional Chinese philosophy and Indian Buddhism was that where traditional Chinese philosophy talked about the “one-ness of substance and use” (*ti yong ru yi*) Indian Buddhism separated substance from use, rending the two asunder. Whether or not Xiong’s conclusion was correct is not something we wish to make a point of in

our discussion here, but certainly it can be said that the problem which he raised in his study of these two ideological cultures stemming from different traditions is most likely to have considerable significance for the study of the characteristics of the Chinese philosophical tradition itself.

From the perspective of the general trends in the development of traditional Chinese philosophy, it can be seen that the notions of *tian dao* (Heaven's Way) and *ren dao* (the way of humanity) generally are considered to be consistent and integrated one with the other—in other words, it was assumed that the ideal should and could be realized in present reality. Even in the *xuanxue* metaphysics of the Wei-Jin period, although this system of thought took the ideas of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi to be its framework, the ultimate pursuit of the metaphysicians was still to achieve the “way of the inner sage and the outward monarch combined” (*nei sheng wai wang zhi dao*) which was contained in the “paradise which is naturally possessed by the Great Teaching” (*ming jiao zhong zi you le di*), i.e., in Confucianism. When the Song-Ming neo-Confucianists opposed Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism), they did so chiefly on the grounds that Buddhists and Daoists, according to the neo-Confucianists, “pursued the illusory transcendental periphery of the universe of that which was real.” The neo-Confucianists claimed to believe fundamentally that “the ethics of the norm” (*gang chang*) and the great teaching (*ming jiao*) equaled “the principle of heaven” (*tian li*). On the other hand, in Chinese Buddhism, too, and particularly in the Chan School, the teaching was that “achieving Buddhahood” did not require leaping out of, or being separated from a life of reality. The Chan Buddhists said, “Carrying water, cutting firewood, all these contained the most wonderful way and truth”—that is, it was possible for one to become enlightened to the wonderful way of achieving Buddhahood even in the mundane routines of everyday life.

When we compare China's traditional philosophy with the transcendentalist “going outside of the world” notion in Indian Buddhism, can we say that Chinese philosophy, after all, remained indeed faithful to the idea of “one-ness of substance and use” and that it was for this reason that the notions of complete transcendentalism were never able to become part of the mainstream of traditional Chinese thought? As I see it, this, too, is a question which merits further and more penetrating investigation.

If we were to apply the comparative method to the study of the philosophical ideas and religious doctrines of various ideological cultures which stemmed from different traditions, such as the ideological culture of China and that of India, or that of the Western world, we will, I believe, discover even more lessons to be learned and topics to be discussed.

Over a hundred years ago that Marx and Engels pointed out: "Because the bourgeoisie opened up a world market, the production and consumption of the various countries have become universalized....This is true not only of material production, but of the products of the mind and spirit as well. The spiritual products of the nations have become their common property, and the partialism and parochialism of the individual nations have become daily increasingly impossible. Therefore, out of the literature of the many nations and places of the world a world literature has been formed."

According to the editor-annotator, the term "literature" here referred to writing in many areas, including science, art and philosophy. We have now reached the 1980s; our age is much more advanced than that of 1848 when Marx and Engels wrote the *Communist Manifesto*. The interflow of ideas and culture and the interaction between peoples and civilizations have become even more widespread and profound. The comparative study of philosophy and religion is bound to promote the study of the history of Chinese philosophy. In the comparative study of ideological cultures of different traditions we can discover the common laws which govern the development of things; we can expose and demonstrate the characteristics and levels of development of various ideological cultures and expand the contents and scope of our study. Will this also play a part in the enrichment and enhancement of the development of Marxism? I am sure that it will.

## **The Development of Chinese Culture: Some Comments in Light of the Study of the Introduction of Indian Buddhism into China**

In the *Historical Records (Shiji)* there is a saying, "Those who, living today, are interested in the ancient Way as the mirror in which they see themselves reflected are different (from ordinary people)." Jia Yi, in "On the Past of the Qin Dynasty" (*Guoqin lun*), quoted a proverb: "Remembrance of the past is the teacher of the future." Past things cannot be taken in their entirety as models of future things; however, is it not possible to analyze and examine the course of past history, find some regularity behind certain phenomena, and let that regularity serve as a frame of reference in terms of which to think about the present? If the answer to this question were simply negative, then there would be no point in studying history and reflecting upon it. Therefore, I think there is some truth in the saying, "Remembrance of the past is the teacher of the future."

In the course of the development of Chinese history, foreign culture was introduced into China in three major occasions. First is the introduction of Indian culture after the first century A.D. The Indian culture that was introduced consisted principally of Indian Buddhism and influenced Chinese culture profoundly. Second is the introduction of Western civilization which began in the seventeenth century (the middle of the Ming dynasty period). This consisted principally of the efforts of Western missionaries, such as Matteo Ricci, to introduce Western civilization. Third is the introduction of Marxism after the May Fourth Movement.

The historical conditions of these three events were different. The introductions of a foreign culture occurred in different periods in Chinese history; the nature of cultures introduced and the manner in which they were introduced were also different. Consequently, these three events had different effects on Chinese culture. It is a major enterprise to investigate this matter comprehensively, and such an enterprise is beyond the limits of my ability. In this paper I would like

only to discuss the historical example of the introduction of Buddhism, and examine certain phenomena that appear after the foreign culture that has been introduced comes into contact with the native culture. I would also like to see whether an examination of these phenomena can provide us with some meaningful insights regarding the more general issue of the introduction of a foreign culture.

Generally speaking, the introduction of Indian Buddhism involved the following stages: first, Buddhism attached itself to the native culture so that it could spread; secondly, certain contradictions and conflicts arose between Buddhism and traditional Chinese culture; finally, Buddhism was assimilated by Chinese culture and contributed on a large scale to the further development of Chinese culture. I would like to comment briefly on each of these stages.

### I.

When Indian culture was first introduced into China, it attached itself to the native Chinese culture so that it could spread and exert its influence. When Buddhism was introduced into China in the Han Dynasty period (206 B.C.-220), it was attached to the native Chinese "techniques of the Way" or "Taoist techniques" (*daoshu* or *fanqshu*). During the Wei and Jin Dynasties (220-419), when the metaphysical speculation of the "profound learning" (*xuanxue*) was popular, "Buddha" and "Emperor Huang and Lao Zi" were treated as similar entities. The Prince of Chu "read the sayings of Emperor Huang and Lao Zi and honored the Buddha's temple (*rensi*)." (*Houhan shu*, chapter 42). Emperor Huan (reign years: 147-167) also built shrines for Emperor Huang and Lao Zi as well as for the Buddha in his palace (*Houhan shu*, chapter 30B, Xiang Kai zhuan).

At that time even Buddhists themselves called their teaching "techniques of the Way (*daoshu*)." In the essay, "On the Resolution of Puzzles" (*Lihuo lun*), Mou Zi treats Buddhism as one of the ninety-six types of techniques of the Way: "There are ninety-six different kinds of spiritual Ways (*dao*). If you look for the august and great, none surpasses the Way of the Buddha (*fodao*)." In the Scripture in forty-two chapters (*Sishi'erzhang jing*), Buddhism is also called "the Way of Buddha (*fodao*)" by its Buddhist author.

The content of Buddhist teaching at that time was mainly summarized by such theses as "the imperishability of the soul" and

“moral retribution of causes and consequences.” There did not seem to have been any understanding of the teaching of “no self” in Indian Buddhism. The idea of “the imperishability of the soul” had existed indigenously in Chinese philosophy, where it took the various forms of “theories about ghosts” (you gui lun). In the Book of Poetry there is a saying that the human spirit goes to heaven after passing away (Sanhou zaitian, Daya, Fuwanq). In the *Huainan Zi* it is said that “body can die, but the spirit cannot die” (Jingshen xun). In opposition to these thoughts, during the Han Dynasty period Huan Tan developed a theory that “when the body is dead the spirit is also dead.” Wang Chong (27-90?) also said, “A person who is dead does not become a ghost.” Nevertheless, the theory that “the imperishability of the soul” can be achieved by certain physical and spiritual cultivation was native to Chinese philosophy.

As for the “moral retribution of causes and consequences,” although there are differences between the discussions in Buddhism and native Chinese philosophy, the Buddhist idea which was popular in the Han Dynasty was consistent with the native Chinese idea that “good deeds produce happiness and licentiousness, misfortune (*Fushan huovin*).” *The Book of Changes (Yi jing)* says, “A family which accumulates good deeds is bound to have a lot of happiness; a family which fails to accumulate good deeds is bound to have misfortunes.”

Toward the end of the Han Dynasty period and around the beginning of the Wei Dynasty period (220-265) numerous new translations of Buddhist scriptures appeared. Buddhism spread in China in two major streams: one was the school of An Shigao, which taught Hinayana Buddhism and emphasized the method of meditation; and the other was the school of Zhi Loujiachen (Lokaksema), which taught Mahayana Buddhism and lectured on the Perfection of Wisdom philosophy. An Shigao translated many Buddhist scriptures. His most influential translations were the AnaDana sutra (Anban shouyi jing) and the Yinchiru Jing (skandhadhatv-vatana-sutra?). The Anapana sutra discussed the techniques of breath control, which was similar to the breath control techniques of Chinese Taoists and those who followed the cult of immortals (*shenxian*). The Yinchiru jing explained Buddhist terms and concepts and was similar to the commentarial scholarship of scriptures that flourished during the Han Dynasty period.

The Yinchiru jing took the concept of “original breath (*yuanqi*)” as its basic category and developed a theory of the universe and human life; *yuan qi* was said to be the same as the “five elements” (*wuxing*). It also discussed the Buddhist theory of “five accumulations” (*wuyin*, an earlier term used to translate *skandha*, which was later translated as *wuyun*), treating the five categories of form (*se*, or *rupa*), feeling (*shou*, or *vedana*), perception (*xiang*, or *samjnan*, volition (*xing*, or *samskara*), and consciousness (*shi*, or *vijnana*) as the effects of the Five Elements. From these examples we can detect that An Shigao advocated the Hinayana method of meditation; it is also clear that he attached Buddhism to the teachings of the “techniques of the Way” (*daoshu*) that were prevalent in China and explained Buddhism using as his model these teachings about the technique of the Way.

The school of Zhi Loujiachen taught the Mahayana learning of the Perfection of Wisdom; it believed that the basic principle of life is “the mind (or spirit, *shen*) reverting to the original truth (*benzhen*)” and becoming one with the “Way.” Here we can see the influence of the Taoist thought of the Lao Zi and the Zhuang zi. The second generation disciple of Zhi Loujiachen, Zhi Qian, translated the Prajnaparemita sutra (“Perfection of Wisdom scripture”) into Chinese, giving its title as the “Scripture of Salvation into the Infinite through Great Brightness” (*Daming du wuji Jing*). The word “prajna in the title was here translated as “great brightness (*daming*)” The word “brightness (*ming*)” must have been taken in the sense of the statement “Knowledge of the constant is known as discernment (or brightness, *ming*)” in the Lao Zi (chapter 16). The word “paremite” was translated as “salvation into the infinite (*du wuji*)” This expression must similarly refer to the state of union with the “Way” (“Return to the Infinite,” Lao Zi, chapter 28).

During the Wei and the Jin Dynasties, the ontology of the “profound learning” metaphysics based on the Taoist thought in the Lao zi and the Zhuang Zi was very popular. The central issue of “profound learning” metaphysics was the question of the relationship between the Root (*ben*) and the Branches (*mo*) and between Being (*you*) and Nonbeing (*wu*). The central issue of the Buddhist teaching of the Perfection of Wisdom (*prajna*) was the question of Emptiness (*kong*) and Existence (*you*, “Being”). Thus the Buddhist discussion was somewhat similar to that of the “profound learning” metaphysics. For this reason many Buddhists of that time used the “profound learning”

metaphysics to interpret Buddhist philosophy, even going so far as to use the so-called methods of “matching concepts (*qe yi*)” and “linking similar things (*lian lei*).”

Dao'an once said: “Among the twelve categories of Buddhist scriptures that of the *pimuluo* (meaning *pifuluo*, ie, *vaipulya* which probably meant Mahayana) scriptures is most popular; this was because the *Vaipulya* scripture's teaching of “forgetting both existence and nonexistence” was similar the thought taught in the land in the Lao Zi and the Zhuang zi.” Here we can see that this famous teacher of that time already recognized that the popularity of Buddhism depended on its being understood in light of the thoughts of the Lao Zi and the Zhuang Zi.

There is a passage in the section, “Letters and Scholarship,” of *the New Account of Tales of the World (Shishuo xinyu)*: “During the Zhengshi era (240-249), Wang Bi (226-249) and He Yan (ca. 190-249) had favored profound and transcendent (*xuansheng*) conversations about the Lao Zi and the Zhuang Zi, and after that the world set great store by them. But at the time of the crossing of the Yangze River (307-312) Buddhist doctrines became especially popular” (quoted in Liu Xiaobiao's commentary). In the beginning of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-419), the study of “*prajna* became extremely popular and the so-called “six schools and seven sects” (*liujia qizong*) developed. The issue that they were interested in was essentially the question of the relationship between the Root (*ben*) and the Branches (*mo*) and between Being (*you*) and Nonbeing (*wu*). What is called the “teaching of the Original Nonbeing” (*benwu yi*) inherited and developed further the teaching that “valued Nonbeing” (*guiwu*) taught by Wang Bi and He Yan; the “teaching of Annihilating Mind” (*xinwu Yi*) was similar to Ji Kang and Ruan Ji's idea of “No Mind” (*wuxin*); the “teaching of Matter As Such” (*jise yi*) is related to Guo Xiang's thought of “Exalting Being” (*chongyou*).

Why did all these occur? I think any culture has its conservative elements, which gives that culture a resistance to foreign cultures. Thus, foreign cultures must first adjust themselves to the native culture and attach themselves to it. Those parts which are similar to the native culture will then spread easily; those parts which are alien to the native culture will then be slowly assimilated by the native culture and thereby influence the native culture.

## II.

As it spread broadly after the Eastern Jin Dynasty, Indian Buddhism gave rise to contradictions and conflicts between the traditional Chinese culture and the imported Indian culture. Yet in the midst of these contradictions and conflicts Indian Buddhism contributed to the further development of Chinese culture.

In the early years of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, the Buddhist teaching of Perfection of Wisdom (prajna) attached itself to the "profound learning" metaphysics based on the Lao Zi and the Zhuang Zi; this position may be called the "Buddhist profound learning metaphysics (*foxuan*)." By the end of the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the beginning of the Liu Song Dynasty, other schools of Buddhism, both Hinayana and Mahayana, started to be introduced; they offered a variety of interpretations of the Buddhist scriptures, and exegetical scholarship on scriptures developed.

In the final analysis, Indian culture and native Chinese culture represent two distinct and different types of cultural traditions. Indian culture could not remain permanently attached to Chinese culture.

By the end of the Eastern Jin Dynasty period and later, numerous translations of Buddhist scriptures appeared, and these translations became more and more systematic. At the same time the superiority of some aspects of Indian culture over traditional Chinese culture became evident. Contradictions and conflicts inevitably arose between the two different cultural traditions.

The translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese began in the Han Dynasty period. According to the Kaiyuan catalogue of Buddhist scriptures, about 1420 volumes of Buddhist scriptures were translated during the roughly 25 years between the Han Dynasty and the Western Jin Dynasty. But during the Eastern Jin Dynasty (if we include the activities in the northern dynasties of Later Qin, Western Qin, Former Liang, and Northern Liang), about 1716 volumes of Buddhist scriptures were translated. More scriptures were translated during these 100 years than during the 250 years that preceded them. Particularly noteworthy in this context are Kumarajiva's precise translations of Mahayana and Hinayana scriptures, monastic rules, and doctrinal treatises; these translations enabled readers to understand the original meaning of the teachings that were representative of Indian Buddhist culture. By that time, not only foreign monks, but also Chinese monks had attained a relatively

correct understanding of Buddhism which tallied with the original Indian meaning of its teachings. As they achieved a relatively correct understanding of Buddhism, new problems confronted these Buddhists: should they continue to understand Buddhism in terms of Chinese culture, or should they teach Buddhism in China according to the original meaning of its teaching? Thus began the inevitable conflicts between these two different types of cultures.

During the Southern and Northern Dynasties period (420-589), the conflicts between Buddhism and native Chinese culture occurred in many fields. These conflicts surfaced as problems of political and economic interests; they also appeared as problems in the fields of philosophy, religion, and ethics.

An important historical work has been preserved for us, and this work provides us with the broad outline of the contradictions and conflicts between Indian Buddhism and traditional Chinese culture during this period. This work is the *Hongming Ji*. Through this work we can glimpse the issues that arose at that time: the controversy over the immortality or mortality of the spirit (or soul, *shen*); the controversy over karmic retribution, which involved the philosophical issue of "causes and consequences" versus moral causality (*yinguo*, preordained fate (*ziran*); "our preordained nature (*xingming*) is self-so"); the relation between Emptiness and Existence; the controversy over the question whether monks should pay respect to the ruler, which involved the issue of this-worldly or other-worldly ethics (*chushi*; *rushi*); the relationship between human beings and other "sentient beings" (*sattva*). He Chengtian, basing himself on the *Book of Changes*, maintained that human beings, Heaven and Earth are three distinct entities, and criticized Buddhists for failing to make these distinctions, treating human beings and other sentient beings on the same level. This issue was related to the defense of the Confucian tradition.

There was also a controversy about Chinese culture and foreign cultures. He Chengtian, in "Reply to Zong Bin," wrote: "Chinese people and foreigners are naturally different, and this difference is rooted in their different natures (*xing*). Chinese people are endowed with a clear and harmonious nature, and are capable of humane sentiments and upholding correct morality; therefore the Duke of Zhou and Confucius taught them the teaching of human nature and learning; foreigners are endowed with a violent nature and are greedy

and full of anger; therefore sakyamuni imposed on them the discipline of the five precepts." Gu Huan, in his "On Chinese and Foreigners" (*Yixia lun*), also claimed that China is the country of "rites and morality" (*liyi*) and that therefore we should not abandon the Chinese ways and imitate foreign countries. The principle on which he based his argument was roughly the same as that of He Chengtian.

During this period Emperor Wu in the North Chou Dynasty ordered the persecution of Buddhism, not only for political and economic reasons, but also for cultural reasons. In this period the contradictions and conflicts between Buddhism and Taoism, which was the traditional religion of the Chinese people, also became acute. First, there was the controversy about the theory that Lao Zi transformed himself into a foreign teacher (the Buddha); this was then followed by the controversies over death and rebirth, body and mind (*shen*, "spirit"), as well as the controversy about the relationship between Chinese and foreign cultures.

All these controversies expressed the contradictions and conflicts between two different types of cultures. Some controversies continued right into the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581-617; 618-907). I will not comment on them further here.

It is clear from the situation described above that after two different types of cultures come into contact with each other, contradictions and conflicts inevitably arise. One important question is how to deal with these contradictions and conflicts. Do we either repel foreign cultures using political power, or remain amidst these contradictions and conflicts and absorb and assimilate what is good in the foreign culture? This is a large question. From the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589) to the Sui and Tang Dynasties there were contradictions and conflicts between Indian culture and the native Chinese culture. In my opinion Chinese people did not reject the foreign culture, but rather absorbed and digested the foreign culture as much as possible. This attitude showed the confidence of the nation as well as the values of its own culture.

The experience of these contradictions and conflicts and the continued assimilation of Indian culture into traditional Chinese culture that resulted from it contributed forcefully to the development of Chinese culture. During this period, Chinese culture flourished in the fields of philosophy, literature, architecture, technology, and even medicine. There is no doubt that all these accomplishments were

related to the way in which Indian culture was treated in China at that time.

### III.

Indian Buddhism was gradually assimilated by Chinese culture after the Sui and Tang Dynasties. First Sinified Buddhist schools were established. By the Song Dynasty (960-1279) Buddhism had become a part of and was completely blended into traditional Chinese culture—Buddhism evolved into the Neo-Confucian Philosophy of Principle (*lixue*) of the Song and Ming Dynasties.

Among the several schools of Buddhism that appeared during the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the Tiantai School, Huayan School, and Chan School were in fact Sinified schools of Buddhism. The central issues that these three schools concentrated on were the problem of the relationship between mind (*xin*) and human nature (or essence) (*xing*) and the problem of the relationship between principle (*li*) and fact (*shi*). The problem of the relationship between mind and human nature had always been an important issue in traditional Chinese philosophy. The discussion of this issue can be traced back to Confucius and especially to Mencius. When Mencius talked about “giving full realization to his mind” (*jinxin*), “understanding his own nature” (*zhixing*), and “knowing heaven” (*zhitian*) side by side in one sentence, he was clearly touched upon the issue of nature and mind. The above-mentioned three schools of Buddhism all discussed the issues of Buddha nature (*foxing*) and the original mind (*benxin*). The Chan School was especially interested in the issue of mind and human nature. According to the Chan School the Buddha nature is identical with the original mind; the Chan School in fact had developed the indigenous Chinese discussion of mind and human nature in a new context from one particular perspective.

As for the problem of principle and fact, the Hua-yen School talked about the “free and harmonious interpenetration between principle (*li*) and fact (*shi*) (*lishi wu'ai*)” and the “free and harmonious interpenetration among facts (*shishi wu'ai*).” This discussion was not unrelated to the “profound learning” metaphysics of the Wei and Jin Dynasties, since the idea of “the identity of the substance (*ti*) and function (*yong*)” had already existed in the “profound learning” metaphysics of that time. For example, Wang Bi once claimed that “Nonbeing is the cause of Being.” He also said, “Although (Heaven

and Earth) are engaged in great undertakings and have great wealth in possessing the myriad things, each thing still has its own character. Although it is valuable to have Nonbeing as its function, nevertheless there cannot be substance without Nonbeing.”(Commentary on the Lao Zi, chapter 38). Both these statements explain the relationship between Being and Nonbeing on the basis of “the identity of substance and function.” The idea of the “free and harmonious interpenetration between principle (*li*) and fact (*shi*)” is thus related to Wang Bi’s thought. On the other hand, the idea of the “free and harmonious interpenetration among facts (*shishi wu’ ai*)” was influenced by Guo Xiang’s theory of “self-transformation of things” (*duhualun*).

In China, the Huayan school and Chan school have had the most influence on Chinese philosophy. This was because they represented Sinified Buddhism. By contrast, the Faxiang school only lasted about thirty years, in spite of the fact that it was promoted by the famous Xuanzang. This was because the Faxiang school was purely Indian Buddhism.

In the Song Dynasty the Neo-Confucian Philosophy of Principle (*lixue*) opposed Buddhism, and from the longer perspective of the development of Chinese philosophy, this Neo-Confucian Philosophy of Principle took over the place that Buddhism had occupied earlier. This development was not a matter of accident, either. We can understand the reasons behind this development in a coherent way. From the beginning traditional Chinese thought has been “this-worldly” (*rushi*); in other words it has focussed on the realization of “ordering the state and pacifying the entire world (*zhiguo ping tianxia*).” This basic orientation differed fundamentally from that of “other-worldly” (*chushi*) Buddhist thought. However, even in traditional Chinese thought questions such as “What is the basis for the establishment of a perfect society?,” and “How are we to realize the ideal of the “ordering of the state and pacifying the entire world?” became very important. In this connection the concept of “Heavenly principle (*tianli*)” was introduced. Cheng Hao said, “There are many things in my learning that I have received from others, but the two character phrase *tianli* (“heavenly principle”) is derived from my own experience.” The *tianli* (“heavenly principle”) is not *konqli* (“empty principle” or “principle of emptiness”) but rather *shili* (“substantial principle” or “principle of the real”); it is the “virtue that expresses perfection.” As for the relation between “Heaven (*tian*)” and “Man

(ren)" (or renxing, i.e., the nature of human being), Neo-Confucianists either claim that "Nature is the principle (Xing ji li)," or state that "The mind is the principle (Xin ji li)." Both these statements refer to the issue of the relation between the mind and human nature. Thus this issue was a basic question in Neo-Confucianism.

In both the Neo-Confucian positions expressed in these theses ("Nature is the principle" and "The mind is the principle"), the question of the relationship between Heaven and human beings arises. Consequently, the Neo-Confucian thinkers established in their ontology "the unity of Heaven and human beings." The Cheng brothers described the relation between Heaven and human beings by the statement "The substance (*ti*) and the function (*yong*) share the same source; what is manifest (*xian*) and what is subtle (*wei*) are not separated from each other." Zhu Xi described this relationship of Heaven and human beings using the thesis "Every human being has his Great Ultimate (*taiji*), and every object has its Great Ultimate." Lu Jiuyuan says "the Universe is my mind and my mind is the Universe." And Wang Shouren spoke about the identity of Heaven and human beings (*tianren yiti*) when he stated, "The mind is the principle. When we say mind, we are at the same time referring to all of Heaven, Earth, and myriad things."

When the ideal that "the Heaven and human beings become one being" is perfectly realized, the project of "ordering the state and pacifying the entire world" is also realized; from the perspective of perfecting an individual human being, what is required is to manifest the "Heavenly principle" in himself. In order to manifest the "Heavenly principle" in himself, a person must raise the standard of his morality to the point where the unity of knowledge and action is achieved, and he must engage in the spiritual cultivation of his own mind. An important linkage developed in this sphere of mind cultivation between the Neo-Confucian Philosophy of Principle during the Song (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1661) periods and the spiritual cultivation and practice of Chan Buddhism that had flourished earlier. However, the goal of the moral practice of Neo-Confucianism was not to enable the individual to achieve Buddhahood, but to realize their ideal of a harmonious society. Neo-Confucianism criticized Buddhism on the one hand, and absorbed and assimilated Buddhism on the other, and in this way developed for Chinese philosophy a nearer-perfect system that contained an

ontology, a theory of value and a philosophy of life. In the period starting from the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220) and ending with the Song and Ming Dynasties, Chinese philosophy experienced the impact of a foreign culture, and completed a course of development that may be described by the formula of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The three developments we have examined above may be understood as expressions of this threefold formula of historical development. The encounter and assimilation of Indian Buddhism was the first example of this kind in the history of Chinese philosophy.

What can we learn from this process? I believe that there are at least four lessons.

1) The process of the absorption of Indian culture into Chinese culture lasted several hundred years. This shows that the absorption and assimilation of one culture into another cannot be accomplished overnight, but that it requires a certain duration of time and certain conditions. We can say the following on the basis of the example of the introduction of Indian culture: although Indian Buddhism was very popular between the first and the tenth century, traditional Chinese culture also revealed its great vitality; each of the three stages of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis pointed to the places where the vitality of traditional Chinese culture lay and showed in what sense it was valuable; each of these stages showed how traditional Chinese culture dared to welcome a foreign culture into its midst, and how effective it was in absorbing and assimilating it. From this example, we can conclude that the attitude of "openness" towards foreign cultures is a sign of the vitality of the national culture. The capacity of a culture to assimilate a foreign culture is an important condition for the more rapid growth of that culture. Foreign cultures act as stimuli for the development of the native culture. When a vigorous culture faces the challenges of a foreign culture, not only does it not reject outright that culture, but it assimilates the foreign culture, in order to foster its own healthy development. Such viewpoints as "cultural relativism" (*benwei wenhua*) and "nativism" (or "national essence ideology," *guocui zhuyi*) not only stifle the development of Chinese national culture; they are themselves expressions of the decline of that culture.

2) This analysis of the phenomena which appeared after the encounter of native Chinese culture with Indian culture is a product of our current understanding. At the time this process of historical

development occurred, people who were directly involved in this development were not aware of what we know today with hindsight, namely that the development went through a series of distinctive stages. When we study these stages of development today, we can recognize the following phenomena: at one stage in the introduction of a foreign culture, the foreign culture frequently spontaneously adjusts itself to the needs of the native culture in a variety of ways and searches for points of integration with the native culture. For example, during the Han Dynasty period, Buddhism emphasized such slogans as “the imperishability of the soul” and “moral retribution of causes and consequences;” later, it also adjusted itself to the “profound learning” metaphysics of the Wei and Jin Dynasties and advocated the “Buddhist metaphysics of profound learning (foxuan).” It was by no means simply a matter of accident that these developments occurred at that time.

Can we then say that this kind of development constitutes a certain universal law? I believe we can. If a foreign culture takes the place of the native culture (or a certain part of that culture) instead of adjusting itself to the native culture, it will then have negated everything about the native culture (or the corresponding part of that culture.) This will result for the host country in cutting off its own history and in abandoning the spirit upon which the existence of its own nationality has depended over a very long period. In this case, the foreign culture becomes something imposed by force on the people or the nation to which the foreign culture was introduced. Consequently, that foreign culture remains a rootless culture and could hardly survive over a long period of time there.

If, after a foreign culture has been introduced, a native culture is able self-consciously and deliberately to seek out the points of integration between itself and the foreign culture, and to let that foreign culture adjust quickly and smoothly to the needs of the development of the people and the nation to which it has been introduced, the situation will be different. Not only will the development of the native culture be enriched, but the native culture will also be able to generate under the impact of the foreign culture new possibilities for reorienting some of the areas of its development.

3) Every culture has its own distinctive characteristics which distinguish it from other cultures. If it is to exist as a unique culture its fundamental characteristics must be protected; otherwise it will

become a thing of the past and not continue as a real culture that functions in real life. Compared with Indian Buddhism, the most evident characteristic of traditional Chinese culture is that it teaches us how to realize the ideal of "ordering the state and pacifying the entire world." Such a "this-worldly" spirit differs completely from the "other-worldly" spirit of Indian Buddhism. After being introduced to China, Indian Buddhism exerted profound influences on the social life of Chinese people; it changed many aspects of the social life of Chinese people. But the basic "this-world" spirit of Chinese culture has never been changed by the imported Indian culture. Hence, Chinese culture as an independent cultural system continued to exist and be developed.

Whether traditional Chinese culture can be further developed in the future thus depends on two factors: first, it must be able to keep its own distinctive characteristics; secondly, it must also be brave in assimilating foreign cultures in order to meet the developmental needs of actual social life. The first of these two conditions allows for the expression of the unique and distinctive value of a particular traditional culture. If a culture is unable to keep its own characteristics, it will vanish from the stage of history. The second condition gives expression to the fact that if a vigorous culture preserves its distinctive characteristics, and at the same time is also able to follow contemporary developments and assimilate new things, it is then bound to be able to develop further. If a culture loses its capacity for assimilating new things, it can no longer continue to exist as a culture which keeps its own characteristics. The history of the development of traditional Chinese culture illustrates that Chinese culture fulfilled these two conditions in the course of its history.

4) After the introduction of Indian culture into China, there was a period in which the influence of Buddhism in daily life was greater than that of the native Chinese culture. The bibliographical chapter in the History of the Sui Dynasty (Suishu, Jingjizhi) says that since Emperors promoted Buddhism, it developed so greatly that "everyone admired Buddhism. The copies of Buddhist scriptures that circulated among ordinary people were a hundred times more numerous than those of the Six Classics." Thus, many of the new developments in Chinese culture during the Sui and the Tang Dynasties were connected with Buddhism. Many famous thinkers during that time were monks and some of the Buddhist schools

contributed to the development of Chinese philosophy. This situation may represent phenomena that necessarily occur at one stage after two different traditions of culture have remained in contact with each other over a long period.

However, Chinese Buddhist schools and sects did not develop in the direction of forcefully adapting the spirit of social life in China to the demands of Indian culture; on the contrary, Buddhism developed in the direction, of Sinification. It is particularly important to note in this context that the distinctively “religious” characteristic of Buddhism was destroyed by the emergence of Chan Buddhism. Chan taught that you not only do not have to recite scriptures and pray to the Buddha; you may also swear at the Buddha and patriarchs. Furthermore, according to Chan, the ideal of becoming the Buddha can be realized in daily life. In this sense, the place of Buddhism is taken by traditional Chinese culture: “Carrying water and chopping fire wood—without exception these are all spiritual paths.” It will require only one more step beyond this in order to reach the position that “serving the father and serving the ruler” is the way of becoming a sage and a wise man. Once this step is taken, traditional Chinese culture has replaced Buddhism completely.

At present, the development of history demands that we place the question “how should Chinese culture develop?” again on the agenda for our discussion of contemporary issues. Our nation is again placed under the impact of various intellectual trends of Western culture: how are we to reflect upon the value of traditional Chinese culture, how are we to reform and develop it further so that it will adapt to the currently unfolding trends of modernization? In order to do justice to these questions, we must continuously explore and meet new challenges. We have discussed the introduction of Buddhism to China, and described the variety of phenomena that appeared after our native culture experienced the impact of a foreign culture. This exploration ought to serve as a very important reference point for studying the future development of Chinese culture.

(Translated by Koichi Shinohara)



## **Relationships between Traditional and Imported Thought and Culture in China: The Importance of Buddhism**

Historically, there were three major occasions when China imported foreign culture and ideology. The first was the importation of Buddhism—the focus of this paper.

The second cultural incursion was that of Western culture, an event which, for a time, gave rise to debate over the respective merits of things past and present, Chinese and foreign. From a philosophical standpoint, this event raised questions concerning the relationships between Western and Chinese philosophy. Many modern philosophers, whether or not they were aware of it, were in actuality striving to reconcile these two vastly different cultures. Before Liberation, Feng Youlan was perhaps most successful in reconciling the two. His “New Rationalism” may be seen as an attempt to use Western pragmatism to resolve several traditional Chinese philosophical questions. That he did not succeed in determining the true course of Chinese philosophical development can be seen in the fact that, in practice, he failed to solve China’s social problems.

The third event was the importation of Marxism, a European ideology developed in response to European historical conditions. In order for Marxism to take root in China, it must also, in a certain sense, merge with traditional Chinese culture and thought. That is to say, it must pass through a stage of critical acceptance of traditional culture.

Jia Yi in his “Guo Chin Lun” (*Treatise on the Failings of Ch’in*) quoted an old adage: “The unforgotten events of the past are teachers of the future.” Can we today learn anything from the contacts between imported Buddhism and traditional Chinese culture? I think we can.

I would like to discuss three important elements which characterized Buddhism’s spread in China.

First, is the fact that when Buddhism first entered China, it tended to attach itself to native ideologies. Only later did it gradually develop and begin to influence those ideologies.

When, during the Han dynasty, Buddhism entered China, it identified itself with native religious practitioners. During the Wei-Jin period, Buddhism identified itself with the "Mysterious Learning" then popular.

During the Han Dynasty, Buddhism was often seen as on par with the Huang Lao School. Thus, King Ying of Chu is reported as having "recited the subtle words of Huang Lao and respectfully performed human sacrifices to the Buddha," while Emperor Huan "set up shrines to Huang Lao and the Buddha in his palace."

Buddhist disciples of the period even identified themselves as "practitioners of the techniques of the Way." The "Lihuo lun" (Treatise on Rectifying Error) of the *Mozi* (*Mo Tzu*) states: "There are ninety-six distinct ways, but, among those worthy of veneration, none is so great as the teachings of the Buddha." The *Sutra in Forty-two Sections*<sup>i</sup> also styles itself "the Way of the Buddha."

At that time the principal tenets preached by Buddhist missionaries were the immortality of the soul and karmic retribution; such Indian concepts as the "non-existence of the self" were simply not understood. The immortality of the soul was already present in traditional Chinese thought, but only in the concept of spirits. The Wen Wang Ode of the *Shi Jing* (*Shih Ching*) says of the former Zhou Kings, "The Three Directors are in Heaven," that is, their souls have ascended. The "Jingshen Xun" of the *Huai Nan Zi* asserts that "the form may be ground away, but the spirit is not transformed." As a result of these beliefs, Huan Tan held that "when the form comes to an end, the spirit is easily destroyed," while Wang Chong argued that "when men die, they do not become ghosts (spirits)."

That the immortality of the soul or spirit depended on "refining and nurturing" was also a native Chinese concept.

As for karmic retribution, while the Buddhist conception did not exactly accord with that of China, it was promulgated during the Han and was compatible with the Chinese notion that "good fortune comes to those who are good and evil to the dissolute." Witness the Wen-yen gloss to the Qian hexagram of the *Yi Jing* (*I Ching*): "Those who accumulate good deeds will certainly have an excess of blessings, while those who accumulate bad deeds will have an excess of calamity."

During the end of the Han and the beginning of the Three Kingdoms period, as Buddhist translations increased, Buddhism

divided into two main schools. The first was the An Shi Gao lineage of Hinayana Buddhism, emphasizing meditation. The second was the Lokak sema lineage of Mahayana Buddhism, which emphasized *prajna*.

An Shi Gao translated a number of sutras among which the most influential were the *Anapansmrti-sutra* (T602) and the *Yin chi Ru Jing* (T1694). The former emphasis breath control, a practice comparable to the "inhalation and exhalation" (*tu na*) methods of Chinese seekers of transcendence. The latter explicates Buddhist numerical categories and may be compared to Han exegetical studies.

With regard to man's place in the cosmos, the theories of these sutras are based on the concept of "primal breath" and state that primal breath encompasses the Five Phases which they equate with the five *skandas*. It can be seen that the Hinayana practices expounded by the An Shi Gao lineage were assimilated to the popular religious practices and thought of the day which then used them to explicate Buddhism.

The *prajna* concept taught by the Lokaksema lineage held as its most important truth the "return of the spirit to its original perfection and union with the Way." In this we see already the influence of the philosophy of the *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*) and the *Zhuang Zi*.

Zhi Qian (Chih Ch'ien), the disciple of Lokaksema's disciple Zhi Lian, re-translated the *Prajnaparamita sutra* as the *Ta Ming Du Wu Ji Jing*. This title itself betrays the influence of the *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*) and *Zhuang Zi*. His translation of "Grand luminescence" for *prajna* probably draws on the phrase, "He who knows the eternal nature of things appears luminous," from the *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*). The translation "cross to the illimitable" for *paramita* also means to reach a state of union with the Way, that is the illimitable Dao.

Zhi Qian (Chih Ch'ien)'s gloss for the first chapter states: My Master (that is Chih Liang) said: "The heart of the Bodhisattiva treads the Great Way. Wishing to embody the Way, his heart and the way merge. For this reason, the formless is called the "empty void." This is the same point reached in Ruan Ji's: "Biography of the Prior-born Great Man," wherein the great man merges with the way. The latter phrase recalls as well the *Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*) statement, "The constant nature of the Way is formless."

Zhi Qian (Chih Ch'ien) and the others believed that man's heart and spirit originated in the Dao, but, because of such flaws of the latter

heavens as desire, man can no longer join with the Dao. For the heart and spirit to escape these limitations, one must embody one's origin, the Dao, and become a Buddha. This is undoubtedly a Buddhism assimilated to the thought of the *Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)* and *Zhuang Zi*.

During the Wei-Jin period the ontology of Mysterious Learning, based on the *Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)* and the *Zhuang Zi*, was very popular. The central issues discussed in the Mysterious Learning were questions of fundamental cause and secondary effects as well as existence and non-existence. Buddhist *prajna* studies were fairly similar to the concerns of Mysterious Learning, so many monks used it to explain Buddhist principles. Dao An, for example, wrote in his *Pi nai yeh* (Preface to the Vinaya):

Among the twelve sections of the Tripitaka, the *vaipulya* section is the largest due to the fact that *Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)* and *Zhuang Zi* have spread teachings in this country similar to the *Fang teng Jing* and *Prajnaparamita sutra* and thus it has been easy to travel with the wind.

Even the clerics of that time recognized that the popularity of Buddhism was due to the thought of the *Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)* and *Zhuang Zi*.

What is the reason for this situation? As Engels has said: "Tradition is a great conservative force." It seems that any cultural ideology has its conservative aspects and will resist foreign culture. Because of this, foreign ideologies must first adapt themselves to the requirements of the native ideology, attaching themselves to a native thought system. Elements of the foreign ideology which are similar or identical to the native ideology are easily transmitted, while dissimilar elements seep in only gradually to eventually change the native ideology.

The second element involves the reason why Buddhism, as a foreign importation, was able to have such a strong impact on Chinese culture. In addition to the fact that it met certain social needs, it often accorded with the natural development of Chinese thought.

The Mysterious Learning of the Wei-Chin period developed from Wang Bi and He Yan's emphasis on Non-being as the source of all existence through Guo Xiang's emphasis on Being ("The ten-thousand things are born of themselves,") to Chang Chan of the Eastern Chin, who contended that "in being suddenly born of themselves, the Source of all things resides in Non-being." Finally there was Seng

Zhao, who held that “the Emptiness of the Unreal” consisted of a negation of both Being and Non-being. Why was the Mysterious Learning of the Wei Chin period summed up in Seng Zhao’s *prajna* inspired doctrine? Precisely because this was one possible outcome to which this philosophical system tended.

Beginning with He Yan and particularly Wang Bi, Mysterious Learning was much engrossed with the relationship between Being and Non-being, which was explained in terms of substance and function. It was held that “Non-being may not be understood in terms of Non-being, (so) it draws its name from Being.” Thus Non-being was held to be the Original substance, which expressed itself as Being so that its substance and function were as one. However, since Wang Bi emphasized the unconditional nature of Non-being, there was also the tendency to glorify the Original substance while neglecting its expression as Being. This was an internal contradiction in the thought of Wang Bi.

From just this element of Wang Bi’s thought, we can extrapolate the negation of Being (which was fully realized in Seng Zhao’s system).

Wang Bi’s emphasis on Non-being was further refined by Xiang Xiu and Pei Gu and eventually developed into Guo Xiang’s emphasis on Being. According to Guo Xiang, all existence was comprised of individual concrete objects. Beyond these material objects there was no Original substance (i.e., no creator). The existence of the ten-thousand things was based solely on their “self-nature.” This self-nature was self-generated. He wrote “Non-being has no reality and thus cannot give birth to Being.” This direct contradiction of non-existence contains within it the seeds of (Seng Zhao’s) negation of existence.

These two developments fit exactly the Prajna School’s negation of Being and Non-being. So Seng Zhao’s doctrine of the Emptiness of the Unreal continues the philosophical development begun by Wang Bi and Guo Xiang. We may, then, trace the historical development of Mysterious Learning from Wang Bi through Guo Xiang to Seng Zhao. Later, the San-lun School (Madhyamika) would develop Seng Zhao’s doctrine and Hui Neng of the Chan School would further refine it and eventually influence the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties.

The reason for this development is that ideologies have certain set principles of development. Unless interrupted, later developments always grow out of earlier tendencies. Also, an ideology often has several possible ways in which it might develop, so that, if an important ideology accords in important respects with one possible line of development, it can have a very great impact. The important ideology may then become a constituent element of the native ideology and, to a greater or lesser extent, influence the development of the native culture.

Thirdly, the reason that Buddhism was able to work such a lasting influence on Chinese thought and culture, was that, in certain respects, it was superior to native Chinese systems of thought. In this way it was able to act as a stimulus in the development of Chinese culture.

The question of the Indian Buddhist *prajna* doctrine's superiority to native Chinese modes of thought is one that must be examined closely from every angle before a conclusion can be reached. This we are not able to do here, so we will only examine the *prajna* system's resolution of the contradiction inherent in the doctrine of the negation of Being and Non-being. Despite the fact that, like the thought of Wang Bi and Guo Xiang, this doctrine is an instance of idealism, it is undoubtedly superior to theirs in that it can be used to analyze problems from two opposite directions. Even though Seng Zhao's doctrine of the "Emptiness of the Unreal" can be seen as an extension of Wang Bi and Guo Xiang, it goes beyond their systems in that it accords fairly well with the Indian *prajna* system.

In my opinion, after its absorption into Indian Buddhism, the idea of a creator or a spiritual entity which fashioned heaven and earth never again occupied an important position in China's idealism. This was replaced by such abstract concepts as the Confucian *li* (the "natural pattern") and *Dao* ("the Way"), which, as first principles, determined human existence in the universe. Sometimes "Heart mind" was made a first principle; it was held that "the heart is the natural pattern" or that "the natural pattern merges in the heart." This is a feature of Sung and Ming dynasty philosophy. As this sort of idealism developed, it became the most important form of Chinese traditional philosophy.

However, even for a relatively superior foreign ideology to influence another culture it must, in addition to satisfying certain

economic and political conditions, also meet the first two requirements we have discussed. If it does not, then even a superior ideology will fail to take root in the host country. For example, the "Treatise on the Completion of Ideation Only" (*Wei shih hun*) brought in by Xuan Zang and Hetuvidya (Yin ming xue) are both fairly lofty constructions, but, despite Xuan Zang's reputation, they were not influential in China and failed to become a constituent of Chinese philosophy.

I think that the above three points are significant phenomena attending Buddhism's importation into China. With these in mind, I would like to bring up a question of current concern: can Marxism merge with traditional Chinese thought and culture. This is a large and difficult question. Predictions are hard to make, but it can be explained. In the abstract, most people respond that they wish for a merger of the two, but the question is whether this is possible and how it could be achieved.

Here I wish only to discuss a few thoughts drawn from the second of the points above: If Marxism is to take root in China, continuing lines of development begun in traditional Chinese thought and culture, the chief issue is to find points of convergence between the two so both Chinese philosophy and Marxism will progress.

Marxism is undoubtedly a superior ideology. Moreover, it developed in the West so that there are great differences between it and traditional Chinese thought. It is also a vast system of thought, so that it is difficult to know just where to search for points of convergence. Naturally, I cannot here discuss the problem in its entirety. I merely wish to raise a few examples.

The dialectical methodology of Marxism centers on the law of the unity of opposites, and takes actual practice as the only standard of determining truth. This I believe to be correct. If related principles can be found among those fundamental to traditional Chinese philosophy, then cannot Marxism be sinified and become a further development of Chinese philosophy?

The central problem of traditional Chinese philosophy as defined by ancient philosophers and historians is the question of the relationship between man and heaven. The traditional answer to this question, in most cases, has been that heaven (that is the natural world, or the way of heaven) and man (society, or the way of man) are one. From this unity derives the unity of thought and action and, in

art, the unity of subjective feeling and objective expression. (This is what Wang Fu calls the interface of emotion and scene.)

These three unities of man and heaven, of thought and action, and the unity of subjectivity and objectivity are questions of "truth," "goodness" and "beauty." Chinese philosophy, then, emphasizes unity, a fact which may have something to do with Chinese thought processes or social conditions. Confucian thought has always emphasized the Grand Unity and the Way of the Mean, and opposed excess.

If we correctly understand this unity and do not regard it as inflexible, then it is easy to see it as an active unification as in the *Yi Zhuan* (*I Chuan*) phrases "giving birth without cessation" and "Heavens movements enduring while the *Xun Zi* (*Hsün Tzu*) never ceases in expanding himself."

Would it be wrong, then, to see struggle, (or "movement") as the traditional technique of Chinese philosophy by which union was achieved, with the unities of heaven and man, knowledge and action, subjective and objective as the goals of this striving? If so, then this is a point of convergence between traditional Chinese philosophy and Marxism. From one standpoint, the Marxist law of the reconciliation of opposites is a superior summation and more scientific continuation of traditional Chinese philosophy. From another, absorbing Chinese ideas of unity would enrich Marxism.

Another special characteristic of Chinese philosophy is that it has never separated its theories of knowledge from questions of moral cultivation. Thus questions of knowledge and action are at once epistemological and moral. To know one must be able to put something into practice. The unity of thought and action, then, is an important concept.

From the point of view of the development of thought, it is proper and even necessary to separate epistemological and moral questions. The failure to do so may have been a shortcoming. Looked at from another angle, however, the traditional Chinese concept of putting moral theories into action has a great significance.

"Practice" in Marxism primarily denotes production struggle, class struggle and scientific experimentation. Of course, such things as the "struggle against Japan," an example of social practice, also included moral practice. "Is it not meaningful, then, to emphasize moral practice?"

I think that such an emphasis would have two important results: first, it would raise our self-evaluation and cause us to view ourselves as moral human beings; second, it would cause us to pay attention to the results of our actions.

I think that if we can overcome the confusion of traditional Chinese philosophy with respect to practice and, moreover, refine it through reference to Marxist views, we can make it more scientific and more correct.

This would serve both to advance traditional Chinese philosophy and to sinify Marxism. The moral emphasis on the unity of thought and action in practice would also enrich Marxism. If this is so, then here is yet another point of convergence between traditional Chinese philosophy and Marxism.

Undoubtedly Marxism must develop, thus it must be an open system, and not a closed one. If it is to develop in China, then it must resolve the question of its merger with traditional Chinese culture. Naturally, the convergence of two such extremely different entities is difficult, but the need to advance Chinese philosophy requires that we strive to do so.

The advancement of Chinese philosophy depends on Marxism's union with the better elements of that philosophy. The modern generation of philosophers is faced with this responsibility. I myself am without special abilities. I can only express my feelings through an old adage: "Though I cannot achieve it, I aspire to do so."



## Immanence and Transcendence in Chinese Chan Buddhism<sup>1</sup>

When Buddhism was transmitted into China, it developed into several schools until the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) Dynasties: Tian Tai, Consciousness-only, Vinaya, Pure Land, Hua Yan, Chan, etc. Since the Tang Dynasty, Chan Buddhism has become increasingly influential and even has been particularly thriving to surpass all the other schools which declined early or late. No doubt there are many reasons for its thriving, perhaps one of the reasons is that Chan Buddhism can particularly reflect the characteristic of Chinese philosophy—"immanent transcendence," to which scholars probably should pay more attention.

As a religion, Buddhism has its doctrinal scriptures, its regular rituals, its precepts, its worshiped objects and so on, but Chan Buddhism after Hui Neng 慧能 (638-713) renounced all these things. So in Chan Buddhism there is no need to chant scriptures, observe precepts, follow any rituals and worship any images. Even leaving home and becoming a monk or nun becomes dispensable. Hence to become a Buddha and attain the state of nirvana can depend only on the awareness of one's own mind. It is said: "one who can be aware within one thought is a Buddha, but confused within one thought a sentient being." That is to say, to become a Buddha and attain the transcendental state completely depends on the role of the immanent essential mind.

*Chinese Chan Buddhism neither valued scriptures nor is established in words, but claimed that everything should listen to the essential mind.*

There is a Chan story called "Buddha twirls a flower and Mahakashapa smiles," which is recorded in *Zhi yue lu* 指月录 (*Record of Fingers Pointing to the Moon*):

When Buddha was in Grdhrakuta Mountain he turned a flower in his fingers and held it before his listeners. Every

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<sup>1</sup> Chan is more famous for its Japanese name--Zen, and is itself derived from the Sanskrit *dhyana*. In English, Chan is usually rendered as "meditation." Editor

one was silent. Only Maha-Kashapa smiled at this revelation, although he tried to control the lines of his face. Buddha said: "I have the eye of the true teaching, the heart of Nirvana, the true aspect of non-form, and the ineffable stride of Dharma. It is not expressed by words, but especially transmitted beyond teaching. This teaching I have given to Maha-Kashapa."

Chan Buddhism considered itself as "transmitted beyond teaching," and proclaimed itself as distinguished from the other schools by telling this story. At the beginning of Buddhism in India, it was quite simple and originally a philosophy of life, in which Shakyamuni Buddha avoided discussing those theories unrelated with real life, saying little about the following problems—"whether the universe is permanent or impermanent," "whether the universe is limited or unlimited," "whether life exists or not after death," "whether life and body are one or not," etc., which were often heatedly discussed at his time in India. Later Indian Buddhism became more and more complicated, developing further and further away from real life, and its system became larger and larger, its worshiped images more and more, its technical terms innumerable, which were completely incompatible with Chinese traditional thoughts. After Sui and Tang Dynasties, many Chinese Buddhist schools were trying every possible way to get over this complication of Indian Buddhism, such as, "one billion worlds entered into one thought" in Tian Tai School and "principle and matter integrated into one real mind" in Hua Yan School, both emphasizing the role of the essential mind. This tendency was further intensified in Chan Buddhism after Hui Neng, hence its insistence on establishment in no words and renunciation of all scriptures.

Hui Neng himself did not yet renounce the scriptures and advocate establishment in no words. It is recorded in *Platform Sutra* 坛经 that Hui Neng taught his disciples about *Diamond Sutra* 金刚经 and *Lotus Sutra* 法华经, but he maintained that "all scriptures and books exist and tell something in accordance with people" (*Platform Sutra*) and are only the tools to conduct people; hence one should not cling to the scriptures because one cannot become a Buddha by chanting the scriptures, and one can be liberated only by relying on one's essential mind. The reasons are: on the one hand, the principles and methods

of becoming a Buddha originally exist in one's own essential mind, so "the twelve-part canons of the Buddhas of past, present, and future are originally inherent in one's nature." (*Platform Sutra*) Thus there is no need to seek outside, no need to search the Buddha out of mind, because to be a Buddha and become enlightened totally depends upon oneself, and the extrinsic words have nothing to do with it. On the other hand, words are outside things. If one attaches to these outside things, one "attaches to the forms." But "one's own essential nature inherently has the insight of *prajna* (wisdom), if one is continually observant, using one's own insight. Therefore one does not depend on words." (*Platform Sutra*) In order to break the bondage of the scriptures, Chan masters after Hui Neng were simply against chanting the scriptures, and even against all kinds of words. It is recorded in *Wu deng hui yuan* 五灯会元 (*The Five Lamps Meet at the Origin*): Wei Shan (771-853) asked Yang Shan (814-890): "Nirvana Sutra has forty volumes. How many are said by Buddha? How many by *mara* (devil)?" (Vol.9) Yang Shan answered: "all are said by *mara* (devil)." If one attaches the sutras as Dharma itself, one has already been bewitched and hoodwinked by devils. *Gu zun su yu lu* 故尊宿语录 (*Recorded Sayings of the Ancient Worthies*) records: "as to those things which are considered as Buddhas, interpreted as Buddhas, if one sees something, finds something and attaches something, all of these are called the dung of intellectual play, coarse words and dead language." (Vol.2) *Jing de chuan deng lu* 景德传灯录 (*Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*) records: Lin Ji (787?-867) "went to Huang Bo mountain (where his master lived) in a mid-summer, and saw his master Huang Bo (?-850) reading a sutra. He said: "I thought there is a man but actually an old monk who puts black soy beans into his mouth." (Vol.12) All scriptures are nonsense. By attaching to this nonsense, how can one be liberated and become a Buddha? Since Buddhist scriptures are "dead language" and "said by *mara* (devil)," and not the tools to awaken, naturally they are not to be fallen back on to attain the goal of becoming a Buddha. *Gu zun su yu lu* records Nan Quan (748-834)'s saying: "the Way does not belong to the category of knowing or not knowing, because knowing is false awareness and not knowing is no memory. If one really attains the Way of no-doubt which likes great emptiness, wide, vast and open, how can one tell right or wrong?" (Vol.13) The Way does not belong to the category of knowledge which has the difference between subject and object, that is conceptual

thought, but enlightenment to the Way relies on the self-awareness of the mind. If so, the self cannot not be self-aware; if the self is not self-aware, it is "*avidya* (ignorance)," therefore "not knowing is no memory."

Chan masters thought that the words were unnecessary and the language cannot be beneficial to the enlightenment and becoming a Buddha. Only through language one cannot comprehend the Buddhist Dharma. Someone asked Wen Yi (885-958): "what is the first meaning (of Buddhist Dharma)?" Wen Yi replied: "If I tell you, it is already the second meaning." (*Wen yi chan shi yu lu* 文益禅师语录 [Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Wen Yi]) The Dharma is ineffable, and what has been said is already not the Dharma itself. Therefore, is there any method that may lead people to the enlightenment? As far as Chan Buddhism sees, hardly is there a method for becoming enlightened except through one's own awareness. However, Chan Buddhism also used very special methods, such as "stick and shout" to instruct disciples. It is recorded in *Wu deng hui yuan*:

A monk asked: "what is *bodhi* (awakening)?" Master (De Shan, 782-865) struck him and said: "Get out! Do not shit here!" One asked: "what is Buddha?" Master said: "Buddha is an old *bhiksu* (monk) in India." Xue Feng (822-908) asked: "by inheriting from patriarchs before, do you still have discriminations?" Master struck him with a stick and asked: "What does this mean?" Xue Feng answered: "I cannot understand." On the next day, Xue Feng asked for more teaching, Master said: "there are neither languages nor sentences taught in our school, and I have no Dharma to give." Hence Xue Feng became aware. (*Vol. 7*)

It is also recorded in *Gu zun su yu lu*:

(Lin Ji came to) see Jing Shan. When Jing-shan just raised his head to see who was coming, Master (Lin Ji) shouted. When he just intended to open his mouth to say, the Master left with a flick of his sleeve. (*Vol. 5*)

This is the so-called "De Shan's stick and Lin Ji's shout." These special methods were intended to break down attachments so as to listen to the essential mind. As far as Chan Buddhism sees, one loses

one's essential nature because one always attaches to something, therefore a sudden shout and an unexpected strike on the head would make one suddenly become enlightened and attain the Buddhahood by oneself. As Yuan Wu (1063-1135) said in *Yuan wu fo guo chan shi yu lu* 佛果禅师语录 (*Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Yuan Wu Fo guo*): "De Shan's stick and Lin Ji's shout are both thorough and complete, and directly cut off the root of the old attachment. They are great methods, reaching the same end by innumerable means, and could remove bondages from the disciples." (Vol.14) Lin Ji's master Huang Bo said in his *Chuan xin fa yao* 传心法要 (*Essential Teachings on the Transmission of Mind*):

This spiritually enlightening nature...cannot be looked for or sought, comprehended by wisdom or knowledge, explained in words, contacted materially or reached by meritorious achievement. All the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, together with all wriggling things possessed of life, share in this great Nirvanic nature. This nature is Mind; Mind is the Buddha, and the Buddha is the Dharma.

Since this spiritually enlightening nature everyone has cannot be revealed by knowledge and language, the only way is to use stick and shout to break down the attachment (of course, it is not necessary to use stick and shout; any other method could serve only if it could break down the attachment), hence the mind has nothing to observe and one attains the transcendental state by denying object and mind.

*Chinese Chan Buddhism Broke Outmoded Conventions and Abolished Sitting in Meditation,<sup>2</sup> but only Valued Seeing Nature and Accomplishing Buddhahood.*

Sitting in meditation is a method used in every Buddhist school. Shakyamuni Buddha became enlightened under the *bodhi* (awakening) tree by sitting in meditation for forty-nine days; Bodhidharma came to China and faced the wall by sitting in meditation for three years. After Hui Neng, there was a great change in Chinese Chan Buddhism. In *Platform Sutra*, Hui Neng said: "it is only a matter of seeing nature, not a matter of meditation or liberation." It is clear that Hui Neng insisted on "seeing nature and

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<sup>2</sup> Sitting in meditation (*zuo chan*) literally means sitting Chan, and is more famous for its Japanese name Zazen. Editor

accomplishing the Buddhahood," and believed that through meditation alone can one not be liberated. Hence he said:

Deluded people stick to the appearances of things: they cling to the idea of absorption in one practice as meaning only constantly sitting unmoving, not letting the mind be aroused at random. They identify this with absorption in one practice, but those who make this interpretation are equivalent to inanimate objects. This is a condition that obstructs the Way. The Way should be fluid, free-flowing. Why then do you stagnate? When the mind does not dwell on things, then the Way is fluid. If the mind dwells on things, that is called self-binding. If you say constant sitting is right, that is contradicted by the fact that Shariputra was scolded by Vimalakirti for sitting quietly in the forest. (*Platform Sutra*)

Those attached to sitting in meditation and who believe that deluded thought cannot arise through their sitting actually regard a human being as a dead thing, and know nothing about "the Way should be fluid." The mind should move and not dwell on things, otherwise the mind is bound, and then how could one be liberated? *Gu zun su yu lu* records: Ma Zu (709-788) "lived in Nan yue chuan fa Monastery (where his master Huai Rang (677-744) presided) and stayed in a hut alone by practicing sitting in meditation without paying attention to the visitors (even to his master Huai Rang)...One day, (in order to instruct Ma Zu) Huai Rang put a tile in front of the hut and began to grind it. Ma Zu did not pay attention to it in the beginning, but after a long time, Ma Zu got very curious and then asked: "for what is this grinding?" Huai Rang said: "grinding into a mirror." Ma Zu laughed: "how can a tile become a mirror by grinding?" Huai Rang retorted: "if a tile cannot become a mirror by grinding, how one could become a Buddha by sitting in meditation?" (*Vol.1*) Ma Zu sat in meditation and was bound by it, hence Huai Rang used "grinding a tile into a mirror," a metaphoric method, to inspire him to be enlightened. This is an example of freeing from one's bondage by relying on others. Another example is Hui Leng (854-932) who had worn seven cattail hassocks by sitting in meditation for more than twenty years but still did not see nature. Until one day when rolling up a curtain by a chance, he suddenly got enlightened, and composed a verse: "it was really a mistake, really a mistake, until I see the world when rolling up a curtain. If one asks me what kind of teaching I know, I shall pick up a whiskbroom and strike right toward

his mouth." (*Wu deng hui yuan*, Vol.7) Hui Leng rolled up a curtain accidentally and saw that one billion worlds are just as they are, and then "witnessed the mind and saw nature." He released the bondage of sitting in meditation, suddenly saw the whole thing in a clear light and became enlightened. It is said in *Platform Sutra*: "they cannot realize it themselves because of the wandering of the conditioned mind; that is why they need a good knowing advisor to point it out and guide them to the perception of essential nature." Ma Zu was inspired by Huai Rang, but Hui Leng became enlightened by himself, either Ma Zu or Hui Leng has to "realize the good knowing advisor within the essential mind." That is to say, one has to rely on one's immanent essential mind to attain the transcendental state. The saying "until I see the world when rolling up a curtain" in Hui Leng's verse is the crux of his enlightenment, because as far as Chan Buddhism sees, there is no need deliberately to do a certain thing in order to be enlightened and become a Buddha, and one should naturally see the Way in ordinary daily life. Like "clouds floating in the blue sky and water filling a bottle." everything goes naturally and ordinarily. There is a verse in *Wu men guan* 无门 (Gateless Gate) wrote by Wu Men (1183-1260):

In spring, hundreds of flowers; in autumn, a harvest moon;  
 In summer, a refreshing breeze; in winter, snow will  
 accompany you.  
 If useless things do not hang in your mind,  
 Any season is a good season for you.

This spiritual state of Chan Buddhism is a state of letting go with nature: one views the blooming of hundreds of flowers in spring, enjoys serenity under a harvest moon in autumn, feels the sudden coming of a refreshing breeze in summer, and watches thickly falling snowflakes swirling in winter. Letting everything goes by itself at ease and without any obstruction, then "every daytime is a good day," and "every nighttime is an enjoyable night." If one attaches to sitting in meditation, one is bound by the method itself and cannot be liberated. Lin Ji said: "There is no place in Buddhism for using effort. Just be ordinary and nothing special. Relieve your bowels, pass water, put on your clothes, and eat your food. When you are tired, go and lie down. Ignorant people may laugh at me, but the wise will understand." (*Gu zun su yu lu*, Vol.11) If one wants to become a Buddha and attain the

state of nirvana, one should not rely on extrinsic practices, but be enlightened suddenly as Hui Leng experienced. A monk asked Ma Zu: "How can one cultivate the Way?" Ma Zu said: "the Way cannot be cultivated. If one says it can be cultivated, even if it has been cultivated, it will disappear eventually." (*Gu zun su yu lu, Vol.1*) How can the Way be cultivated? By relying on so-called "cultivation," one has to manage it with a contrived effort; certainly "it will disappear eventually." Therefore cultivating the Way cannot be sought deliberately in ordinary life. A Vinaya Master You Yuan asked Hui Hai, "Do you make efforts in your practice of the Way?" Hui Hai answered: "Yes, I do." The Vinaya Master asked: "How?" Hui Hai answered: "When hungry, I eat; when tired, I sleep." The Vinaya Master asked: "And does everybody make the same efforts as you do, master?" Hui Hai answered: "Not in the same way." The Vinaya Master asked: "Why not?" Hui Hai answered: "When they are eating, they think of a hundred kinds of necessities, and when they are going to sleep they ponder over affairs of a thousand different kinds. That is how they differ from me." An ordinary person eats with preference of the fat or the lean in the food, sleeps with going off into wild flights of fancy, and has different preferences and attachments and there is no chance for liberation. Those who truly know Chan should "sleep if one needs to sleep and sit if one needs to sit," "enjoy the cool if hot and warm at a fire if cold."

A monk told Zhao Zhou (778-897): "I have just entered the monastery. Please teach me." Zhao Zhou asked: "Have you eaten your rice porridge?" The monk replied: "I have eaten." Zhao Zhou said: "Then you had better wash your bowl." At that moment the monk was enlightened. (*Zhi yue lu, Vol.11*) After eating, naturally it is time to wash the bowl. This is so ordinary. Only through this can one meditate when sitting, meditate when sleeping, meditate when resting, and meditate when moving, therefore eating and shitting are both fine Ways. If meditation is not necessary, there is no necessity to keep all kinds of precepts. Lu Xisheng asked Yang Shan: "do you still observe precepts, master?" Yang Shan said: "I do not." (*Wu deng hui yuan, Vol.9*) Li Ao (772-841) asked Yao Shan (751-834): "what are *sila* (precepts), *dhyana* (meditation) and *prajna* (wisdom)?" Yao Shan said: "we do not have these idle practices here!" (*Jing de chuan deng lu, Vol.14*)

*Sila* (precepts), *dhyana* (meditation), and *prajna* (wisdom) are the “three practices” of Buddhism, and indispensable gateways for Buddhists. But Chan masters see them as something useless. It seems that this negation means that the practice of methods is unnecessary; hence Chan Buddhism negates anything extrinsic and formal. The reason why Chan Buddhism sees this is based on “the mind of everyday life is the mind of the Way.” There is no “mind of the Way” apart from the mind of everyday life, and also no need to live any special life apart from everyday life. With this realization, the immanent mind of everyday life can be the transcendental mind of the Way. It is just as Yin Shun (1906-2005) put in his *The History of Chinese Chan Buddhism*: “Nature is both transcendental (away from all forms and its body, pure and clear) and immanent (all Dharma cannot be different from nature). Only when one can be enlightened on the transcendental from everything here and now, at the same time being not different from everything, and to completely enlighten everything is no other than the magical application of nature, can one go into the world or renounce the world at one’s will, get the substance and its application, integrate the matter with its principles, and have one’s feet firmly planted on the ground.”<sup>3</sup>

*Chinese Chan Buddhism did not worship images, rather abused the Buddhas and berated the masters, but claimed “one who is enlightened in one’s thought is a Buddha.”*

Indian Buddhism cannot avoid the influence of Indian culture which strongly marked the character of mysticism, especially after Shakyamuni Buddha. For example, there are so-called “twenty-eight heavens” and “eighteen hells,” attached to which are adjacent heavens or hells, and there are also innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who have supernatural powers. Certainly all these are influenced by Indian traditional culture. Even the much simpler Indian Chan which is considered as “transmitted beyond teaching” is still mystical in character. It is said that all twenty-eight masters of Indian Chan have so-called “Six Supernatural Powers:” (1) the power of divine audition; (2) the power of divine vision; (3) the power of awareness of the minds of others; (4) the power of the knowledge of previous lifetimes; (5)

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<sup>3</sup> Yin Shun, *The History of Chinese Chan Buddhism* (in Chinese) (Taipei: Zhengwen Press, 1987), pp. 375.

unimpeded bodily action; (6) the power of the extinction of contamination. Even the four meditative states—"The Four Meditation Heavens"—which Indian Chan practiced are also very mystical. Chinese Chan Buddhism after Hui Neng is very different. Hui Neng said: "my mind inherently has a Buddha in it; and the inner Buddha is the real Buddha." (*Platform Sutra*) Based on this, Chan Buddhism was against supernatural powers and worshiping images.

*Wu deng hui yuan* records: Dao Ying (?-902) "built a house nearby a place called San Feng, and did not go to hall for a couple of weeks. Dong Shan (807-869) asked him: "why did not you go to have meal recently" Dao Ying said: "a heavenly god served the food everyday." Dong Shan told him: "I thought you are a man, but still have this kind of idea. Come to my place at night." Dao Ying came to Dong Shan's place at night. Dong Shan called his name: "Dao Ying!" Dao Ying replied. Dong Shan said: "if you neither think of good nor think of bad, then what leaves?" Dao Ying came back and sat silently. Since then Dao Ying could not find the heavenly god any more. After three days, there was completely no such thing in Dao Ying's idea." (*Vol.13*) The point Dong Shan criticized Dao Ying lies in how could a man like Dao Ying believe these mystical supernatural powers. What is the meaning of "neither think of good nor think of bad?" This is the teaching from Hui Neng that one should never be attached to things created by one's imagination. It is recorded in *Chan zong zhuan* (*A Biography of Chan Buddhism*): "Hui Ming asked the Dharma from Hui Neng. Hui Neng said: "You should shut out all desires and not conceive a single thought of good or bad." Hui Ming did what Hui Neng told him to do. Hui Neng told him: "When you neither think of good nor think of bad, what is your original face?" At these words, Hui Ming was greatly enlightened and said to Hui Neng with his deep gratitude: "I am like a man who takes a drink of water and knows for himself whether it is cold or warm." The so-called "a heavenly god served the food" was just an illusion of Dao Ying; once he became aware, the illusion disappeared and the heavenly god could not be found any longer. A man is essentially a man and has his original appearance; therefore everything has to count on man himself, and does not need any help from the extrinsic transcendental powers at all.

In *Platform Sutra* (Qi-song Edition), there is a verse called *Wu xiang song* 无相颂 (*Verse on Freedom from Forms*):

When the mind is even, why bother to keep precepts?  
When action is straightforward, what's the need to practice meditation?

If you are grateful, you take care of your parents respectfully;  
If you are dutiful, above and below are mentally sympathetic.  
If you are deferential, high and low harmonize amicably;  
If you are tolerant, myriad evils cause no disturbance.  
If you can drill wood and produce fire,  
You will produce red lotuses from the mud.  
Harsh words are clearly good medicine;  
If it offends the ear, it's surely faithful speech.  
Reform your errors, and you will develop wisdom;  
Defend your faults, and you betray an unsound mind.  
Always practicing altruism in your daily life;  
Attaining the Way does not come from donating money.  
Enlightenment is only to be sought in the mind;  
Why bother seeking mysteries outside?  
Hearing my explanation, practice on this basis,  
And the Heaven is right before your eyes.

This verse not only denies the existence of the extrinsic mystical powers, but also denies the existence of so-called Heaven and Hell, believes one should live in the real life ordinarily and responsibly, and by means of one's own Buddha nature (immanent essential nature); in the life here and now can one become a Buddha. It is just as Da Hui (1089-1163) said: "Dharma of secular world is Buddha Dharma and vice versa." (*Da hui pu jue chan shi yu lu*, Vol.27)

It is recorded in *Wu deng hui yuan*: Tian Ran (739-824) "met bitter cold weather when visiting Hui Lin Temple, so he burned a wooden Buddha statue for warmth. The head of the temple bawled him out: "Why did you burn my wood Buddha?" Tian-ran prodded the ashes with his staff and said humorously: "I am looking for *sharira* (relics) by burning it." The head retorted: "how can a wood Buddha statue have *sharira* (relics)?" Tian-ran laughed: "Now that it does not have *sharira* (relics), take two more statues and burn them." (Vol.5) A wood Buddha statue is an image, how could it have Buddha *sharira* (relics)? Burning a wood Buddha is only burning a wood-made statue. The denial of the image in his mind is the realization that "my mind

inherently has a Buddha in it; and the inner Buddha is the real Buddha.”

Lin Ji climbed up into the loft of Xiong-er Tower, and the guard of the tower asked him: “do you prostrate yourself before the Buddhas or masters first?” Lin Ji said: “none of them.” (*Jing de chuan deng lu*, Vol.12) Chan masters paid no respect to the Buddhas and masters at all and even abused the Buddhas and berated the masters. De Shan said: “there are neither Buddhas nor masters down here. Bodhidharma is an old foul foreigner, Shakyamuni Buddha is a pile of dried dung, and Bodhisattva Manjusri and Samantabhadra are men who carry the dung.” (*Wu deng hui yuan*, Vol.7) As Chan Buddhism sees, everyone is originally a Buddha himself; elsewhere can a Buddha be found? What are abused and berated are nothing but the images in one’s mind, the worship of which would certainly obstruct the development of one’s essential nature. It is recorded in *Jing de chuan deng lu*: “someone asked Huai Hai (720-814): “What is Buddha?” Huai-hai retorted: “Who are *you*?” (Vol.6) In the same book, it is also recorded: “Ling Xun just came to study with Gui Zong, and asked Gui Zong: “What is Buddha?”...Gui Zong said: “Just *you* are.” (Vol.10) Everyone by himself is a Buddha. How can one ask “what is Buddha?” By asking “what is Buddha?” one is searching Buddha outside of one’s mind.

Nevertheless, one should not be attached to this idea of becoming a Buddha. Huang Bo said: “if you will conceive of a Buddha, you will be obstructed by that Buddha!” (*Wan ling lu* [Recorded Sayings in Wan Lin]) If one bears the idea of becoming a Buddha in one’s mind constantly, one cannot live naturally and obstructs himself from becoming a Buddha by this searching. A monk asked Dong-shan when he was weighing some flax: “What is Buddha?” Dong Shan said: “This flax weighs three pounds.” (*Wu deng hui yuan*, Vol.15) A monk asked Ma Zu: “What is the intention of Bodhidharma to come to China?” Ma Zu struck him and said: “If I do not strike you, those who know would laugh at me.” (*Jing de Chuan deng lu*, Vol.6) Dong Shan gave a reply far from the mark in order to break down the attachment of becoming a Buddha, and Ma Zu even tried to prevent the searching of extrinsic Buddhist Dharma, because as Ma Zu saw, “what you all should believe is that your essential mind is the Buddha, and this right mind is the mind of Buddha.” (*ibid.*) This is the essential spirit of Chan Buddhism, as it is said in *Platform Sutra*: “Buddhahood is actualized

within your own nature; do not seek it outside the body. If your own nature is confused, a Buddha is an ordinary person; if your own nature is awakened, every ordinary person is a Buddha."

As we have discussed above, we can see that the central thoughts or fundamental subject of Chinese Chan Buddhism is "witnessing the mind and seeing nature" and "seeing nature and becoming a Buddha." The fundamental concepts used in *Platform Sutra* are "mind" and "nature." "Mind" is also called "own mind" (*zi xin*), "essential mind" (*ben xin*), "own essential mind" (*zi ben xin*), etc. "Nature" is also called "own nature" (*zi xing*), "essential nature" (*ben xing*), "Dharma nature" (*fa xing*), "own Dharma nature" (*zi fa xing*), etc. "Mind" and "nature" have quite similar meaning and both refer to the subjective in everyone's immanent life. They are originally pure and empty, but transcend the phenomenal world, at the same time their activities can appear as all kinds of different things. As *Platform Sutra* says: "The extent of mind is vast as space...the emptiness of physical space contains the colors and forms of myriad things, the sun, moon, and stars, the mountains, rivers, and lands, the springs and valley streams, the grasses, trees, and forests, bad people and good people, bad things and good things, heaven and hell, the oceans and the mountains—all are within space. The emptiness of the essential nature of people in the world is also like this." It also says: "The essential nature of human beings is originally pure. All things come from essential nature; when you think about all evil things, it produces bad behaviors; when you think about all good things, it produces good behaviors. Thus all things are in your own nature, and your own nature is always clear." Good and bad, heaven and hell, the mountains, rivers, and lands, the grasses, trees, insects and fishes, and so on—all are realized from one's own nature by means of the "thinking" (*si liang*) function of "the mind." The appearance of everything cannot deviate from "one's own nature," just as everything is within space. If one's "mind" is confused, one cannot see "one's own nature;" but can only be an ordinary person; if one's mind is always clear, one "sees nature" and becomes Buddha or Bodhisattva. It is said in *Platform Sutra*: "My mind inherently has a Buddha in it; and the inner Buddha is the real Buddha. If there were no Buddha-mind, where would we look for the real Buddha?"

As Chan Buddhism sees it, one's own nature (or own mind) is originally a vast space and without anything, and it is not a deathly

stillness but rather it can “think” and everything comes from this “thinking.” If this activity of “thinking” goes without any trace, it has no influence on one’s “own nature” and one’s own nature can always stay in the clear state. “One’s own nature is always clear” just like the sun and moon always shining, only sometimes they are covered by clouds, even they are still shining behind the clouds, but it is dim when seeing from the ground so that one cannot see the original face of the sun and moon. If a sudden wind of wisdom (such as the instruction and inspiration of a good knowing adviser) blows off the clouds or mists, the ever shining sun and moon would appear naturally. It is said in *Platform Sutra*: “The nature of worldly people is always drifting, like the clouds in the sky. Wisdom is like the sun, insight is like the moon: knowledge and insight are always light, but when you fixate on objects outside, your own essential nature is covered by the drifting clouds of errant thoughts, so you cannot have light and clarity. If you meet a spiritual benefactor and hear truly authentic teaching, you get rid of confusion so that the inside and outside are thoroughly clear, and myriad things appear within your own essential nature.” A good and knowing adviser can only inspire someone, but whether one can be enlightened or not depends on oneself. “What is meant by liberating yourself through your own essential nature? That means the beings in false views, afflictions and ignorance are liberated by accurate insight. Once you have accurate insight, you get the *prajna* (wisdom) to break through the beings in folly and delusion, so each one is self-liberated.” (*Platform Sutra*)

Only a few times does the phrase “Buddha nature” appear in the Dung Huang edition of *Platform Sutra*, but it is many times repeated in the Zong Bao edition. “Buddha nature” mentioned in two places of *Platform Sutra* is quite important: one is the verse Hui Neng composed when he studied with his master: “Buddha nature is always clear;” another is when Hui Neng answered the question of Governor Wei, he said “building temples, charity, sustaining, etc....have no actual virtue,” and “virtue lies in *dharmakaya* (truth body), not in field of merit; one’s own Dharma nature is inside virtue and honesty is outside virtue. While one sees the Buddha nature inside, one will naturally hold it in reverence outside.” The first place shows that the essence of “Buddha nature” that has the same quality as one’s “own nature” is “always clear;” hence the so-called “Buddha nature” is “own nature,” which is the essential nature of human being and the

subjective in everyone's immanent life. The second place shows that "Buddha nature" is "own Dharma nature" which is also the immanent essence in everyone. Based on the ideas above, Chan Buddhism established its theory of "witnessing the mind and seeing nature" and "seeing nature and becoming a Buddha." "Witnessing the mind and seeing nature" tells that if one can realize one's own essential mind, one can realize that "the own nature is always clear;" Attaining "the own nature always clear" means the revelation of the immanent essential nature as the transcendental Buddha nature. Hence it is true that "witnessing the mind and seeing nature, attaining the Way of Buddhahood by oneself" lie in "the wisdom is accomplished when enlightening."

In that case how can one "witness the mind and see nature?" Chan Buddhism pointed out a direct and simple practice or method that they established, that is, "freedom from thought as the source, freedom from form as the substance, and freedom from fixation." It is said in *Platform Sutra*:

Since time immemorial this school of ours has first established freedom from thought as the source, freedom from form as the substance, and freedom from fixation as the basis. Freedom from form means detachment from forms in the midst of forms. Freedom from thought means having no thought in the midst of thoughts. As for freedom from fixation, while the basic nature of humanity is in the midst of the world, with good and bad, beauty and ugliness, enmity and familiarity, words and speech, offense and attack, deception and contention, one considers it all empty and does not think of retaliation, not thinking about the objects in the surroundings. If thought after thought, previous, present, and subsequent thoughts, go on and continue uninterrupted, this is called bondage. When thought after thought does not dwell on things, then there is no bondage. Thus freedom from fixation is basic.

"Freedom from form" means no attachment to every phenomenon (detachment from form), because ordinary people always attach the phenomena as the substance. For example, one may think that by sitting in meditation one can become a Buddha, which is certainly

attached to sitting in meditation; one may think that by worshipping Buddhas one can become a Buddha which is certainly attached to worshipping Buddhas; all these are "taking form and attaching to it." "But taking form and attaching to it" can obstruct the own nature just as the clouds and mists can cover the bright empty sky. When one "detaches from appearances while in the midst of appearances," one can suddenly see the original clearness of the body of nature, just as the clouds and mists are blown off and the bright clean empty space is revealed. Therefore, freedom from form not only means no attachment to every phenomenon, but also means detachment to appearances and revelation of "the own nature always clear." It is said in *Platform Sutra*: "If you can be detached from forms and appearances, then the substance of nature is pure. Thus freedom from form is the substance." "Freedom from fixation" means one's own nature originally has no fixation thought by thought, that is, the previous, present, and subsequent thoughts are consecutive, and if once dwelling on one object, it is not going on continuing uninterrupted but fixing of every thought, hence "the mind" is "bound." "When the mind does not dwell on things, then the mind is fluid. But if the mind dwells on things, then the mind is bound." (*Platform Sutra*) If the mind is not dwelling on everything, once a thing has gone, it has gone and left no trace; it is like a wild goose flying across the vast sky and leaving no trace at all, and also like a white screen on which a movie is projected for viewing, once the movie ends, nothing is left on the screen; only by this can one not be bound by anything; hence one should regard "freedom from fixation as the basis." "Freedom from thought" does not mean "not thinking of anything at all, and getting rid of all thoughts entirely" (*ibid.*), but when getting in touch with objects the mind is not affected by the external objects, that is, "the mind is not aroused over objects." (*ibid.*) "Thought" is the function of the mind, and the mind faces external objects. Ordinary people's thoughts are aroused over external objects; if the objects are nice, thoughts aroused over them cling to them; on the contrary, thoughts again arouse and get angry. Therefore, the "thoughts" of ordinary people are aroused along with the objects and move in accordance with the objects; "thoughts" of this kind are "erroneous thoughts," driven by the objects without freedom. "When the mind is not influenced by objects" (*ibid.*), one could not be disturbed by the external world. Although one lives in the secular

world, one is still not defiled and contaminated, but comes and goes at ease, has the always clear own nature and attains the Buddhahood by oneself. "Freedom from form," "freedom from fixation" and "freedom from thought" discussed above are the function of the mind; the difference between the ignorant and the awakened lies in one thought, hence attaining the Buddhahood should rely on sudden enlightenment.

According to the discussion above, we may conclude as follows:

First, the reason why Chinese Chan Buddhism belongs to Chinese traditional thought and differs from Indian Buddhism lies in its characteristic of "immanent transcendence," which is also the characteristic of Chinese Confucian and Taoist philosophy. The reason why it could deeply influence Neo-Confucianism of Song (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1644) Dynasties (especially Universal Mind School of Lu Wang) also lies in "immanent transcendence" of its thought. It is said that the quest of Confucian thought characteristic of "immanent transcendence" is the morally ideal personality which transcends "the self" and becomes "a saint." The quest of Taoist philosophy being characteristic of "immanent transcendence" is the spiritually absolute freedom which transcends "the self" and becomes "an immortal." The quest of Chinese Chan Buddhism characteristic of "immanent transcendence" is a mystical state in momentary eternity which transcends "the self" and becomes "a Buddha." On this point, Chan Buddhism still has some religious forms.

Second, although Chan Buddhism still has some kind of external religious forms, by virtue of releasing from all extrinsic bondage such as chanting scriptures, sitting in meditation, worshipping Buddha, etc, it is bound to contain the implication of denying itself being a religion. That is to say, the secularization of Chan Buddhism makes it become an unreligious religion influencing China, and it leads people to realize the purpose of transcending the reality in the real life by denying heaven and hell which are considered as opposite and out of real life, therefore it suggests the secular spirit of "Dharma of secular world is Buddha Dharma and vice versa."

Third, as a religion, Chan Buddhism not only breaks all rules of traditional Buddhism, but also believes there is no need to rely on extrinsic power but rather on the immanent self-awareness of Chan masters themselves in order to attain the Buddhahood. Therefore, it transforms a religion being characteristic of "extrinsic transcendence"

into an unreligious religion characteristic of “immanent transcendence,” it turns from renouncing the world to going into the world, and hence avoids the inclination of duality. Does this transformation mean that Chan Buddhism has some kind of inclination to get out of traditional religious mode? If this can be deduced, certainly it would have important implications for studying the history of Chan Buddhism in investigating the religions in real social life.

Fourth, if it is said there was a tradition strongly imprisoning the mind of people in China, can we say that some resources were appealed to for breaking everything imprisoning the mind of the people? If there were such resources, Chan Buddhism must be an important one of them. Chan Buddhism denies all extrinsic bondage, breaks all attachments, removes the traditional and realistic authority, and lets everything listen to the essential mind; in this sense one can be master of oneself. This open-mindedness is very valuable in the feudal despotic society in China and deserves our attention. Of course, as Chan Buddhism thereby built the authority of the immanent subjective “self” and built up the infinite transcendental power of the “self,” one could again be bound by the immanent subjective of the “self;” this probably is an inextricable contradiction to Chan Buddhism.

Fifth, the ideological system being characteristic of “immanent transcendence” of Chan Buddhism is an obvious subjectivism, and inevitably leads to the denial of any objective criterion and validity. This is a disadvantage to the investigation of the extrinsic world and establishment of objectively valid social system and legal order. It has defects in the investigation of ultimate care of the universe and human life. Therefore, we may suggest an issue: is it possible to build a better philosophical system which contains the thought as characteristic of “immanent transcendence” and the thought as characteristic of “extrinsic transcendence?” I think this issue deserves attention in the development of Chinese philosophy.

Sixth, if it is possible to build a Chinese philosophical system which contains the thoughts of both “immanent transcendence” and “extrinsic transcendence,” then is it possible to find the resources of “extrinsic transcendence” within Chinese traditional philosophy itself? I think Chinese traditional philosophy has this kind of resources. There are two aspects in the thought of Confucius: on the

one hand, he advocated the idea that “human-heartedness is something that must have its source in oneself” (*Analects*, 12.1) and “it is man that can make the Way great, and not the Way that can make man great” (*Analects*, 15.29) which can be considered as the aspect of “immanent transcendence;” on the other hand, he insisted that one should “fear the will of heaven, fear great men, and fear the word of the divine sages” (*Analects*, 16.8), which can be considered as the aspect of “extrinsic transcendence” or at least a suggestion of it. Later Confucianism has developed the former aspect while leaving the later one quite undeveloped. Is it possible to build a Chinese philosophical system which contains the thoughts being both “immanent transcendence” and “extrinsic transcendence” from the direction of Confucius by developing and combining both aspects of Confucius’ thoughts? In my opinion, it is an issue that deserves our study. There was another philosopher—Mo Zi, who lived later than Confucius, and whose philosophy is characteristic of “extrinsic transcendence.” Mo Zi’s philosophy includes two interrelated parts: “all-embracing love” being human spirit and “the will of Heaven” being religious. It seems that there is a little bit of contradiction between the two parts, but actually “all-embracing love” is the fundamental principle of “the will of Heaven,” therefore “the will of Heaven” is the kernel of Mo Zi’s thoughts. Mo Zi’s “the will of Heaven” means that the will of “Heaven” is the supreme and ultimate standard to judge everything, can reward the good and punish the bad, and is a transcendental power outside the human or, we may say, is obviously “extrinsic transcendence.” Therefore, the later Mohist School suggested a scientific view and had a logic and epistemology, but it is a pity that these thoughts were left undeveloped after the Warring States (403-221 B.C.) in China. Is it possible to use Mohist thought as a resource to build a Chinese philosophical system which contains both “immanent transcendence” and “extrinsic transcendence?” This is also an issue to be studied later.

### Glossary

avidya 無明

ben xin 本心

ben xing 本性

bhiksu 比丘

Bodhi 菩提

Bodhidharma 達摩  
 Chan 禪  
 Chan Buddhism 禪宗  
 Chan zong zhuan 禪宗傳  
 Chuan xin fa yao 傳心法要  
 Consciousness-only 唯識  
 Da hui 大慧  
 Da hui pu jue chan shi yu lu 大慧普覺禪師語錄  
 Dao ying 道膺  
 De Shan 德山  
 dharmakaya 法身  
 dhyana 禪, 定  
 Diamond Sutra 金剛經  
 Dong shan 洞山  
 Dun Huang edition 敦煌本  
 fa xing 法性  
 good knowing adviser 善知識  
 Governor Wei 韋使君  
 Grdhrakuta 靈山  
 Gu zun su yu lu 古尊宿語錄  
 Gui Zong 歸宗  
 Hua Yan 華嚴  
 Huai Hai 懷海  
 Huai rang 懷讓  
 Huang Bo 黃檗  
 Hui Hai 慧海  
 Hui Leng 慧稜  
 Hui Lin Temple 慧林寺  
 Hui Ming 慧明  
 Hui Neng 慧能  
 Jing de chuan deng lu 景德傳燈錄  
 Jing shan 徑山  
 Li Ao 李翱  
 Lin Ji 臨濟  
 Ling Xun 靈訓  
 Lotus Sutra 法華經  
 Lu Wang 陸王  
 Lu Xisheng 陸希聲  
 Maha Kashapa 摩訶迦葉

Manjusri 文殊  
mara 魔  
Ming 明  
Mo Zi 墨子  
Nan quan 南泉  
Nan yue chuan fa Monastery 南岳傳法院  
Platform Sutra 壇經  
prajna 般若  
Pure Land 淨土  
Qi song Edition 契嵩本  
Samantabhadra 普賢  
Shakyamuni 釋迦摩尼  
Shariputra 舍利弗  
sharira 舍利  
si liang 思量  
sila 戒  
Six Supernatural Powers 六神通  
Song 宋  
Sui 隋  
Tang 唐  
The History of Chinese Chan Buddhism 中國禪宗史  
The Four Meditation Heavens 四禪天  
Tian ran 天然  
Tian Tai 天臺  
Vimalakirti 維摩詰  
Vinaya 律  
Wan Ling Lu 宛陵錄  
Warring States 戰國  
Wei shan 滄山  
Wen Yi 文益  
Wen Yi chan shi yu lu 文益禪師語錄  
Wu deng hui yuan 五燈會元  
Wu Men 無門  
Wu Men Guan 無門關  
Wu xiang song 無相頌  
Xiong Er Tower 熊耳塔  
Xue feng 雪峰  
Yang shan 仰山  
Yao shan 藥山

Yin shun 印順

You Yuan 有源

Yuan wu 圓悟

Yuan wu fo guo chan shi yu lu 圓悟佛果禪師語錄

Zhao Zhou 趙州

Zhi yue lu 指月錄

zi ben xin 自本心

zi fa xing 自法性

zi xin 自心

zi xing 自性

Zong Bao edition 宗寶本

zuo chan 坐禪

## The Attempt of Matteo Ricci to Link Chinese and Western Cultures

When introduced into another country or nation a foreign culture is confronted by the problem of how to treat that cultural tradition. If it wishes to spread easily and exert influence in the country in which it is introduced it must identify with that country's native culture. Hence, as the attitude of Matteo Ricci towards traditional Chinese culture is related to his missionary goals in contacting Chinese and especially Confucianist culture, he developed an intensive knowledge of that culture and recognized its very positive value. Therefore, his missionary work is related to an important issue in the history of culture: how effectively to blend not only into one but to communicate between two cultural traditions with different backgrounds. This is the heart of the problem of cultural transplantation. Most probably, he appreciated well the significance of solving the problem and on the whole took a positive attitude towards Confucianist culture. We may observe this problem in two aspects: one is his own description of the problem; the other is how the literati of the period or a little later looked upon Matteo Ricci.

Matteo Ricci not only had a good command of Chinese, but also knew a great deal about Chinese customs and etiquette. He not only dressed in Confucianist style and called himself a "Western Confucianist" (*xiru*) with a square piece of cloth on his head, but also followed the etiquette of a Chinese scholar when meeting visitors. He made a careful study of ancient Chinese classics and records and regarded Confucius as a great man of wide knowledge. Of *The Four Books* (*sishu*) which he translated he wrote that it "was written by the four great philosophers and is full of reasonable ethical thought."<sup>1</sup> To his mind, "it is no use at all just to know our learning without the knowledge of theirs."<sup>2</sup>

But how did he treat Chinese culture? In a letter of February 15, 1609, to another missionary he wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Luo Guang, *Matteo Ricci* (in Chinese: Taipei).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209.

As I have gradually illustrated, they (the Chinese) also appreciate very much the principle of filial piety, although one might hold different views. To date from its very beginning, they faithfully followed natural law in ancient times, just like the case in our country. In 1500, this nation did not simply worship any idols. Even though they did worship some, these idols were not so detestable as those worshipped by our Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. Some of the gods were even very moral and well-known for their good conduct. As a matter of fact, in the most ancient and authoritative works of the literati, they only worshipped Heaven and Nature and their common master. When making a careful study of all these works, we may find few things contrary to reason, but instead, most of them are corresponding to reason. And their natural philosophers are no worse than anyone else.<sup>3</sup>

The above quotations make clear the following: (1) Ricci knew very well traditional—especially Confucian—Chinese culture. As in ancient society, China was dominated by the patriarchal clan system and moral importance was attached to filial piety based on the principle of blood relation and “natural law.” In China worship of Heaven and Nature also is moral and hence naturally “reasonable.” Being quite knowledgeable regarding Chinese culture, Ricci regarded Confucianism not as a kind of religion, but rather as based on “natural law.” (2) Ricci highly appreciated China’s Confucianist culture. He saw that the idolatry in ancient Chinese culture was not like that of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans and hence that ancient Chinese philosophy, in speaking of human nature and heavenly principles, transcended Western philosophy. This appears in his answer to Xu Guangqi’s question, “China now, when virtue and rite and cultural relics are all prevailing, really flourishes culturally as though it has dispelled clouds and seen the sun again.”<sup>4</sup> This may be due to the fact

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<sup>3</sup> Matteo Ricci, *Lettere dalla China*, trans. He Gaoji, et al. (Zhonghuashu, China: China Press, 1983), p. 687.

<sup>4</sup> See the “Epilogue” to *Twenty-five Sayings from Epictetus*, in Xu Zongmian, ed. *Extracts of the Translated Works by the Protestants in Ming and Qing Dynasties* (Beijing: China Press, 1949), p. 329.

that as Catholic he attached great importance to opposing idolatry and advocating morality. Matteo Ricci was strongly against the idolatry of Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism), but he did not regard Confucian worship as a kind of idolatry. Thus we can say, that, on the whole, Matteo Ricci agreed with and appreciated the orthodox Confucianist thought of Chinese culture.

As Xu Guangqi believed in Catholicism through his contact with Ricci, he respected Ricci both for his learning and for his morality. He noted that in Ricci's speech, "you cannot find even a single word which runs counter to the principle of loyalty and piety, nor can you find one harmful to the will of the people and the world."<sup>5</sup> That Xu Guangqi should attach special importance to "loyalty and piety" was influenced strongly by traditional Chinese ideas and it is on this basis that Matteo Ricci preached the Catholic doctrines and received Chinese culture. One passage in *Ten Discourses by a Paradoxical Man* describes the statement of Gong Dacan made on Matteo Ricci:

On hearing his wise talk, I feel that the Confucian classics of China and those of his country corroborate each other. Thus those who believe in the real sages, either from the East or from the West, from the North or from the South, are actually all the same.<sup>6</sup>

All the Chinese scholars mentioned above think that what Ricci preached corresponded to traditional Chinese thought, especially to that of Confucianism, the most fundamental linking point of which lies in "the principle of loyalty and piety." As far as we know, although the Chinese intellectuals at the time set store in Ricci's knowledge of astronomy, almanac, science and technology, they valued even more highly his attempt to combine Western with Chinese culture. This probably is one of the earliest manifestations of "regarding Chinese learning as the body and Western learning for use." I shall discuss this problem later on.

### **Modes of Relating Oriental and Occidental Cultures**

Judging from the above two aspects we see that, while doing missionary work in China, Matteo Ricci actually was trying to link

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

<sup>6</sup> See *Ten Discourses by a Paradoxical Man* (Yanzhoufu: Catholic Press, 1930), Vol. II, p. 76.

Oriental and Occidental cultures. On this premise, we would conclude that his attempt adopted the methods of “linking Catholicism with Confucianism” (*heru*), “using the Catholic doctrines as a complement to Confucianism” (*buru*), “making in some respects the Catholic doctrines transcend the Confucian ones” (*chaoru*) “and making some revisions of the Catholic doctrines so that they would concord with the Confucianist ones” (*furu*). In short, on the above bases Ricci attempted to discover the point at which Oriental and Occidental cultures could be linked.

*Linking Catholicism with Confucianism (heru)*

Matteo Ricci wrote three important books on Catholic doctrines: *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, *Ten Discourses by a Paradoxical Man* and *Twenty-five Sayings from Epictetus*. The original title of the first one was “The True Meaning of the Learning of Heaven.” Obviously, he first thought of avoiding the name “the Lord of Heaven” because there is no such thing in China, to facilitate its reception by the Chinese. Fang Yingjing explains in the Preface as follows:

This book is about the questions and answers between Matteo Ricci and his fellow friends and five Chinese. What is the Lord of Heaven? It is God. God does exist.

The edition of *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* in the Ming Dynasty often used the titles “God” and “Heaven” for “the Lord of Heaven” or “the Lord of Supremacy,” while the present edition often uses instead “the Lord of Heaven” and “the Lord of Supremacy” simply because Ricci used those titles in order to be easily received by the Chinese. Thus in ancient times the Chinese people worshipped Heaven, their state and their forefathers, but not “the Lord of Heaven.” He tries to conform to this by quoting the classics to show that in ancient China “the Lord of Heaven” is God himself. The Chinese classics which he quotes include *The Book of Songs (shi)*, *The Book of History (shu)*, *The Book of Rites (li)*, *The Book of Changes (yi)* and *The Doctrine of the Mean (zhongyong)*. These quotes appear more frequently in *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*. For instance, in Discourse 6 of Vol. II, where he answers the question about “rewarding good and punishing evil,” he more than once quotes Chinese classics to confirm that the doctrines of Catholicism should be combined with those of Confucianism. (1) Matteo Ricci is quite aware

of the existence of a supreme personal "God" in ancient China, regarding which he argues that the "Lord of Heaven" in Western Catholicism and "God" in China are one thing with different names. (2) Criticizing Zhu Xi's explanation, he argues that there is only one "supreme lord," not two (heaven and earth). In his Introduction to *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* he notes that the ancient sage advised that the subject should be faithful, but that they cannot be faithful to two lords. Of the three Cardinal Guides, ruler guiding subject stands first for since a state has its head, how can heaven and earth not have their lord? As a state should be unified, how can heaven and earth have two lords? All these ideas obviously show his interpretations of the Catholic doctrines in relation to Confucianism. (3) Quoting the ancient classics he also states that God wills to impose fortune and misfortune on humanity. (4) So God has his own "sphere" (*ting*) which is different from the "heaven" (*tian*) in nature. From all these we can see that Matteo Ricci attempts to prove that Catholicism coincides with Confucianism and the ancient Chinese classics.

*Complementing Confucianism (buru)*

*Lettere dalla China* is a note written by Matteo Ricci in Italian in China. Later a British missionary translated it from Italian into Latin and added something concerning the history of missionary work as well as of Matteo Ricci, the missionary. It also has an appendix relating the missionary's posthumous glory and pathos. One passage in the book reads as follows:

In answering what the main content of Christianity is, Dr. Xu Guangqi sums it up very exactly in four Chinese characters: "expelling Buddhism and complementing Confucianism" (*qufuburu*). That is to say, he wants to expel the idol of Buddhism and add something to the doctrines of Confucianism.<sup>7</sup>

As generally any religion is characterized by excluding others, Ricci criticized Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism), especially the former, since he wanted to bring Catholicism to China; this shows in nearly all his works. St. Augustine once pointed out that the main content of a heathen religion should resolutely be given up, but that the ideas

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<sup>7</sup> *Lettere dalla China*, p. 663.

put forward by some heathen philosophers should be taken into account, accepted or approved if they were really reasonable. Matteo Ricci took this approach to the doctrines of Confucianism. He declared that Confucianism had nothing to do with religion, but was rather a kind of philosophy. He particularly esteemed Confucius, noting that as Confucius lived five centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ he could not know what was to happen 500 years later. "Ricci just quotes the classics of Confucianism in their own terms, saying nothing of how they should be evaluated after the death of Confucius."<sup>8</sup> In *Ten Discourses by a Paradoxical Man* there is a passage about Gong Dacan's discussion with Ricci on the issue: "whether good or evil will be rewarded posthumously." Gong first notes that the Chinese classics, because Emperor Qin Shihuang burned books and persecuted scholars after the death of Confucius, lost the records of the paradise, hell and retribution, which are still in a good state of preservation in the West: "Thus the stories about the paradise and hell are well preserved." In China, the story of retribution in later ages "is both vague and strange to scholars, who half believe and half doubt its existence." Gong also tries to prove the probable existence of the paradise by quoting ancient classics, but he still doubts the idea that "bestowing charity is bound to be rewarded a place and stand long." Ricci explains this according to the doctrines of Catholicism in which retribution to those who bestow favor does not consist in "place" or "life span." A man living in the world should work hard for the Lord of Heaven instead of intending to be rewarded in his lifetime; he should be confident that he will finally go to the paradise. Therefore, answering Xu Guangqi he says: "Those who suffer simply for benefit and emolument or fame and official rank or lasciviousness rather than the sacred cause are actually tragic. But those who suffer for the Lord of Heaven are obviously happy and seem to live in the paradise."<sup>9</sup> It is apparent that he wants to complement the thought of Confucianism with Catholic doctrines, but the approach he adopts is not to negate the Confucian classics but to extend and develop them so as to show that the Confucian ideas do not run counter to those of Western religions but may be complemented by them.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 664; also cf. p. 693.

<sup>9</sup> All the quotations are from Vol. II of *Ten Discourses by a Paradoxical Man*, pp. 57-79.

In *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* many passages deal with the “retribution of good and evil.” In Discourse VI “On Man’s Being Rewarded with Heaven or Punished with Hell after Death,” he more or less complements and revises the Confucianist concept that “the family always doing good is bound to be fortunate, whereas the family always doing evil is doomed to misfortune.” To him, there is not only retribution in one’s lifetime or to one’s descendants (he seems not to be favor of that to one’s descendants). What is more important is posthumous retribution: those who do good will go to Heaven instead of going to Hell after death. But as their purpose is not just this, Ricci adds:

All those who do good usually have three intentions: (1) to go to Heaven instead of going to Hell; (2) to reward the kindness bestowed by the Lord of Heaven; and (3) just to follow the imperial edict given by the Lord of Heaven.<sup>10</sup>

The first intention serves as a bridge in order for one to reach the third; that is, doing good is, after all, following the imperial edict. However, the Confucianists did not know this, and even criticized the concepts of Heaven and Hell simply because they could not understand their deep significance: “The Confucianists criticize the concepts of the Heaven and Hell because they do not know truth.”<sup>11</sup> We can see roughly the difference between Catholicism and China’s Confucianist tradition. Since the Confucianists talk about “the retribution of good or evil” just from personal moral cultivation, so everyone should “have self-cultivation” or “stick to morality” only for the purpose of reaching one’s inner moral accomplishment. In this sense, it is pursuing a kind of “inner transcendence.” But the Catholic doing good is after all for “the Lord of Heaven,” which is a kind of power of “outer transcendence.” So it pursues or follows a kind of “outer transcendence.” I shall discuss this problem later on.

*Transcending Confucianism (chaoru)*

The aim of China’s Confucianist theory is to pursue “inner transcendence,” whereas that of Catholicism is to pursue “outer

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<sup>10</sup> See *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (T’ien chu shih)*, p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

transcendence." In *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* Matteo Ricci points out this shortcoming of Confucianism and criticizes it.<sup>12</sup>

As far as we know, traditional Chinese philosophy, and Confucianist philosophy in particular, is strikingly different from Western philosophy and religion. The Greek philosophy of Plato and Aristotle already had divided the world into two parts: a transcendental noumenon and a real world. Thereafter Christianity was concerned especially with an outer transcendent God, whereas traditional Chinese philosophy was characterized by "inner transcendence." What Confucius means by "nature and the doctrine of Heaven" is a matter of inner transcendence, and what Mencius meant by "thinking hard, knowing nature and Heaven" is also a matter of "inner transcendence." There is a sentence in *Xici* saying: "A feminine (*yin*) and a masculine (*yang*) equals a word, and it is followed by virtue (*shan*) and will have a nature," which is a matter of "inner transcendence." According to this, one may reach a realm leading to a transcendental "way of Heaven" through one's own inner moral cultivation, without the help of an outer transcendent power. But for Ricci, one can hardly reach the culminating realm just through one's inner moral cultivation; one must be pushed by an outer transcendent power or God; thus it is necessary to believe in God. That is to say, Ricci considers the doctrines of Catholicism to be more perfect than those of Confucianism.

#### *Concordance with Confucianism (furu)*

This concept means that it is necessary to make some revisions of the Catholic doctrines or to yield to some of the Confucianist ideas in order to concord or chime in with China's traditional Confucianist thought.

The editor's Preface to the French 1978 edition of *Lettere dalla China* says:

Immediately before Ricci's death, the methods adapted by the Chinese missionary group led by him had already become an issue argued both at home and abroad. It was disputed with two objections. In practice, he was accused of paying too much attention to developing his relation to the Confucianist elite instead of pushing forward the

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

missionary cause. In theory, he was also opposed for his positive evaluation of Confucianism. Some people even pointed out that, if so, it would run a risk of sullyng the purity of Christianity. Only by means of a heightened religious emphasis can the missionary preach the Gospel to the broad masses of people and make evident the characteristics of Christianity.<sup>13</sup>

I have already pointed out that Matteo Ricci had some opinions of China's Confucianist tradition and attempted to link Western and Eastern cultures. Naturally, he knew clearly that there were many differences and conflicts between Confucianism and Catholicism and probably would have dealt with these by the methods of "complementing Confucianism" and "transcending Confucianism." If his missionary work were completely according to Catholic doctrines, however, he would have been confronted with more difficulties. Therefore, he had to make some revisions of the Catholic doctrines so as to cater to the Chinese tradition and it is not strange that he was criticized. As to how he adapted Catholicism to Confucianism, the following should be noted.

a. In order to fit Catholicism to Chinese society, he explained its differences from Chinese society. In the Italian edition of his *Lettere dalla China*, there is a passage describing how the Confucianist offers sacrifices to gods.

However, according to an old law, there is a grand Confucian temple in every big city where the literati gather, with a figure of Confucius enshrined and his name; every year, the literati offer sacrifices to him four times, with a candle burning and a beast is killed. However, as they do not think of him as godly or want anything of him, such a rite cannot be called a real offering.<sup>14</sup>

In Matteo Ricci's books, there are many signs of the Catholic stance against idolatry; the criticism of Buddhist idolatry is particularly strong. However, he never criticizes Confucian offerings to the Sage, nor does he criticize the Chinese offerings to their ancestors. The issue concerning offerings is an important reason why China later forbid the preaching of Catholicism. In 1704, the Vatican gave orders that

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<sup>13</sup> See *Lettere dalla China*, p. 660.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 659.

Chinese Catholics should not follow traditional Chinese rites that did not conform to Catholicism. Obviously, offering sacrifices to Confucius as well as to ancestors is especially counter to Catholicism; this led the Chinese government to limit and even forbid the preaching of Catholicism. Since Matteo Ricci well understood Chinese conditions, he adopted the method of compromising with the Chinese tradition for the sake of adapting to Chinese society as well as his missionary work, although the attempts did not conform to the doctrines of Catholicism.

b. He makes some Catholic ideas conform to traditional Chinese Confucianist thought so as to enable the Chinese to accept Catholicism. As mentioned previously, the "Lord of Heaven" in Catholicism is, of course, the supreme personified God, but Ricci's *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* does not mean this according to its original title. In that book he often uses such words as "God" and "Heaven" of Chinese origin, instead of the "Lord of Heaven." According to Fang Hao's *Collected Essays on The History of Chinese Catholicism*, in contrast to the edition of the Ming Dynasty, it is found that the later edition has changed the words "God" or "Heaven" in the Ming to "Lord of Heaven" or "Supreme Lord" in 79 places.<sup>15</sup> In the Chinese language there are already such words as "God" (*shangdi*) and "Heaven" (*tian*), but in traditional Chinese thought *tian* has several meanings. Among these Ricci takes the meanings "God," "Heaven" and the supreme personified God, but for the Chinese people there may be some other meanings. In 1715, after Ricci's death, the Pope gave an edict that the name "Lord of Heaven" was a legal one and such names as "God" and "Heaven" should no longer be used because they could be interpreted in different ways.

Also, according to Professor Luo Guang, Ricci says in his *Twenty-five Sayings from Epictetus*, "This book is actually composed of 25 chapters. Every chapter is short and concise. It advises people to live simply and to restrain desire and feeling. Happiness lies in one's secure state of mind without having stirred either by good fortune or misfortune. The purpose of human life lies in one's obedience to the Lord of Heaven." It is apparent then that the book is intended to conform to Chinese conditions.

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<sup>15</sup> See *Collected Essays on the History of Chinese Catholicism*, pp. 4-8.

c. Ricci made some revisions in the “idea of sin” in order that it should approach more closely the “idea of virtue” in China’s Confucianist tradition. As the “idea of sin” in Catholicism implies, human nature cannot be considered “virtuous,” which is entirely different from the “idea of human nature being virtuous” in China’s traditional Confucianist thought. In accordance with St. Augustine’s interpretation, man is born to be “sinful” because of his rational choice. In the final analysis, what causes man to choose evil with reason is his vanity, or an ego-centric desire that puts himself over God. Such a desire usually drives him into following his own intention and holding in contempt God’s decree, which is particularly apparent in human desire. Augustine then adds that, since man intentionally chooses evil and commits sins violating God, he can never recover his original state with his own effort. For such a “sin” causes him to degenerate inevitably, being characteristically ego-centric in willing and desiring and able only to choose “committing sin” or tending to “evil.”

In this regard in the 7th discourse of *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, Ricci thinks that the “human nature” refers to what differentiates man from metal and stone, grass and wood, bird, beast and even spirit, and this is why man “can reason things out.” So he says: “What can reason things out is alone called human nature, which is different from other creatures.” “Virtue and morality come after reason, which itself is something dependent, and not human nature itself.” Thus, “reasoning things out” refers simply to this virtuous “ability,” and “human nature is born to be virtuous.” This obviously caters to Confucianist ideas. But since Matteo Ricci could not completely violate the doctrines of the Lord of Heaven, he thinks that man is “able to reason things out.” How can he get such an ability? Just as farmers plough, weed, remove the stones and irrigate before they sow seeds in order to get good harvests, so “learners should first of all get rid of evil before they could be virtuous. Only by standing aloof from worldly success can they be successful.” As this idea is associated with that of “sin” in Catholicism, it could not but conflict with the so-called idea of “good ability.” Thus it is quite difficult to reconcile one cultural tradition with another.

From the above four points we can see that Matteo Ricci preached the doctrines of Catholicism for the purpose of linking Oriental and

Occidental culture together. Whether his attempt was successful or not will not be evaluated here, but that he was the very first Westerner to make such an attempt is certainly of historical importance.

### **“Body and Use” and the Correlation of Chinese and Western Harmony**

In trying to link Western and Chinese culture, often we encounter the problem of the “body and use” (*tiyong*), of Chinese learning and Western learning. In preaching Catholicism in China, Matteo Ricci could not but consider his relation to traditional Chinese thought and culture. Similarly, in receiving Catholicism, the Chinese had to consider such a relation. Above I have discussed how he dealt with this problem. Now let us consider how the Chinese intellectuals at the time received Catholicism. In my opinion, such receivers of Catholicism at the time as Xu Guangqi, Li Zhizao and others in receiving or studying Western learning took the attitude: “Chinese learning as body and Western learning for use, we know that although the Protestants were active at that time even at the court in Beijing, yet “the Chinese court made use of them only by employing their techniques.” “For example, Ricci once repaired clocks and other machines in the court, and Tang Ruowang and Nan Huai ren and others joined in revising the calendar.” “What China’s enlightened literati were particularly interested in was to learn from them their science and knowledge.” “They did not have great success in shaping China’s intellectuals”<sup>16</sup> for few Chinese intellectuals received the doctrines of Catholicism. As these were received chiefly due to his association with traditional Chinese thought, especially the Confucianist morality, his attempt can be regarded as another earlier form of “regarding Chinese learning as body and Western learning for use” formulated in the 1860s.

During subsequent centuries there have been various attempts to correlate “Chinese learning” and “Western learning” with that between “body” (*ti*) and “use” (*yong*), such as “Chinese learning as body and Western learning for use,” or “Western learning as body and Chinese learning for use” and even “both the two learnings as body and Chinese learning for use” are called “all-Westernizers” (*quanpan xihua pai*); those who regard “Chinese learning as body and Western

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<sup>16</sup> See the Preface to the Chinese version of *Lettere dalla China*, p. 23.

learning for use: are called “Chinese culture supremacists” (*guocui pai*). Such confusions are caused by the attempt to describe the relationship between “Chinese learning” and “Western learning” with that between “body and use.” As a matter of fact, none of the above ideas are tenable.

As a pair of important categories in the history of Chinese philosophy, “body” and “use” are not substantial categories, but rather fundamental relations. “Body” (*ti*) generally refers to the “inner transcendental spirit” or “transcendental noumenon.” It corresponds to what Mencius means by “conscience” (*liangzhi* or *liangneng*) and Wang Yangming by “mind” (*xin*), etc.; the latter corresponds to “God’s will” (*tianming*), “taiji,” “God’s word” (*tianli*) and “logos” (*dao*), etc. “use” (*yong*) refers to the various functions demonstrated by such an “inner transcendental spirit” or “transcendental noumenon.” According to traditional Chinese philosophy, *ti* and *yong* are unified, with the former presenting the latter for, as Wang Bi in the Wei-Jin Dynasty pointed out, there would be no corresponding *yong* without *ti*. The so-called concept of “Chinese learning as body and Western learning for use” is nothing but an effort to preserve the inner transcendental noumenon in Chinese tradition, so as to reject the Western spirit. For how could we make “Western learning for use” if we should do like that? Similarly, it is impossible to regard “Western learning as body and Chinese learning for use.” The former will inevitably result in “Chinese learning both as body and for use” and, the latter, “Western learning both as body and for use.”

As for “both the learnings as body and for use interchangeably,” it can be interpreted as: if something in Chinese learning is good we should regard “Chinese learning as body and Western learning for use;” also, if something in Western learning is good we should in turn regard “Western learning as body and Chinese learning for use.” Such an idea is obviously untenable. It will do nothing but include both attitudes in the so-called concept of regarding “both learnings as body and for use interchangeably,” which is just eclectic. Professor Fang Keli involves himself in a confused eclectic situation although he criticizes the above two attitudes in his “‘Chinese Learning as Body and Western Learning for Use’ and ‘Western Learning as Body and Chinese Learning for Use’.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See *Studies of Philosophy*, 9 (1987), 29-35.

It would give rise to “stealthily substituting one culture for another” if we use the relation of *tiyong* to explain the relationship between Chinese culture and Western culture. If we do not improve the cultural soil and other conditions, but just stealthily substitute one culture for another, the cultural foundation will not be solid. Thus to my mind, our modern society should have its modern spirit and various systems embodying such a spirit. If we use the relation of *tiyong* to explain this problem, we might probably regard “the modern spirit as body and the systems and their functions embodying such a spirit for use.” If so, one might ask: what is the “modern spirit?” and what are the “systems and their functions embodying the spirit?”

Here I would refer to the point of view put forward by Yan Fu, who once criticized the idea of regarding “Chinese learning as body and Western learning for use.” He also points out that body and use should be unified rather than separated. Particularly, he lays emphasis on the significance of science and puts forward a very meaningful proposition: “liberty as body and democracy for use.” I do think that such an idea of his is probably of certain modern significance. So in my opinion, “liberty” is the concentrative embodiment of the modern spirit, or an inner spirit in the modern era and a universal ideal that the people in modern society are pursuing; whereas “democracy” consists of various systems of modern society ensuring one “liberty,” rather than certain people only. We now live Chinese society. It is most important to give everyone “liberty” and have a set of democratic systems ensuring its realization if we want to enable our society to become modernized. Only in this way, can people give full play to their enthusiasm and creativity, and our country set foot on the road not only of the “four modernization” but also of all-around modernization.

**Part V**  
**Chinese Philosophy and Religion**



## Towards a Chinese Hermeneutics

Since Western hermeneutics was introduced into Chinese academia a little more than ten years ago, Chinese scholars have been using its methods and theories in the social sciences and the humanities. The study of interpretation in the West can be traced back to ancient Greece, but it flourished with Biblical scholarship. After many centuries of gestation, especially after the publication of the works of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), it has turned out to be an influential and well-developed subject with systematic theories. This chapter will discuss two questions: first, is there a subject called "hermeneutics" in ancient China? Second, is it possible to find general patterns of interpretation in the study of Chinese classics.

### I.

Surely there has been a long history of interpretation of the classics in China. However, can we say that there is a systematic theory of interpretation different from that in the West? I do not think so. We can only say that we are trying to establish our own hermeneutics with Chinese characteristics, and that we have made much progress along the way to this goal.

In my opinion, in order to establish a subject of study or a branch of learning one should first be conscious of its own theoretical and methodological assumptions. There has been a tradition of interpretation in the West. However, it was only in the 19th century that Schleiermacher and Dilthey began to study "the question of interpretation" as a subject. More than a century elapsed before "the question of interpretation" became a subject in the West. Of course, before a subject comes into being, it usually goes through a period of "question accumulation" or "material accumulation." This period could be considered as the pre-history of the subject. For example, it is commonly agreed that comparative literature is a subject established in the 19th century, though, as we know, there was such a study as comparative literature both in the West and China in earlier times. In China, for example, there is a comparative study of poetic styles in different times in the chapter of "*Ming Shi Pian*"

("Understanding Poetry") in *Wen Xin Diao Long* 《文心雕龙》 by Liu Xie (刘勰, ?465-?532), which says, "at the very beginning of the Sung Dynasty (420-479),<sup>1</sup> poetic styles witnessed continuity and evolution: while the thoughts of Lao Tzu (老子, ?570 B.C.-?470 B.C.) and Zhuang Tzu (庄子, 369 B.C.-286 B.C.) were dormant, poetry that described natural landscape became developed." This quotation is a comparison of style changes that took place in the Wei-Jin period (220-420) and the South-North Dynasties (420-589). In the Wei-Jin period poetry was usually "extremely mysterious and abstruse," but then it changed to "landscape poetry" in the early South-North Dynasties. As a result, poetry looked more "natural" (Tang Yijie, 1999: 186-187). In his book *A Study of Comparative Literature: A New Direction*, Li Dasan wrote, "As a subject, in France, it was not until 1830s and 1840s when 'comparative literature' became mature. Therefore, Amber (1800-1864) and Abel-Francois Villemain (1790-1867) may be considered as scholars who truly intended to establish an integrated 'comparative literature'" (Li Dasan, 1978:107). In China comparative literature was studied as a subject late in the 1920's. We cannot take it for granted that comparative literature, as a subject, has been in China since ancient times. Similarly, there were many archaeological studies (of usually illegally unearthed items) or antique appraisals long ago, both in China and abroad, yet according to the volume of *Archeology in Encyclopedia Sinica*, Western archaeology started from about 1760 to 1840, while Chinese archaeology was set up by Pei Wen Zhong (1904-1982) and Li Ji (1896-1979) as late as the 1920s.

A strange and perhaps controversial idea is that it is not right for Hegel to declare that there was no philosophy in China, as there are abundant "philosophical thoughts" in Chinese traditional culture. But it is perhaps right to say that, before Western philosophy was accepted in China as an independent subject separate from "Jing Xue" (经学, the study of classics), "Zi Xue" (子学, the study of ancient philosophers), historiography and literature, "philosophy" was indeed non-existent in China. There are many "philosophical thoughts" or "philosophical questions" in Chinese traditional culture, which were embodied in "Jing Xue" and "Zi Xue." But during the evolution of Chinese intellectual life, no serious effort was made to

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<sup>1</sup> Founded by Liu Yu (363-422), different from the Song Dynasty (960-1279) by Zhao Kuangyin (927-976).

distinguish philosophy from literature and history. This observation was also the case in the West in ancient times. Even now in Chinese academia, there is little difference between “Chinese philosophy” and “Chinese intellectual background.” Actually it is much easier to write an intellectual history of China than a history of Chinese philosophy. “Philosophy” should start from thinking about one or more “philosophical questions,” from a set of organized concepts and elementary propositions based on the relationship of these concepts. It employs in a self-conscious manner critical methods developed from theoretical analysis and synthesis. That would mean that many Chinese subjects must follow the models set by the West, and in many areas we do need first of all to learn from the West before we can establish our “Chinese” subjects (like “Chinese comparative literature” and “Chinese archaeology,” etc.). Then we can leave behind the West, our “teacher.”

We can understand this point from the transformation of Indian Buddhism in China. During the South-North Dynasties, when Indian Buddhism came into China, the Chinese first tried to understand and learn its texts, principles and theories. Not until the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581-907) did China develop its own Buddhist schools and sects. Integrated with indigenous Chinese cultures, Chinese Buddhism significantly enriched Indian Buddhism. To cite Bertrand Russell:

Contacts between different civilizations have often in the past proved to be landmarks in human progress. Greece learnt from Egypt. Rome from Greece, the Arab from the Roman Empire, Medieval Europe from the Arabs and Renaissance Europe from the Byzantines. In many of these cases, the pupils proved better than their masters. In the case of China, if we regard the Chinese as pupils, this may be the case again (R.E. Egnor and L.E. Ednnon, 1992:547).

Although we in China started “comparative literature” and “interpretation of classics” as subjects of study much later than the West, we may well leave the West behind. This, of course, is no more than a possibility, and there is another possibility that will be discussed in the following pages. Meanwhile, it cannot be said that there is little in Chinese culture that the West can learn from. For

instance, Confucianism greatly influenced French philosophers, especially Voltaire (Meng Hua, 1993:14, 149 & 151). There are many scholars writing on the history of Chinese philosophy, but none are interested in the history of "Jing Xue." But "Jing Xue" has had a history of more than two thousand years and has influenced almost all aspects of Chinese society. I believe that the study of "Jing Xue" will eventually have an influence on the development of other cultures.

Returning to the question of the possibility of a Chinese hermeneutics, my proposal is based on a long and rich tradition of classical interpretation in China. According to *Lun Yu Nian Pu* (Chronological Table of the *Analects*) written by the Japanese scholar Taisuke Hayashi (1854-1922), more than 3,000 books had been written about the *Analects*. In the preliminary remarks of his book *Tao Te Ching Yuan Zhi* (the Original Meaning of *Tao Te Ching*), Du Dao Jian (1237-1318), a Taoist in the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368), pointed out that "more than 3,000 scholars had commented on the *Tao Te Ching* and there should have been the same number of books, many of which are not extant. We should make the best use of the books that are available and try to define a Chinese version of hermeneutics.

However, here it must be stressed that a Chinese hermeneutics is possible only when it is in contact with Western hermeneutics. In my article "Towards a Chinese Hermeneutics: A Second Study," I analyzed the types of classical interpretation in the pre-Qin period to show that there has been a long tradition of interpretation in China. It also discussed issues involved in classical interpretation after the Qin and Han Dynasties (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). By describing the development of the interpretation of classics in China, I hoped to find out whether there were general principles and patterns similar to or different from Western interpretative practices.

To the question of whether a Chinese hermeneutics is different from that interpretative tradition; we can enrich Western hermeneutics by introducing into it interpretative theories and methods peculiar to the Chinese tradition. If we want to establish a Chinese version of hermeneutics, I think the following studies are probably needed:

First, we should work hard to study the history of interpretation (particularly Biblical interpretations) in the West, and the hermeneutical theories advanced by Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey as well as their current developments in the West.

During the past century, almost all the philosophical schools (e.g. phenomenology, structuralism, deconstruction and post-modernism) in the West are to some extent related to hermeneutics. Many debates arose because of people's different views on how to "interpret." So a solid knowledge of German hermeneutical theories is essential for the development of a Chinese hermeneutics.

Second, there is a long interpretative history in China. We will have to work hard to perform two tasks. One is that we should first tidy up the history of Chinese classics interpretation. Why were there different kinds of classics interpretation before the Qin Dynasty? Why was "Zhang Ju Zhi Xue" (annotative study of chapters and sentences in ancient works) the most important method applied during the Han Dynasty not only to Confucian classics, but also to the Tao Te Jing?<sup>2</sup> We need also to explain why in the Wei-Jin Dynasties scholars held in high regard ideas like "De Yi Wang Yan" (得意忘言, forgetting the word after getting its ideas) and "Bian Ming Xi Li" (辨名析理, distinguishing the names and analyzing the principles) in their interpretative activities. Many new interpretation problems arose when Indian Buddhism came into China, for instance Ge Yi (格义, interpreting Buddhism classics with existent concepts of Chinese thought) and Lian Lei (连类, putting similar things together to draw analogies) in the Jin Dynasty (265-420). Scholars were arguing over the issue whether translators should not use different Chinese expressions for the same Buddhist term. The translation of the sutras even caused disagreements about the exact meaning of words taken from classical texts. All these issues need further study. Of course, we will also have to ask why there have been in classical interpretations so many changes that are the result of the change in the Chinese intellectual climate. Because there are many methods in Chinese classical interpretation (such as commentary, record, explanation, annotation, comment, note, and so on), how can one clearly and explicitly explain the contexts of these methods? Besides, because many areas of knowledge, such as that of "Xun Gu Xue" (explanation of archaic words in the current language, or semantic study), philology, archaeology, phonology, and "Ban Ben Xue" (the study of

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<sup>2</sup> For example, *Lao Tzu Dao Te Jing Zhang Ju* (an annotative study of *Dao De Jing*) by He Shanggong of early Western (Former) Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-8 A.D).

historical editions) are employed in interpretation, how to consider their functions is a question that should not be neglected.

Third, many Chinese subjects, such as “comparative literature,” archaeology, sociology, history and philosophy, and others, have recently employed theories and methods of Western hermeneutics with much progress. It can be said that, as in the West, there is also a “trend of interpretation” in China. Many Chinese philosophers in the 20th century have more or less used these theories and methods in studying Chinese philosophy. In my view, without the impact of Western philosophy, modern Chinese philosophy would not have come into being. It could enter from “the past” into “modern times” only when it itself is rebuilt (or gets a new interpretation of itself) with the help of Western philosophy. Only in this way can “Chinese philosophy” be relevant and useful to modern China, which is becoming more and more part of the world. This is what I mean when I say we probably must first study Chinese cultural tradition in the light of Western hermeneutical theories before we discuss the possibility of establishing a Chinese hermeneutics. As far as I know, many scholars, such as Qian Zhongshu (1910-1998), the author of *Cuan Zhui Pian* (a detailed comparative study of Chinese and Western classics and literary theories), Cheng Chungying (1935-) in the United States, the author of *Ontology and Hermeneutics*, and Rudolf Wagner in Germany who produced an impressive interpretation of the Lau Tzu, all have made great achievements by combining classical Chinese interpretative methods with Western hermeneutical theories.

Therefore, for the establishment of a Chinese interpretation theory, we should first of all develop a comparative point of view. Only in this way can we establish our own hermeneutics with Chinese characteristics—a theory that is different from that of the West.

## II.

There is a brief entry of “hermeneutic” in the volume dedicated to philosophy in *Encyclopedia Sinica*. According to the entry, the study of interpretation can be traced back to ancient Greece. Augustine (354-430) gradually systematized fragmentary Biblical scholarship before him. Chinese interpretation may have had a longer history than that in the West. Here in this paper, I will demonstrate some characteristics of classical interpretation in ancient China (mainly the Pre-Chin period). We will be able to discuss the possibility of establishing a

Chinese hermeneutics when we have comprehensive knowledge of how classical interpretation was developed in China.

China is a country that pays much attention to history and tradition, so there is the saying “Six Classics are all history.”<sup>3</sup> According to *the Analects*, Confucius taught his students such classics as *Shi Jing*, *Shu Jing*, *Li Ji* and *Yue Jing*, and he called himself a “transmitter rather than a maker, believing in and loving the ancients.” (*Analects*, 7:1) That is to say, Confucius did not elucidate his own thoughts without the base of the classics; instead, he interpreted the classics as what they were. He believed in and was fond of the ancient classics. Mencius (孟子, 372 B.C.-?289 B.C.) seemed to start the Confucian teachings of the “Dao Tong” (way of transmission) and he took as his ideal “transmitting the ancient traditions of Yao and Shun,” “modeling after and making brilliant the systems of King Wen and King Wu” and “expatiating on Confucius’ thought.” According to *Xun Tzu*, the mission for “the man of humanity” is “first to follow systems made by Yao, Shun and Yu,<sup>4</sup> then to follow the teachings of Confucius and Zi Gong” (*Xun Tzu*, Chapter 6).<sup>5</sup> Even philosophically independent and creative Taoists (before the Qin Dynasty) would rate the classics very highly. Lao Tzu was a custodian of the imperial archives of the Zhou royalty and often cited the words of ancient sages in his book. Zhuang Tzu would also appeal to the authority of the ancients to attack the mistakes of his contemporaries. Mo Tzu (墨子, ? 476 B.C.-?390 B.C.), founder of Moism, advocated the thought of Yu, and said: “Those that are not thoughts of Yu are not thoughts of Mo Tzu” (Sun Yi Rang, 1986). The school of Legalism, however, insisted on “neither observing the teachings of the ancient sages nor rigidly observing the set rules” (*Han Fei Tzu*, Chapter 49). Confucianism and Moism are criticized for their blind worship of the ancients. This does not mean that the Legalist school denied the cultural heritage wholesale. Its representative Han Fei Tzu (韩非子, 280 B.C.-233 B.C.) much valued the legalistic thinkers

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<sup>3</sup>In China, “Six Classics” refers to the six books, namely, *Shi Jing* (*Book of Odes*, or *Book of Songs*), *Shu Jing* (*Book of History*), *Li Ji* (*Book of Rites*), *Yue Jing* (*Book of Music*), *I Jing* (*Book of Changes*) and *Chun Qiu* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*). *Yue Jing* is now lost.

<sup>4</sup>Yao, Shun and Yu were the three legendary rulers of the third millennium BC. Yao was succeeded by Shun and Yu. Yu was the founder of the Xia Dynasty (?2183 B.C.-?1752 B.C.).

<sup>5</sup>Zi Gong was one of Confucius’s pupils.

before him. He said: "The ancient sages cherished it (the tradition) and transmitted it." It should be noted that there are such articles as "Jie Lao" (Explaining *Lao Tzu*) and "Yu Lao" (Understanding *Lao Tzu*) in the book of *Han Fei Tzu*. With this Han Fei Tzu established an interpretation pattern different from that of *Zuo Zhuan* and *Ji Ci*. How the thinkers in ancient China thought of history and tradition is not what this paper will explore. My main point is that there is a close relation between Chinese emphasis upon history and tradition and Chinese classical interpretation.

Before the Qin Dynasty (221 B.C.-206 B.C.), there had been several interpretative books about classics. Here I select three typical samples (two books and two articles) of three interpretation patterns. The first kind of interpretation, as exemplified by *Zuo Zhuan's* interpretation of *Chun Qiu*, is called the interpretation of historical events. *Gong Yang Zhuan* (Gong Yang Gao's Commentaries on *Chun Qiu*) and *Gu Liang Zhuan* (Gu Liang Chi's Commentaries on *Chun Qiu*) are also interpretations of *Chun Qiu* and they are quite different from *Zuo Zhuan*. The two books will not be discussed here. The second, as shown in *Ji Ci's* interpretation of *I Ching* (*Zhou Yi*, or *Book of Changes*), is called general philosophical interpretation. The third, represented by "Jie Lao" and "Yu Lao," two articles in the book of Han Fei Tzu, are called practical interpretation, that is to say, social and political interpretation. Surely, the three interpretations are not water-tight compartments, but we should keep in mind that these interpretations, in any case, all have remarkable features.

### **Zuo Zhuan's Interpretation of Chun Qiu**

*Zuo Zhuan* or *Zuo's Commentaries*, written by Zuo Qiuming according to legends, are commentaries on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. However, Yang Bojun did not agree with this. Yang said that the author of *Zuo Zhuan* is perhaps not Zuo Qiuming and that as a Confucian he might belong to another school of Confucianism. Yang also argued that the *Zuo Zhuan* came into being somewhere between 403 B.C. and 386 B.C. (Yang Bojun, 1981). Here we will discuss *Zuo Zhuan's* interpretation of *Chun Qiu* on the basis of Yang's conclusions. According to Yang's dating of *Zuo Zhuan*, we can say that *Zuo Zhuan* is one of the earliest interpretation books ever known or one of the earliest interpretation books that is extant in the world. This means that the Chinese interpretation of classics boasts a history of over 2,300

years. It is said in *Chun Qiu* that in the first year of Duke Yin's reign (722 B.C.-712 B.C.), "in May, earl Zheng overcame Duan in Yan." There is a long paragraph interpreting this short sentence:<sup>6</sup>

Duke Wu of Zheng had married a daughter of the House of Shin, called Wu Jiang, who bore Duke Zhuang and his brother Duan. Duke Zhuang was born as she was waking from sleep (the meaning of the text here is uncertain), which frightened the lady so that she named him Wu Sheng (born in waking) and hated him, while she loved Duan and wished him to be declared his father's heir. Often did she ask this of Duke Wu, but he refused it. When Duke Zhuang came to the earldom, she begged him to confer on Duan the city of Zhi. "It is too dangerous a place," he replied. "The Younger of Guo died there; but in regard to any other place, you may command me." She then requested Jing; and there Duan took up his residence, and came to be styled Da Shu (the Great Younger) of Jing City. Ji Zhong said to the Duke, "Any metropolitan city, whose wall is more than 3,000 cubits round, is dangerous to the State. According to the regulations of the former kings, such a city of the 1st order can have its wall only a third as long as that of the capital; one of the 2nd order, only a fifth as long; and one of the least order, only a ninth. Now Jing is not in accordance with these measures and regulations. As ruler, you will not be able to endure Duan in such a place." The Duke replied: "It was our mother's wish;—how could I avoid the danger?" "The Lady Jiang," replied the officer, "is not to be satisfied. You had better take the necessary precautions, and not allow the danger to grow so great that it is difficult to deal with. Even when grass has grown and spread all about, it cannot be removed; how much less the brother of yourself, and the favorite brother as well!" The Duke said, "By his many deeds of unrighteousness he will bring destruction on himself. Do you only wait a while?"

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<sup>6</sup> The following translation is taken from Legge's *The Chinese Classic*, Vol. V, *The Chun Tsew (Chun Qiu)*, with the *Tso Chuen (Zuo Zhuan)* with slight modifications. Here names of place and person are sometimes converted to the Pin Yin system.

After this, Da Shu ordered the places on the Western and northern borders of the State to render to him the same allegiance as they did to the earl. Then he said to the Duke, "A state cannot sustain the burden of two services;—What will you do now? If you wish to give Jing to Da Shu, allow me to serve him as a subject. If you do not mean to give it to him, allow me to put him out of the way, so that the minds of the people will not be perplexed." "There is no need for such a step," the Duke replied. "His calamity will come of itself."

Da Shu went on to take as his own the places from which he had required divided contributions, as far as Lin Yan. Zi Feng (the designation of child Lu mentioned above) said, "Now is the time. With these enlarged resources, he will draw all the people to himself." The Duke replied, "They will not cleave to him, so unrighteous as he is. Through his prosperity he will fall the more."

Da Shu wrought at his defenses, gathered the people around him, put in order buff-coats and weapons, prepared footmen and chariots, intending to surprise Zheng, while his mother was to open to him from within. The Duke learned the time agreed on between them, and said: "Now we can act." So he ordered Zi Fang, with two hundred chariots, to attack Jing. Jing revolted from Da Shu, who then entered Yan, which the Duke himself proceeded to attack; and in the 5th month, on the day Xin Chou, Da Shu fled from it to Gong.

In the words of the text—"The earl of Zheng overcame Duan in Yan," Duan is not called the earl's younger brother, because he did not show himself to be such. They were as two hostile princes, and therefore we have the word "overcame." The Duke is styled the earl of Zheng simply to condemn him for his failure to instruct his brother properly. Duan's flight is not mentioned in the text, because it was difficult to do so, having in mind Zheng's wish that Duan might be killed.

This interpretation is, though long enough, one of only six Chinese characters. As we see, it is an interpretative recounting of a historical event, which includes its origin, its zigzag process, and its ending. There are a variety of discussions and remarks, resulting in an integrated narrative story. This very long paragraph, even if it is not considered as a direct interpretation of the text in *Zuo Zhuan*, itself can be thought of as a statement of a whole historical event. The fact is that this paragraph surely is an interpretation of the text. If "earl Zheng overcame Duan in Yan" is a historical event, the passage cited above

is an interpretative record of a historical event. The interpreter/narrator will no doubt take account of and be influenced by his own historical background, moral values, and other contingencies. This means that a narrative story is sure to embody the author's "historical standpoint" toward particular historical events. In the passage cited above, the expression "by his many deeds of unrighteousness he will bring destruction on himself" and the last words are highlights that show the author's "historical standpoint." This kind of interpretation greatly influenced the following historical books. As we know, in the *24 Histories* there are many commentaries like this. For example, *San Guo Zhi* (Records of Three States) had commentaries by Pei Songzhi. Had it not been for Pei Songzhi's commentaries, *San Guo Zhi* would have been less popular. In his interpretation, Pei Songzhi did not spend much time in tracing archaism but in explaining and supplementing background facts. Let us take a look at what he did with *Zhang Lu Zhuan* (Biography of Zhang Lu) in *San Guo Zhi*. In his commentaries Pei Songzhi noted, "During the period of Xi Ping (172-178), disorders took place all around the country. A man named Luo Yao rebelled. During the period of Guang He (178-184), Zhang Jiao and Zhang Xiu rebelled respectively in East and Central China. Luo Yao taught his people how to hide them. Zhang Jiao founded Tai Ping Dao. Zhang Xiu founded Wu Dou Mi Dao." Pei Songzhi's citation furnishes us with what happened to Taoist schools of that time. Although Pei Songzhi's commentaries on *San Guo Zhi* are a little different from that of *Zuo Zhuan* on *Chun Qiu*, they belong to the same pattern of interpretation. Both are narrative interpretations of historical events recorded in the classics.

### ***Ji Ci's Interpretation of I Ching***

*I Ching* (*Book of Change*) was originally a classic for divination in ancient China. There is profound wisdom in its divinatory names and diagrams together with its *Gua Ci* (explanation of the text of the whole hexagram) and *Yao Ci* (explanation of the component line). *Ji Ci* (Appended Remarks) in *I Zhuan* (Commentaries on *I Ching*) has a comprehensive and philosophically mature interpretation of *I Ching*<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Besides *Ji Ci*, many passages in *I Zhuan* can be studied and discussed in this context. Because of limited space, only *Ji Ci's* interpretation of *I Ching* will be discussed in this article.

*Ji Ci* interpreted *I Ching* as an integrated system. This kind of integrated interpretation of ancient classics has greatly influenced later scholars in China. For instance, *Lao Zi Zhi Lue* (a brief introduction to *Lao Tzu*) and *Zhou Yi Lue Li* (simple exemplifications of the principle of *I Ching*), all written by Wang Bi (226-249), were systemic and integrated interpretations of *Lao Tzu* and *I Ching* respectively. *Dao De Lun* (on *Lao Tzu*) and the *Wu Ming Lun* (on namelessness) written by He Yan (7-249) were also integrated interpretations of *Lao Tzu*. There were many works like these in Chinese history.<sup>8</sup> *Ji Ci*'s interpretations are enlightening in many aspects. Here we will focus on ontological and cosmological interpretations, which in practice are different and yet interconnected.

The sixty-four hexagrams in *I Ching* form an integrated yet open system, with a structural mode indicative of the way of the universe. This is an organic and dynamic mode. This is why we say "production and reproduction means I (Change)" (*Ji Ci*, Chapter 5)<sup>9</sup> Everything in the world can find its corresponding position, so *Ji Ci* said, *I Ching* (maybe we should call it "the principle of I") molds and encompasses all transformations of Heaven and Earth without mistake, and it stoops to bring things to completion without missing any" (*Ji Ci*, Chapter 4). Heaven, Earth, and all things in the world, their creations and changes, are all connaturally incarnated in the structural mode set up in *I Ching*. So it says: "In the heavens, forms (heavenly bodies) appear and on earth shapes (creatures) occur. In them changes and transformations can be seen" (*Ji Ci*, Chapter 1). The reasons and principles of why Heaven, Earth, and all things exist in the world can all be found in this mode. The foundation for their corresponding position in the structure can also be found here: "By means of the easy and the simple we grasp the laws of the whole world. When the laws

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<sup>8</sup> Most of the translations in this paper are cited from works by Wing-tsit Chan or Richard Wilhelm.

<sup>9</sup> The term Zhen Ji had been very popular in Buddhism. For example, in *Ren Wang Jing* it said, "Buddha nature is Zhen Ji, which has no past and no future, and has no life and death. Zhen Ji is the Buddha nature." In *Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra* it said, "Zhen Ji is Buddha nature, it has neither being nor non-being." In *Grand Dictionary of Buddhism* by Ding Fubao it said Zhen Ji refers to ultimate principle. Though it is not an extent concrete being, yet Tao is not Nonexistence but "non-existence but being." For further discussion, see Feng Youlan, 1999. What Lu Ji (261-303) said "to ask non-being for being and to ask quietness for sound" is the best statement of "non-existence but being."

of the whole world are grasped, therein lies perfection." The universal modes embodied in *I Ching*, which contain not only the principles for Heaven, Earth, and all things that have already existed, but also principles for whatever potential beings, may become the corresponding guidelines for all things existing in the world. As the *I Ching* states, "the spirit has no spatial restriction and Change has no physical form" (*Ji Ci*, Chapter 4), the changes of "I" (易) have no orientation and place, and are not confined to practical beings. That is to say, according to the author of *Ji Ci*, the foundations for the existence and changes of Heaven, Earth, and all things in the world can all be found in the "I" system. "I" is a universal mode that contains everything. It is also a "Dao" (道, way) of metaphysical sense, anything, being or coming into being, can in this system find their principles why they are, this is the reason why in *Ji Ci* it said "what exists before physical form (and is therefore without it) is called the "Dao" (Way). What exists after physical form (and is therefore with it) is called "Qi" (器, a concrete thing)." In Chinese philosophy, judging from the existent literature, *Ji Ci* should be considered the first to advance the two terms "Xing Shang" (before the physical form) and "Xing Xia" (after the physical form). Borrowing Professor Feng Youlan's words, it may be said that the "Xing Shang" is "Zhen Ji" (真际, ultimate reason) while the "Xing Xia" is "Shi Ji" (实际, particular entity). Shi Ji refers to concrete things, and Zhen Ji refers to the reason (or principle) why concrete things exist.<sup>10</sup> That means that *Ji Ci* has observed the inflexible difference between Xing Shang and Xing Xia, and established a metaphysical system on the basis of *I* (change) that has no physical forms.

This interpretation pattern has greatly influenced the development of Chinese philosophy. We can see this influence in Wang Bi's interpretation of "the number of the Great Expansion (multiplied together) make 50, of which (only) 49 are used (in divination)" (*Ji Ci*, Chapter 9) and his interpretation of *Lao Tzu* in his *Lao Tzu Zhi Lue*. Han Kang Bo (332-380) quoted Wang Bi in his book *Zhou Yi Ji Ci Zhu* (commentaries to *Ji Ci* of *I Ching*): "To deduce the principles in the world, 50 numbers are needed, of which 49 are used, while the remaining one will not be used. The reason for us to keep it without

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<sup>10</sup> "Tao originated from Vacuity," in *Huai Nan Tzu*, 3:1. Vacuity (Xu Kuo) refers to the condition before time and space are separated. See Chan, 1963:307.

using it is that it can make the divination understood. This is where the greatness of I lies. The existence of non-being must come from being, so we can understand that non-being comes from the ultimacy of being." "Ultimacy" here refers to substance. Here Wang Bi's explanation of the relation between substance and function sheds light on the relation between Xing Shang and Xing Xia.

There is a very important interpretation in *Ji Ci*. It says: "In the system of the I modes there is the *Tai Ji* (Grand Terminus or Great Ultimate). *Tai Ji* generates the modes (Yin and Yang), the two modes generate the four forms (major and minor, Yin and Yang). The four forms generate the eight trigrams...." This indicates in the I there is a creative system, manifest in the universe's constant changes and progressive development. The universe developed from original chaotic states (*Tai Ji*), followed by two forces, Yin and Yang, and their interaction in turn gave rise to Four Forms (Major and minor Yin and Yang), again, after their interactions, there appeared Eight Trigrams (Qian, Kun, Zhen, Xun, Kan, Li, Gen and Dui). These trigrams represent respectively different attributes. According to *Shuo Gua* (Discussion of the Trigrams), "the creative (Qian) is strong. The receptive (Kun) is yielding. The arousing (Zhen) means movement. The gentle (Xun) is penetrating. The abysmal (Kan) is dangerous. The clinging (Li) means dependence. Keeping-Still (Gen) means standstill. The joyous (Dui) means pleasure." These attributes can also be demonstrated in that of heaven, earth, thunder, wind, water, fire, mountain and marsh (collection of water). Each trigram is combined with another, one upon the other, thus making sixty-four hexagrams. However, the universe's changes will not stop; it changes forever. The last two hexagrams are *Ji Ji* (after completion) and *Wei Ji* (before completion). That indicates that any thing (not a particular thing, yet it refers to any kind of thing) will inevitably come to an end, but this end is, at the same time, another new start. Therefore, it is said in *Shuo Gua* that "The succession of events cannot come to an end, and therefore *Ji Ji* is succeeded by *Wei Ji*." All things in the world grow and change this way.

The "I" is an open system, demonstrating the developments and changes in the universe. In *Ji Ci* it is said that "Heaven and earth come together, and all things take shape and find form. Male and female mix their seeds, and all creatures take shape and are born." And in *Xu Gua* (Sequence of the Hexagrams) it is said that "Heaven and earth

existing, all (material) things then got their existence. All (material) things have existence, afterwards there came male and female. From the existence of male and female there came afterwards husband and wife. From husband and wife there came father and son. From father and son there came ruler and minister. From ruler and minister there came high and low. When (the distinction of) high and low had existence, afterwards came the arrangements of propriety and righteousness." This interpretation includes a cosmic evolution theory. We can say that *Ji Ci*'s interpretation of *I Ching* is one of cosmism. Here a question needs to be discussed. In my opinion, the statement "Tai Ji engenders two forms..." is nothing more than a symbolic system, while the statements "Heaven and earth come together, and all things take shape and find form..." and "Heaven and earth existing, all (material) things then got their existence..." are not symbols but the actual processes or courses; they are used as examples to demonstrate how the universe forms and develops. Consequently we may conclude that what is set up in *Ji Ci* is a symbolic system for developments and changes in the universe.

We can bring forward another new issue in the study of Chinese philosophy, namely, that of the symbolic system for developments and changes in the universe. We can also find this issue in *Xian Tian Tu* (congenital diagram) by Shao Yong (1011-1077) and in *Tai Ji Tu* (diagram of the Great Ultimate) by Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073). It is said that *Tai Ji Tu* came from another book, *Wu Ji Tu* (Diagram of Non-being of Ultimate) by a Taoist named Chen Tuan (906-989). This is, however, a questionable conclusion. It needs further discussion. I think it is very important to distinguish between symbolic systems of cosmic evolutions, on the one hand, and descriptions of an actual cosmic evolution process on the other. The latter is usually based on experiential observations and is concerned with the evolution process of concrete things with concrete forms, such as heaven, earth, male and female, etc. The former, as symbolic systems, can be based on experiential observations, but the evolution process that it refers to involves symbols rather than concrete things. These symbols may have names, but they are more than signs for concrete things and their natures. Consequently, symbolic systems of cosmic evolutions, like algebra, can include any concrete thing and its nature. For example, the two forms may represent either heaven and earth, or male and female, both vigorousness and submissiveness. Thus I think it is

inappropriate to consider *Ji Ci*'s interpretation of *I Ching* only as a description of the actual evolution of the universe, instead, it should be understood as a mode of how the universe developed and evolved, a mode that is something like a cosmic algebra. For the system in *Ji Ci*'s interpretation of *I Ching*, I call a "theory of cosmic evolution."

*Ji Ci* is not the only one that indicates a cosmic evolution theory in term of symbols. Many other works are like *Ji Ci*, for instance *Lao Tzu*. *Lao Tzu* says: "Dao produced the one; the one produced the two, the two produced the three. And the three produced the ten thousand things. The ten thousand things carry the Yin and embrace the Yang, and through the blending of the *Qi* (material force) they achieve harmony" (Chan, 1963:160). This is also a symbol system of cosmic evolution and a cosmic algebra as well, in which the numbers can be replaced by any concrete things. "Yuan Qi" (元气, vitality) or "Xu Kuo" (虚廓, vacuity)<sup>11</sup> can replace the One, Yin Yang and the universe<sup>12</sup> can replace the two. The three do not necessarily refer to heaven, earth and human being; instead, it may be the third thing coming out of two things that have opposite natures. Each concrete thing comes out of the interactions of two things that have opposite natures.<sup>13</sup> However,

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<sup>11</sup> "Vacuity produced the universe," in *Huai Nan Tzu*, 3:1, time and space come to be separated from the condition "vacuity."

<sup>12</sup> Professor Pang Pu advances "one divides into two" to differentiate it from "one divides into three." This is an interesting question. From the sense of ontology, "one divides into three" may explain that the "three" (which is above or inside the "two") may be the "substance." For example, Tai Ji plus Two Modes is "three:" Tai Ji is substance, and Two Modes are functions of the substance. In one of my essays (see Tang Yi Jie, 1986), I said that there are some differences Confucianism and Taoism in their research approaches: Confucianism usually explored the Mean (middle, center) from two extremities, e.g., "to go too far is as bad as not to go far enough" (*Analects*, 11:16), "to thrash the matter out, with all its pros and cons, to the very end" (*Analects*, 9:8), and "Faithfully grasp it by the center" (*Analects*, 20:1); on the contrary, Taoism sought one extremity from its corresponding extremity. For example, "All in the world know the beauty of the beautiful, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what ugliness is" (*Lao Tzu*, Chapter 2). For the Mean in Confucianism, it is not coordinate to the two extremities but is superior to them. In the light of ontology, the "Mean" is *Tai Ji*. So "one divides into three" and "one divides into two" is of the same importance in philosophical study, and the former is actually the basis of the latter.

<sup>13</sup> For example, in *Huai Nan Tzu*, 3:1, it said, "Before heaven and earth took shape, there was only undifferentiated formlessness. Therefore it was called the great beginning. Tao originated from vacuity and vacuity produced the universe (of

the Han ontology, most of which were descriptions of the actual evolution processes of the universe, is different from that established in *Ji Ci*. This is another question which I will discuss in another essay.<sup>14</sup>

So there are two systems in *Ji Ci*'s interpretation of *I Ching*, namely, a system of substance and a system of cosmic evolution. Does it indicate that there is a conflict in the interpretation? I do not think so. On the contrary, these two systems are mutually complementary, forming respectively two different systems in Chinese philosophy. For the universe itself, we may look at it as an open planar system, which is limitless; as Guo Xiang (252-312) noted in his *Zhuang Tzu Zhu* (Commentary on *Zhuang Tzu*), "Yu (宇, limitless space) refers to four quarters of the world, ups and downs, which has no limits." While at the same time, we can look at the universe as a vertically extended system. The universe, in term of length, has no terminal, as Guo Xiang noted in the same book, "Zhou (宙, infinite time) covered all time past and future, yet it has no limits." Since the universe can be looked at from two angles, the "sage" can establish his philosophical systems of interpretation of universe from two directions; so it said in *Ji Ci*: "The Book of Changes (*I*) contains the measure of heaven and earth." (Wilhelm, 1979:293).

The *I Tao* (Way of *I*) is an open, integrated cosmic structure mode; so it is an indiscernible "Great Wholeness," in which things that had existed, exist and may exist in the future can all find their corresponding basis. The *I Tao* is not stagnant but a constantly reproducing system. Therefore it must express itself in two interacting symbols, rather than in other quiescent things. The two symbols, Yin and Yang, as it is said in *I Ching*, "Yin and Yang get transformation because of their blending" and "that which is unfathomable in the operation of Yin and Yang is called spirit" (Chan, 1963:266), represent

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space and time). The universe produced the material force. The material force was extremely secure. That which was clear and light drifted up to become heaven, and that which was heavy and turbid solidified to form earth." Also in *Xiao Jing Wei* (augury book of Book of Filial Piety) it said, "Universe (heaven and earth) witnessed five phases before it was born, that is, Tai Yi, Tai Chu, Tai Shi, Tai Su and Tai Ji. It was called Tai Yi before the universe got its shape; it is called Tai Chu when the material force started to germinate; it is called Tai Shi when material force and form began to develop; it is called Tai Su when the universe developed substantially; it is called Tai Ji when the universe gets its form and essence. "These messages show that Han ontology was basically based on material force.

<sup>14</sup> For the three Chinese characters, see Feng Youlan, 1952.

two forces with different natures. The *I Tao*, which includes these two symbols, is the root of changes for the *Yin* and *Yang*. Therefore, “the successive movement of Yin and Yang constitutes the Way (Tao)” (Chan, 1963:266). Yang Shi Xun, in his book *Chun Qiu Gu Liang Zhuan Shu* (commentary to *Gu Liang Zhuan*), cited Wang Bi (226-249)’s interpretation of this sentence. Yang said that “*Ji Ci* says that the successive movement of *Yin* and *Yang* constitutes the Way.” Wang Bi said, “for *Yin* and *Yang*, some time it is called *Yin* and some time it is called *Yang*: there are no definite names for them. If it is *Yin*, it cannot be *Yang*; if it is yielding, it will not be firm. Only when it is neither *Yin* nor *Yang* (and both *Yin* and *Yang* at the same time) can it be the Great Master of *Yin* and *Yang*; only when it is neither yielding nor firm (and both gentle and yielding at the same time) can it be the Great Master of the firm and the yielding. Accordingly, only when it has no spatial restrictions and physical form, neither *Yin* nor *Yang* can be thought to understand the Tao, and can it be thought to understand the spirit.” *Yin* and *Yang* represent respectively two different natures; *Yin* cannot replace *Yang*, and vice versa. Only the Tao can represent both, for it is neither *Yin* nor *Yang*, yet it is the substance of both. So it is said in *I Ching* that “spirit has no spatial restriction and I has no physical form.” Seen from this point of view, it is without doubt of great philosophical wisdom that *Ji Ci*’s interpretation of *I Ching* indicates an open planar system as well as a vertically extending system. Let me confirm once more that *Ji Ci*’s integrated philosophical interpretation of *I Ching* is a very different pattern from *Zuo Zhuan*’s interpretation of *Chun Qiu*.

#### Han Fei Tzu’s Interpretation of Lao Tzu

If *Zuo Zhuan*’s interpretation of *Chun Qiu* is a description of historical events, and *Ji Ci*’s interpretation of *I Ching* is an integrated philosophical interpretation, then *Han Fei Tzu*’s interpretation of *Lao Tzu* is mainly in the light of social and political concerns. In the two articles “*Jie Lao*” and “*Yu Lao*” in *Han Fei Tzu*, we may find that their primary purposes are by and large to elucidate Han’s legalist thoughts characterized by *Fa* (law), *Shu* (statecraft) or *Shi* (power or authority).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> There were some bamboo books that were unearthed in 1993 in Guo Dian of Hu Bei Province, of which one, named *Wu Xing* (Fire Agents) is very different from the one, a silk book, with the same name, that was unearthed in 1973 in Chang Sha, Hu Nan Province. There are *Jing* (Ching, classic) and *Shuo* (treatise or interpretation of the classic) in the silk *Wu Xing*, while the bamboo *Wu Xing* has

Wei Yuan (1794-1857) in his book *Lao Tzu Ben Yi* (original meaning of *Lao Tzu*), said, among those who studied Lao Tzu, there were *Han Fei Tzu* who wrote “Jie Lao” and “Yu Lao,” which understood Tao in the light of legalist thought; there were scholars such as Wang Pang (1044-1076) and Liü Huiqing (1032-1111) who understood *Lao Tzu* with *Zhuang Tzu*, there were scholars such as Su Ziyou (1039-1112), Jiao Hong (1540-1620) and Li Zhi (1527-1602) who would understand *Lao Tzu* from a Buddhist perspective. None of them understood the essential spirit of Lao. Here we will not discuss all of them, but only Wei Yuan. It is questionable to say that Wei’s interpretation had got “the essential spirit of *Lao Tzu*,” which is but one of the many interpretations of Lao Tzu. But it is reasonable to say that *Han Fei Tzu* explained Lao Tzu with legalist thoughts. Therefore we think “Jie Lao” and “Yu Lao” established another interpretation pattern when he understood the classic in the light of social and political operation. Some later works, such as *Dao De Jing Lun Bing Yao Yi* (the essential meaning of war art in *Dao De Jing*) by Wang Zhen of the Tang Dynasty, should be categorized in this pattern.

Most of the interpretations in “Jie Lao” were made through a social and political approach. Han made a little philosophical explanation of the text; from a philosophical point of view, little philosophical importance can be attached to it. For example, Han’s interpretation of the sentence “this is called shape without shape, form (Xiang) without object” (*Lao Tzu*, Chapter 14) was no more than experiential interpretation based on common sense. Han explained, “Men seldom see a living elephant. They obtain the skeleton of a dead elephant and imagine a living one according to its features. Whatever people use ill imagining the real is called form. Although the Tao cannot be heard or seen, the sage decides and sees its features on the basis of its effects. Therefore it is called (in *Lao Tzu*), “shape without shape and form without objects” (Chan, 1963:161). In his interpretation of another sentence “the Tao (Way) that can be told of is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name,” Han said, “Now, a thing which first exists and then becomes extinct, now lives and then

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Jing but not *Shuo*. That is to say somebody else put the *Shuo* into silk *Wu Xing* afterwards. Therefore we cannot confirm both *Jing Shuo* and *Mo Jing* were written by the same person. Certainly we still can not deny that (1), both of the two books were written by one person, and (2), *Mo Jing* was finished before *Jing Shuo*, which was written for more comprehensive understanding of *Mo Jing*.

dies, or flourishes at first and declines afterwards cannot be called eternal. Only that which exists from the very beginning of the universe and neither dies nor declines until heaven and earth disintegrate can be called eternal" (Chan 1963, 261). Here the interpretations of "change" and "invariableness" are of great philosophical significance. As this understanding can be obtained from general knowledge, there is some distance from this metaphysical thought. The Tao is "a Great Wholeness" which is the same in "the Tao (Way) that call be told of is not the eternal Tao" as in "what is above form is called Tao" (*Da Zhuan in I Ching*, Chapter XII; Wilhelm, 1979, 323).

As for other parts of these two articles, Hall often explained them with the thought of *Fa*, *Shu* and *Shi*. For example, Han explained the sentence "he who possesses the Mother (Tao) of the state will last long" (*Lao Tzu*, Chapter 59) as "mother is Tao." Tao was born in the country where tactics are fully used. This kind of country, called "country of mother (Tao)" indicates rightly Han's legalist thought. In explaining "when his capacity is beyond anyone's knowledge, he is fit to rule a state" (*Lao Tzu*, Chapter 59) *Han Fei Tzu* said, "These who rule a state and save himself from danger are surely these who understand Tao. He will become wiser if he understands the Tao; He will get profound knowledge if he becomes wiser, then others are unable to know what he knows and what he does not know. Only in this way, can he not only keep himself from damage but also rule his state. That is to say, he who understands profoundly the essences of Tao can both save himself from danger and rule the state. This is actually explaining the Tao in terms of law in explaining Lao Tzu's sentence "who knows when the limit will be reached" (*Lao Tzu*, Chapter 58), Han said, "Anyone will succeed if he follows the principle. As for success, the greatest will be King, while the less great will be ministers or generals." That is to say, if one operates following the Tao's nature, he will get the exalted position of king, while the minister or general will get the reward and salary they deserve. Here Han combined the Tao with power. In explaining "ruling a big country is like cooking a little fish," Han said, "in ruling a big country if the ruler constantly changes the laws, the people will suffer greatly. Therefore the sensible ruler values tranquility (no-action) instead of changing laws." That is to say that the laws should be carried out in a long term so that the people can observe them. Such interpretations in *Han Fei Tzu* can be found everywhere, while little can be found from these interpretations that

have philosophical significance in this article. Consequently, Han was ready to elucidate his legalist thoughts of *Fa*, *Shu* and *Shi* when he interpreted Lao Tzu.

In "Yu Lao," more clearly, Han interpreted *Lao Tzu* in the light of social and political operation, most of the materials he employed were historical stories, in order to show how a ruler succeeded or failed and how a state rose and declined. For instance, he took the story of Duke Jian of Qi (484 B.C.-481 B.C.) and his minister Tian Cheng to illuminate that "fish cannot divorce itself from water" (*Lao Tzu* Chapter 36), for "major powers are a ruler's base (like the fish to the water), his power should be above his ministers, which he cannot get back once it was rendered to the ministers." Again he used the story of Duke Xian of Jin (676 B.C.-651 B.C.) who presented nice horses and pieces of jade to Yu State (to lower its guard before he planned to attack it) to explain "in order to grasp (it), it is necessary first to give it." The reason why *Han Fei* interpreted *Lao Tzu* in this way is because many thoughts in *Lao Tzu* are about how to govern and administer a state. It is reasonable that he was put together with Lao Tzu, Zhuang Tzu, Shen Dao (395-315 B.C.) by Si Maqian (145 B.C.-?) in his book *Shi Ji* (historical records). On the other hand, Han is much different from the scholars (Neo-Taoist) of the Wei-Jin period, for he made little interpretations in *Lao Tzu* on the texts that have philosophical significance. In one word, Han's interpretation can be considered another kind of interpretation pattern in the history of Chinese learning.

There are many other interpretation patterns in Pre-Qin classics, but I think the three interpretation patterns we have discussed above may be of greatest influence upon later Chinese scholarship. Here I would like to mention the relation between *Mo Tzu*, *Mo Ching* (classic of Moism) and *Ching Shuo* (treatise on Mo Ching). As for the date of these two articles. I do not agree that *Ching Shuo* appeared after *Mo Ching* had been finished, I think *Mo Ching* might appear at much the same time as *Ching Shuo*, or, the two articles were not written by different persons.<sup>16</sup> Both of them are mainly explanations of concepts; still there are some differences between them. *Mo Ching* is by and large definitions of concepts, while *Ching Shuo* focuses on the embodiments or complementary accounts of the concepts. For instance, in *Mo Ching*

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<sup>16</sup> One of the articles in *Shang Shu* (Book of History).

it is said, "Jiu (long time) refers to different times." This definition does not refer to a particular period of time but all the time; it is an abstract and extensive explanation, so *Ching Shuo* gives a more explicit definition: "Jiu refers to ancient and modern time, day and night," indicating Jiu covers all the time from ancient to modern and from dawn to sunset. Again in *Mo Ching* it is said that, "Yu (limitless space) refers to different spaces." Yu refers to spaces, not some specific place; so "different space" is just a definition to Yu. In *Ching Shuo* it is said, "Yu refers to Dong (east), Xi (West), Jia (home), Nan (south) and Bei (north). There are many understandings of the word "Jia (家)." For example, Gao Heng (1900-1986) thought that it is Zhong (中, center), but I would rather think it is Jia (加, plus). Yu is the extension of east and West plus south and north, which is surely an account of Yu in *Mo Ching*. This kind of interpretation of a specific word or expression is much similar to a present-day dictionary, and has great influence, especially on the compilation of dictionaries and the translation of Buddhist classics.

Since Han Confucianists valued Confucian classics very much, and these classics were approved to be the basic resources for civil service examinations, there rose a movement of studying these classics by syntactic and semantic analysis; gradually such knowledge as explaining and scrutinizing the origins, developments of ancient characters had become indispensable skills for scholars in their interpretation of these classics. As a result, some subjects such as like Xun Gu, phonology, philology, Kao Ju (textual research), become special and technical. Han's study and interpretation of these classics were loaded with trivial details, as it is said in *Han Shu* (History of the Han Dynasty) that "usually a treatise on a classic would employ over a million characters." A Confucian named Qin Yan Jun explained two characters in the *Yao Dian* with more than a hundred thousands characters and used thirty thousands characters to explain four words. In the chapter of "Lun Shuo" (discussion on treatise) of *Wen Xin Diao Long*, it is said, "because persons like Qin Yan Jun who commented *Yao Dian* with over hundred thousand characters whereas Zhu Shan Zhi who explained *Shang Shu* (Book of History) with three hundred characters, many scholars were so sick of it that they would not like to study syntactic and semantic analysis." Scholars in Han dynasty explained classics not only with undue triviality but also became ridiculous. However, this style changed greatly in the Wei-Jin period.

Scholars of that time tended to interpret the classics concisely and comprehensively. Most of the works during that time, including commentaries on *I Ching* and *Lao Tzu* (by Wang Bi) and commentaries on *Zhuang Tzu* (by Guo Xiang), were both compendious and philosophical (Tang Yijie 1998).<sup>17</sup>

I would like to use one example to show the different styles between the Han Dynasty and the Wei-Jin period. The “*Xiao Yao You*” (A Happy Excursion) of *Chang Tzu* says that “In the northern ocean there is a fish, called the Kun, I do not know how many thousand miles in size. This Kun changes into a bird, called the Peng. Its back is I do not know how many thousand miles in breadth. When it is moved, it flies, its wings obscuring the sky like clouds.” In his commentary, Guo Xiang just said, “For the truth about Kun and Peng, I am not sure of it.” He continued to criticize the trivial styles in the Han Dynasty as “stiff explanations,” and said, “A comprehensive-minded scholar should, in his study, catch its essence rather than those extraneous details, and should not painstakingly explain stiffly all the time. These details can be abandoned as long as they affect the main ideas.” So we can conclude that the way the Han Confucianist interpreted classics was that of “I was commenting on classics” while that of the Wei-Jin scholars was that of “classics commenting on me.” In Chapter 22 of *Da Hui Pu Jue Chan Shi Yu Lu* (the analects of Pu Jue, the Great Zen Master), it is said, “Guo Xiang was seen writing his interpretation of *Zhuang Tzu*. People who knew it said, ‘in fact it is *Zhuang Tzu* who commented on Guo Xiang’.” Also in his foreword to the *Nan Hua Zhen Jing Ping Zhu* (Annotation of *Zhuang Tzu*) by Gui Youguang (1507-1571), Feng Mengzhen (1546-1605) of the Ming Dynasty said, “it is not Guo Xiang’s commentary of *Zhuang Tzu*, but *Zhuang Tzu*’s commentary of Guo Xiang.”

Since Indian Buddhism came to China at the end of the Western Han (206 B.C.-25 A.D.), people became more and more concerned with interpretations. At first when An Shigao (belonged to Hinayana) of the Eastern Han began to translate Buddhism classics into China, he matched Buddhist theories with the dominant thoughts of that time, such as Caturmahabhuta (earth, fire, water and wind) for Five Agents

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<sup>17</sup> In the end of this essay, I advanced the question of establishing Chinese hermeneutics theory and method and made some analyses on two methods employed by Guo Xiang when interpreting *Zhuang Tzu*. Also see another essay of mine, Tang Yijie 1998b.

(water, fire, wood, metal and earth), Pancasila (no killing living creature, no stealing, no bawdy, no telling lie and no potation) for Five Virtues (benevolence, righteousness, ritual, wisdom and sincerity) etc. in *Yin Chi Ren Jing Zhu* (Commentary of Yin Chi Ren Classic), it is said, "Pancaskandha refers to body...just like man's original vigor. When the vigor is mixed, it takes turns to rise, drop, thrive and decline in turn around the Trilokya without end, so it is called seed." To explain Pancaskandha in terms of vigor was surely far away from the real Buddhism principle, but it coincided with the dominant thoughts of that time. Later, when Mahayana was introduced into China, it was usually understood as the thought of Neo-Taoism. Therefore, there appeared new interpretation methods, e.g. Ge Yi and Lian Lei (Tang Yongtong, 1991). It is said in *Gao Seng Zhuan* (Biography of Great Dignitary) that, when Hui Yuan (334-416) "was 24 years old, he began giving lectures. Once one person in the audience felt it difficult to understand him. Though Hui Yuan tried hard, he still failed to make himself understood. At last Hui Yuan cited thoughts in *Zhuang Tzu*, and the person got it." From this case we can say that Ge Yi is nothing more than Lian Lei, namely, interpreting Buddhist classics with Chinese ideas.

In fact, scholars had already observed that using Ge Yi to explain classics was prone to misinterpreting their original thought. For example, it occurred to Dao An (314-385) that "Ge Yi had misunderstood most of the classics before." Seng Rui, one of Kumarajiva's most distinguished disciples, said, "to propagate and teach (Buddhism principles) with Ge Yi is both pedantry and a deviation of the real Buddhist spirit" (Taisho shinshu daizokyo, 55:59). After that Ge Yi was gradually given up. But it is inevitable that transliteration was employed in translating Buddhist classics, for there are many terms in Buddhism, e.g. Prajna and Nirvana, that cannot find their corresponding substitutions in Chinese. In Zheng Wu Lun (on Correcting Mistakes) it is said, "Ni Huan is a Sanskrit word, which in the Jin dynasty refers to nonaction" (Hong Ming Ji, Chapter I). Ni Huan is the transliteration of Nirvana; there was no corresponding word for it in Chinese; it was transliterated and interpreted as "nonaction." Another example can be found in Vimalakirtinirdesasutra. In the first volume of this book, there are the following words, "Seng Zhao (384-414) said, Bi Qiu (Bhiksu) in Later Qin Dynasty (936-947) sometimes refers to beggar, sometimes refers

to the wiping off of annoyance, sometimes to observing commandment, sometimes to frightening devils. One Indian word can generalize all of the four meanings; however, because there was no corresponding word for it, it can only be transliterated." This explained the reason why there are some transliterations in Buddhist classics translation.

But this may raise a new question, that is, because of the different understandings of the Buddhism, there may be different interpretations for the same concept. In order to have a general and common understanding of the terms in Buddhist classics, there appeared some specific books to set up criteria for the terms. These kind of books included *Yi Qie Jing Yin Yi* (Transliteration Guide for All Classics) and *Fan Yi Ming Yi Ji* (A Recorder for Transliteration). Moreover, from the South-North Dynasties to the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581-907), some Buddhists advanced certain principles for classics translation, such as Qi Daliang who set up "five principles not to translate," which were later made more sophisticated by Xuan Zang (602-662) (Tang Yongtong, 1982). It may be of great importance for us, for the development of a Chinese interpretation theory, to systematically straighten out these methods and principles in Buddhist translation.

Of course since Western learning entered China, new questions about translation and interpretation have emerged. This gives rise to many issues that are beyond my competence. I hope other scholars would do some research in this field.

(Translated by Cui Yujun and Li Chenyang)

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### Glossary

Ban Ben Xue 版本学

Bi Qiu 比丘

Caturmahabhuta 四大

Chen Tuan 陈抟

Ching Shuo 经说

Chun Qiu 春秋

Da Hui Pu Jue Chan Shi Yu Lu 大慧普觉禅师语录

Dao De Lun 道德论

Dao Tong 道统

Du Dao Jian 杜道坚

Fan Yi Ming Yi Ji 翻译名义记  
Feng Mengzhen 冯梦祯  
Gao Heng 高亨  
Gong Yang Gao 公羊高  
Gong Yang Zhuan 公羊传  
Gu Liang Chi 谷梁赤  
Gu Liang Zhuan 谷梁传  
Gua Ci 卦辞  
Guan Zhui Pian 管锥编  
Gui You Guang 归有光  
Han Kang Bo 韩康伯  
He Yan 何晏  
Hong Ming Ji 弘明集  
I Zhuan 易传  
Ji Ci 系辞  
Ji Ji 既济  
Jiao Hong 焦竑  
Jie Lao 解老  
Jin dynasty 晋朝  
Jing Xue 经学  
Lao Zi Zhi Lue 老子指略  
Li Zhi 李贽  
Lian Lei 连类  
Liu Xie 刘勰  
Lv HuiQing 吕惠卿  
Lun Shuo 论说  
Lun Yu Nian Pu 《论语》年谱  
Mo Ching 墨经  
Nan Hua Zhen Jing Ping Zhu 南华真经评注  
Pancasila 五戒  
Pei Song Zhi 裴松之  
Pei Wen Zhong 裴文中  
Qian Zhong Shu 钱钟书  
Qin Yan Jun 秦延君  
San Guo Zhi 三国志  
Seng Zhao 僧肇  
Shao Rong 邵雍  
Shen Dao 慎到  
Shi Ji 史记

Shuo Gua 说卦  
Si Ma Qian 司马迁  
Su Zi You 苏子由  
Tai Ji 太极  
Taisuke Hayashi 林泰辅  
Tao Te Ching Yuan Zhi 道德经原旨  
Wang Bi 王弼  
Wang Pang 王雱  
Xiao Jing Wei 孝经纬  
Wei Ji 未济  
Wei Si 魏斯  
Wei Yuan 魏源  
Wu Ming Lun 无名论  
Xu Gua 序卦  
Xun Gu Xue 训诂学  
Yang Shi Xun 杨士勋  
Yi Qie Jing Yin Yi 一切经音义  
Yin Chi Ren Jing Zhu 阴持人经注  
Zhang Ju Zhi Xue 章句之学  
Zheng Wu Lun 正诬论  
Zhou Dun Yi 周敦颐  
Zhou Yi Lue Li 周易略例  
Zuo Qiu Ming 左丘明

## On The Unity of Man and Heaven

If philosophical ideas treat problems of the true, the good, and the beautiful, how might traditional Chinese philosophy make a valuable or unique contribution to this discussion? I think it does, and very remarkably. We can approach this issue from two closely related aspects: the content of its thought and its attitude toward life. On the issue of the true, the good, and the beautiful, three propositions in traditional Chinese philosophy have exerted an extended influence over Chinese thought. These are the "integration of heaven with man," which inquires into the unity of the world; the "integration of knowledge with practice," which concerns the problem of an ethical norm; and the "integration of feeling with scenery," which involves the creation and appreciation of artistic works.

### The Integration of Heaven with Man

How the two concepts of "heaven" and "man" are defined varies with different philosophers. Nevertheless, the "Way of Heaven" refers to the basics of the universe or the universe as a whole; the "way of man" often refers to the society of man or man himself. The relationship between heaven and man has always been the fundamental issue studied by Chinese thinkers.

Sima Qian called his *Historical Records* a book that "probes into the relations between heaven and man." Dong Zhongshu described what he saw as a branch of learning that "studies how man is related to heaven." He Yan, one of the founders of the metaphysics of the Wei and Jin dynasties, called another founder, Wang Bi, a philosopher "qualified to discuss the relations between heaven and man." Tao Hongjing, the true founder of the Maoshan sect of China's Daoism, said only Yan Huan, another Daoist leader, understood that "what he had in mind" was the problem "between heaven and man."

The "relationship between heaven and man" has been explained by different theories in traditional Chinese philosophy. For example, Xun Zi required that a "distinction be made between heaven and man." Zhuang Zi theorized that "those who are ignorant of heaven know nothing about man." Furthermore, the question of "relations between heaven and man" has often found expression in the

discussion about the relation between “nature” and the “Confucian ethical code.” Nevertheless, the mainstream of traditional Chinese philosophy has taken as its main task the demonstration or explanation of how “heaven is integrated with man.”

Confucius spoke more about “human affairs” and less about “the Mandate of Heaven.” Nonetheless, he also believed that “what the saint says” is in keeping with “the Mandate of Heaven.” Mencius was the first philosopher to propose the idea of the “integration of heaven with man” in a complete sense. For example, he said: “DO with all your heart, know your lot, and understand heaven;” “keep up with heaven and earth above and below.” Even though Xun Zi advocated that a “distinction be made between heaven and man,” his fundamental goal was to “bend the will of Heaven to our use” so that “Heaven” would be integrated with man. Lao Zi of the Daoist School urged: “Man follows earth, earth follows Heaven, Heaven follows the way, and the Way follows nature.” Even Zhuang Zi who was “ignorant of heaven and knows nothing about man” this to say: “Heaven and earth live side-by-side with me and all things on earth are identified with me.” He also said that the superior man can “communicate with heaven, earth, and spirit.” Dong Zhongshu preached the idea that “heaven and man respond to each other;” he argued that the two were integrated.

Metaphysics during the Wei and Jin dynasties focused its discussion on the relationship between “nature” and Confucian ethical code.” Even though Ji Kang and Ruan Ji advocated that the “ethical code be overstepped and nature followed,” the mainstream of the metaphysical school stressed that the “ethical code” be reconciled with “nature.” As Wang Bi embraced the idea that “the intrinsic and the extrinsic are like one,” he urged that “the essentials (Nature and the Way of Heaven) be upheld to rule the nonessentials (ethical code and mundane affairs). In stressing that “the intrinsic and the extrinsic are like one,” Guo Xiang believed “there is no intrinsic beyond the extrinsic.” Therefore he concluded that “heaven is the general term for all things on earth.”

By the time of the Song Dynasty, the Confucian philosopher Zhou Dunyi noted in more explicit terms: “A saint shares virtue with heaven and earth,” and “a saint aspires to heaven.” Zhang Zai stated in his *West Inscription*: “That which exists between heaven and earth is my intrinsic being; that which commands heaven and earth is my

character." The two Chengs theorized that "the intrinsic and the extrinsic come from the same source" and stated: "In heaven it is destiny, in man it is character, and it is the heart that commands the body. They are actually one and the same." Zhu Xi held that "Heaven is man, and man is heaven. Since this man is born, heaven rests in him." He added: "A saint...is integrated with heaven."

Wang Yangming said: "The heart is heaven. Stressing the importance of the heart upholds heaven, earth, and all things." "Man is actually one with heaven, earth and all things." "The heart has no intrinsic content but take the response of heaven, earth, and all things its content." Later Wang Fuzhi advanced the idea that man moves along with the vaporization of Heaven to explain why Heaven is integrated with man. "Destiny is realized by days and character is formed by days." "There is not a day that heaven stops thinking of destiny, and there is not a bay that man does not submit his destiny to Heaven."

In traditional Chinese philosophy the major thinkers, whether materialist or idealist, all talked about the problem of "integration of Heaven with man" An analysis of their theories brings us to the following general conclusions:

First, in traditional Chinese philosophy, the concept of the "integration of Heaven with Man" expresses the idea of observing things in their entirety. It is a direct description, rather than a detailed analysis. We can call it a directly perceived "overall concept."

Second, in traditional Chinese philosophy, the basic argument for the idea of the "integration of Heaven with Man" is that "The intrinsic and the extrinsic are like one." The unity of the ways of Heaven and man is "both intrinsic and extrinsic." The Way of Heaven serves intrinsically and the way of man extrinsically. The result can be termed an "absolute" of "unity."

Third, traditional Chinese philosophy does not see the "way of man" as something rigid. Furthermore, it sees in the "way of Heaven" liveliness and unending vitality. "Heaven moves along a healthy track, and a gentleman should make unremitting efforts to improve himself." That human society should move forward and man should improve himself is due to the necessity of keeping up with the development of the "Way of Heaven." This can be termed the unlimited "concept of development."

Fourth, in traditional Chinese philosophy, "Heaven" is object, and the "way of man" must be brought in line with the "Way of Heaven." However, "man" is the heart of heaven and earth; he should install a heart for heaven and earth. Without "man," heaven and earth would have no vitality, rationality or morality. This can be called the "humanistic concept" of morality. This can be called the "humanistic concept" of morality. This can be called the "humanistic concept" of ethics.

The four above-mentioned concepts comprise the total implication of the idea of "the integration of heaven with man" in traditional Chinese philosophy.

### **The Integration of Knowledge with Practice**

The problem of "knowledge and practice" is an issue of the theory of knowledge. In traditional Chinese philosophy, however, it is more a problem of ethics and morality. If the question of the theory of knowledge had not been linked to the question of ethics, it would have been difficult for it to be passed down as a part of the traditional Chinese philosophy. Therefore the problem of a theory of knowledge is often also the problem of ethics. This is why the philosophers advocated that man not only seek "knowledge" but also pay special attention to "conduct" (practice).

What is the "good?" The criterion for the "good" can vary, but, according to traditional Chinese philosophy, a unity of "knowledge" and "practice" must be regarded as a prerequisite. From the history of Chinese philosophy contains many explanations of the relationship between knowledge and conduct. In *History Classic* (Chapter I, "On Destiny") it was said long ago that "it is not difficult to know, but difficult to put into practice." Later the two Chengs advocated: "Knowledge precedes practice." Zhu Xi was of the opinion that "knowledge and practice each give rise to the other." Wang Fuzhi theorized that "practice precedes knowledge." And Sun Zhongshan advanced the idea that "to know about a thing is more difficult than to do it."

Taking things as a whole, however, the concept of the "integration of knowledge with practice" actually has run through traditional Chinese philosophy from beginning to end. Starting from the time of Confucius, the "agreement of one's words with one's deeds" has always been used as an ethical criterion to differentiate a gentleman

from a villain. Confucius Said: "A gentleman feels it a shame not to be able to match his words with actions." Mencius stressed "intuitive knowledge" and "intuitive ability." Even though he regarded the four factors including the "sense of pity" as inherent, he thought it necessary to "foster and enhance" benevolence, righteousness, rite and wisdom, which had already become moral codes. As they could be acquired only through moral practice, he advocated that "a noble spirit be cultivated." Xun Zi stressed "practice" as the purpose of seeking "knowledge;" at the same time, he also admitted the guidance "knowledge" provided for "practice:" "One who practices it knows it; one who knows it is a saint." As a saint, therefore, one must "integrate knowledge with practice."

By the Song Dynasty, the Confucian philosopher Cheng Yi, regardless of his opinion that "knowledge precedes practice," argued in terms of morality and self-cultivation that "one who knows but cannot practice is one who does not truly know." Therefore Huang Zongxi noted: "Cheng already had the idea of integrating knowledge with practice" (*Academic Files of the Song and Yuan Dynasties*, Volume LXXV). Zhu Xi inherited Cheng Yi's theory that "knowledge precedes practice," but he stressed in particular that "knowledge and practice are mutually dependent" and that "efforts on knowledge and practice should be pushed forward side-by-side." He reasoned: "In terms of sequence, knowledge precedes; in terms of importance, practice is more important." Therefore some people described Cheng and Zhu as theories of "integration of knowledge with practice, with emphasis on the latter." Even though "knowledge" is the foundation of "practice," "knowledge is shallow when knowledge has one personally experiences it, his knowledge will be deeper, different from what he knew before." Zhu Xi stressed "practice" because he basically regarded "knowledge" and "practice" as an issue of morality. This is why he remarked:

Wherever the good is, one must practice it. Having practiced it long enough, it will become identified with oneself. Having identified with it, it will become a part of oneself. Failing to practice it, the good remains the good, and oneself remains oneself; they have nothing to do with each other.

Traditional Chinese philosophy often advocated “practicing the Way.” This idea had perhaps a twofold implication: One was to “take the Way as the intrinsic content,” another to practice the “intrinsic way,” namely, earnestly to practice the “intrinsic way” one advocated, for it is not merely an issue of understanding.

Wang Yangming’s theory of “integration of knowledge with practice” is broadly known, but the common understanding of it is not totally correct. By quoting his remark, “Practice begins once an idea is struck upon,” people often describe him as “ascribing practice to knowledge” and “taking knowledge to be practice.” In fact, Wang Yangming did not equate “knowledge” with “practice” completely. The remark that “practice begins once an idea is struck upon” was made in the context of morality and self-cultivation. Immediately after that, he added: “If the idea is not good, we have to overcome it so that the not-good idea will not lay hidden in our hearts.” He also said: “A close and solid knowledge is where practice lies and a conscious and precise practice is where knowledge lies. Efforts for knowledge and practice were originally inseparable. Only scholars in later ages split them into two and lost the essence of knowledge and practice. In regard to the relations between knowledge and practice, Wang explained clearly: “Knowledge gives idea to practice, and practice is the effort made by knowledge. Knowledge is the beginning of practice and practice is the end result of knowledge.” From the angle of the theory of knowledge, Wang Yangming could be suspected of “including practice in knowledge.” In the perspective of morality and self-cultivation, however, his emphasis on “the integration of knowledge with practice” had a positive significance.

Between the Ming and Qing dynasties, Wang Fuzhi advanced the idea that “practice precedes knowledge” and “practice can also gain knowledge.” However, he still stressed “the integration of knowledge with practice when addressing the issue of ethics. He opined that “knowledge and practice complementing each other is use, and the two progressing alongside each other constitutes achievement.” He criticized Wang Yangming’s idea of “the integration of knowledge with practice” and called Wang “ignorant of the fact that they each have their own use and complement each other.” Nevertheless, Wang Fuzhi, too was an advocator of “the integration of knowledge with practice.” He said:

In saying that someone is engaged in pursuing knowledge and practice we mean he devotes himself to the pursuit of knowledge and makes every effort to practice. Because of his devotion and efforts, achievements can be made and divided. Since achievements can be made and divided, an order of succession can be established, the antecedent and the subsequent can complement each other. From knowledge one knows what is being practiced, and from practice one practices what is being known. Thus it can be said that the two progress alongside and therefore produce achievements.

That knowledge and practice can progress alongside each other arises because in the final analysis the two constitute the moral realm. According to Wang Fuzhi's opinion:

A wise man is one who knows the rites. A man of ritual is one who practices knowledge. In practicing knowledge, all rituals will be properly performed; in knowing the rites all essentials will go to the mind. Thus one will improve oneself with each passing day and there will be no end to it.

A saint "combines his intelligence with sincerity. He practices what he knows and what he practices becomes his knowledge." This is how a man should behave as envisaged by traditional Chinese philosophy.

In the study of traditional Chinese philosophy the presently prevailing viewpoint asserts that "since the Song and Ming dynasties the neo-Confucianists, when discussing knowledge and practice, often confuse this issue of the theory of knowledge with the issue of ethics," and insists that this is where the limitations and mistakes of ancient Chinese philosophers lay. Here, I feel, two questions must be discussed.

First, neo-Confucianists since the Song and Ming dynasties did not regard knowledge and practice merely as an issue of the theory of knowledge. They thought the issue important precisely because it was related to morality and self-cultivation. The final purpose of their discussion of relations between knowledge and practice was to improve moral cultivation. Therefore it is out of the question to assert

that the neo-Confucians confused the issue of the theory of knowledge with that of morality. Second, as an issue of morality and self-cultivation, the theory and viewpoint of unity between knowledge and practice cannot be without positive significance. Ethically, knowledge and practice cannot be separated into two ends, for it is necessary that “knowledge be integrated with practice.” The remark, made by Wang Yangming, that “knowledge is the purpose of practice and practice is the work of knowledge; knowledge is the beginning of practice and practice is the end result of knowledge” can be seen as the best summary ever made by ancient Chinese philosophers on this issue.

### **The Integration of Feeling with Scenery**

“The integration of feeling with scenery” is an aesthetic issue. Wang Guowei discussed it thoroughly in his *Random Talks about Poetry*. He said: “Realm is the most important quality in poetry writing. Having realm, a poem is naturally of a high quality and carries famous lines.”

What does “realm” mean? Wang explained:

Realm does not refer to scenery alone. Delight, anger, sorrow, and joy are also a realm in man’s heart. Therefore a poem that can depict true scenery and true feelings can be said to have realm.

Obviously the term “realm” refers not only to scenery, but to “sentiments” as well. In *Jailing Manuscripts Discussing Poetry*, Ye Jiaying made a very perceptive explanation about Wang Guowei’s realm theory. According to Ye:

The generation of realm depends entirely on our sense of perception. The existence of realm depends entirely on what our sense of perception can reach. Therefore the outside world cannot be called realm before we can reproduce it through the function of our sense of perception. Judging by such a conclusion, the theory of realm as advocated by Wang, as a matter of fact, can be traced to the same origin as the theory of interest by Canglang and the theory of romantic charm by Yan Tingzhi.

Bu Yentu, after Wang Guowei, also said in his *Questions and Answers on the Methods of Painting*: "Landscape painting is no more than portraying feeling and scenery, and feeling and scenery is realm." This is why Wang Guowei remarked: "When people in the past discussed poetry, they divided the verses into those describing scenery and those depicting feeling. They did not know that all verses describing scenery depict feeling." Obviously, Wang Guowei regarded as the most creative writing literary pieces that "integrate feeling with scenery." However, this aesthetic viewpoint of "integration of feeling with scenery" did not begin with Wang Guowei. Generally speaking, it was in the period of the Wei and Jin dynasties that the theory of China's literature and art truly became an independent branch of learning, and by that time the idea of "integrating feeling with theory" had already emerged. In the *Introduction to the Grades of Poetry* Zhong Rong said:

Four-characters-to-a-line poems can be useful they imply more in fewer words and are modeled upon works of literary excellence. However, the problem is they often involve many words, but connote little content. Therefore few people learn to write them. The five-characters-to-a-line poems occupy the primary position in writing and stand out as the most meaningful among a variety of genres, thus winning the praise of being popular. Is not it because they are the most detailed and truthful in narrating events, conjuring images, expressing feelings, and portraying things? Therefore there are three approaches to writing poetry: First, implication; second, comparison; third, narration. The idea that there is more to the poem than the words state is what we call implication. Citing things to indicate one's intention is comparison. A direct account of the happening, thus embodying the idea, is narration. Take the three approaches into consideration and choose the most appropriate, enhance it with charm and force and polish it with color so that those who read it will find unlimited meaning and those who listen to it will be stirred. This will be a poem of top quality.

That a “masterpiece” or “superb work” should “express feelings and portray things” was the forerunner of the idea of “the integration of feeling with scenery.” Xie Zhen, one of the Later Seven Scholars of the Ming Dynasty, said in *Four Seas Poetic Discussions* “Writing poetry rests on feeling and scenery. Neither can work without the other or conflict with the other.” He said also: “Poetry is the tool for the portrayal of feeling and scenery. Feeling melts inside, running deep and long; scenery shines on the outside, stretching far and wide.” In *Poetic Discussions from the Ginger Studio* Wang Fuzhi put it even more clearly: “In name feeling and scenery are two things, but in fact they are inseparable.”

Those skillful in writing poems have unlimited opportunities to write good ones. In an ingenious piece there is “scenery in feeling and feeling in scenery.” “Feeling is generated from amid scenery and scenery is generated from amid feeling. This is why we say scenery is the scenery of feeling. And feeling is the feeling of scenery.” “Once feeling is integrated with scenery, witty expressions are readily available.” This last sentence perhaps constitutes the basic proposition for China’s traditional theory of art and literature, manifesting its basic view of “beauty.” In the traditional thinking in China, what is beautiful has always been linked to what is good.

That “the substantial is called the beautiful” refers to a spiritual realm in which one takes noble enjoyment having listened to the music of “Wu,” Confucius commented: “It has all the beautiful, but not all the good.” After listening to the music of “Shao,” he remarked: “It has all the good and also all the beautiful.” Only music that “has all the good and also all the beautiful” can be regarded as the highest and most ideal. This was said of music, but should apply to other arts as well. An art that “has all the good and also all the beautiful” is designed to elevate man’s spiritual realm and help him derive there from the highest enjoyment of beauty. Because of this the creator of artistic and literary works must be one who has “realm,” and his works must “integrate feeling with scenery.”

#### **Chinese Philosophy as the Integration of Heaven with Man: Goal and Renewal**

In regard to the issue of the true, the good and the beautiful, why does traditional Chinese philosophy keep pursuing the three “integrations?” In my opinion, it is because the basic spirit of Chinese

philosophy is to teach how one should behave like a human person. To be a "human person" one must have set a standard for oneself, an ideal of the true, the good and the beautiful. One who has attained such an ideal realm in which "heaven is integrated with man," "knowledge is integrated with practice" and "feeling is integrated with scenery" is a saint. Therefore the prospective for traditional Chinese philosophy lies in bringing the demand for being human in line with the need for the program of modernization and realizing it. One's ideal may find expression in an immense variety of ways, but it is essential to have such an ideal and noble spiritual realm. The three integrations advocated by traditional Chinese philosophy, in fact, constitute a unified realm by which one is human; at least theoretically, they cannot be separated.

The proposition of "the integration of heaven with man," though designed to illustrate the relations between man and the entire universe, was made on the basis of man being the center of the universe. *The Golden Mean* states: "Honesty is the Way of Heaven; to be honest is the way of man." "An honest man who hits the target without difficulty, arrives at the right idea without racking his brain, and conforms to the Way without hurry, is a saint." The role of a saint is to "foster a heart for heaven and earth, create a life for living creatures, carry forward peak insights for posterity, and open the way to peace for thousands of generations to come." Therefore a "man" (mainly, the saint) must behave according to the requirements of the Way of Heaven which he should assume it his responsibility to fulfill. Being alive in the world, one must not take a passive attitude; rather, one should "make unremitting efforts to improve oneself" so as to embody the evolution of the immense universe. In this way, one will set oneself a goal, find a reason for one's being, and foster a noble spiritual realm. Since one has set a goal for oneself and has a reason for one's being, the most important thing is to "integrate his knowledge with practice." One must have an ethical standpoint for unifying the two. The three programs and the eight items listed in the *Great Learnings* tell us the precise reason for this. It says:

The Way of the great learning lies in shedding light on the bright moral principles, being close to the people, and reaching the utmost good. Those in ancient times who wanted to shed light on the bright principles for the world had first to bring order to their own kingdoms. To

bring order to their kingdoms they had first to bring their own families to order. To bring their families to order they had first to cultivate their own moral character. To cultivate their own moral character they had first to set their minds straight. To set their minds straight they had first to foster a sincere desire. To foster a sincere desire they had first to carry knowledge to the utmost degree. To carry knowledge to the utmost degree they had first to inquire into the properties of things. Having inquired into the properties of things, they were able to carry knowledge to the utmost degree. Having carried knowledge to the utmost degree, they were able to foster a sincere desire. Having fostered a sincere desire, they were able to set their minds straight. Having set their minds straight, they were able to cultivate their own moral character. Having cultivated their own moral character, they were able to bring their families to order. Having brought their families to order, they were able to bring order to their kingdoms. Having brought order to their kingdoms, the whole world would be at peace.

“Knowledge” must be integrated with “practice.” From “inquiring into the properties of things, to carrying knowledge to the utmost degree,” to “bringing order to their kingdoms and peace to the world” is a process of cognition and, more importantly, a process of moral practice. Man must have an ideal, and the highest ideal is to “achieve peace” and thus enable human society to attain a realm of “Great Harmony.” The basic demand of a society of “great harmony” is that everyone should set for himself a demand; find a reason for his “being,” and “not do to others what he does not wish done to himself.” Said Confucius: “My way is consistent; it is nothing more than honesty and forbearance.” Leading a life in this world, one should behave like a “man,” enjoy the pleasure of “being a man” and appreciate the creation of the universe.

In order to have a genuine appreciation of the creation of the universe, one should have the ability to display human creativity, thus reproducing “the creation of the universe.” One should display the spiritual realm of man—the why and how a man exists as a man—thereby making it possible for a writer to produce a “masterpiece,” for

a painting to be a “superb work,” and for music to be the “sound of nature.” Art requires “integration of feeling with scenery” whereby “feeling is generated amid scenery and scenery is generated amid feeling.”

When one enters the realm of creation, one will reach a situation in which the true, the good, and the beautiful are integrated. There lies the meaning of life and the man’s highest ideal. Confucius professed: “At the age of seventy, I can do everything as my heart pleases without violating the rule.” What he described was probably a realm in which all one did and said was in harmony with the universe, human society, the others, and oneself, both body and mind, inside and outside. This realm of life is, of course, that of the saint.

In my opinion, traditional Chinese philosophy still bears the value of existence precisely because it tells us the way to be human. To be a man is by no means easy. It is even more difficult to be in harmony with nature, society, other people, and oneself in both body and mind, inside and outside. As this is a necessary requirement for life in today’s world we cannot underestimate traditional Chinese philosophy; nor should we ignore where its value lies. However, precisely because traditional Chinese philosophy tells us only the reason for being a man, it is inappropriate for us to set undue demands upon it in other respects, nor should it come as a surprise that it is inadequate in certain areas. For example, it does not emphasize issues of logic and the theory of knowledge, nor does it provide a well-conceived demonstration of the structure of its own theory. We should not be overly critical of this.

Under such circumstances, can we further develop traditional Chinese philosophy while appreciating its value? We should and we can. The pre-Qin Dynasty Confucians, aside from the *Book of Changes*, seldom touched upon problems of ontology. Under the impact of Buddhism, however, neo-Confucians of the Song and Ming dynasties founded a very significant theory of ontology, which made great progress and became neo-Confucianism. As the mainstream of China’s traditional philosophy, thinking and culture, Confucian philosophy today has sustained an even heavier impact than in the past. Having profoundly critiqued it, we are now reexamining its value. Is it inconceivable that we redevelop it once again; under the new impact could there not be established a new system with its own logic and theory of knowledge?

Traditional Chinese philosophy should have a third-phase of development because “one must have a reason for being a man.” Whether or not this can be developed depends on whether or not it can establish for itself a new system of logic and theory of knowledge. “Man can enhance the Way; not the Way can enhance man:” the outcome depends upon our efforts.

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## The Problem of Harmonious Communities in Ancient China

In my essay "On the Problem of Truth, Goodness and Beauty in Chinese Philosophy," I suggested that the conceptions of truth, goodness and beauty rest on three propositions: the unity of Heaven and man, the unity of knowledge and action, and the unity of sentiment and scenery. Among these, the unity of Heaven and man is the most fundamental, and it is from this that the other two unities are derived. The unity of knowledge and action requires that people realize both the "heavenly Way" and the "human Way," and practice them in daily life, while the unity of sentiment and scenery requires that people express Heaven's work in their thoughts and feelings. Why did the ancient Chinese philosophers pursue these three unities? In my opinion, Chinese philosophy does not engage in investigating the external world, but is concerned rather with pursuing internal human values. In other words, traditional Chinese philosophy teaches people how to be human by making demands upon themselves, i.e., to cherish an ideal form of human life. Sagehood is defined by the attainment of the three unities. Beginning with Confucius, Chinese philosophers have always aspired to the creation of harmonious societies, and have attempted to bring them into being. Even when unsure of the outcome of their efforts, they still consider the endeavor to be obligatory. Thus it was said of Confucius that he "knew the impossibility for the task) and yet continued to do it." The ideal societies they sought are characterized by harmony; for example, the Confucian description of a society of "great harmony" in the *Liyjin*, 礼运 chapter of the Book of Rites, and the "small country with a small population" in Chapter 80 of the Taoist classic *Tao Te Ching* 道德经. Such communities exhibit a concordance between man and Heaven, a unity of knowledge and action, and an intermingling of sentiment and scenery. But these ideals may not be realized in the actual world. Whether we should pursue the ideal of harmony is a matter of attitude. Ancient Chinese philosophers believed that some of their ideals might only be realized in their minds. Why was Chang Tsai's (张载) *Western Inscriptions*" so highly esteemed by later thinkers? I

think it is because the essay reveals the spirit of an ideal harmonious society. The essay begins: "People are my compatriots; things, my fellow-beings;" and ends "Living is following my nature; death, my tranquility." When alive, one must fulfil the responsibility of realizing the ideal of "great harmony." Thus one can enjoy serenity without feeling shame to the end of one's life.

This search for an ideal harmonious society differs from Western humanism, though it can be looked at as humanism of a Chinese type. According to the ancient Chinese thinkers, only human beings can conceive of the ideal. Why are ideals necessary? Human beings are the most important link between Heaven and Earth. Sages are capable of "establishing the mind of Heaven and Earth, determining the destiny of human lives, restoring discontinued traditions of learning from the past, and commencing a period of supreme peace for one's descendants., Hence the Confucian notion that men can expand the Way, rather than the other way around. Although the Way of Heaven is an objective Being, it needs human embodiment. According to ancient Chinese thought, a man can embody the Way when he understands the unity of Heaven and man, practices the unity of knowledge and action, and creatively reveals the unity of sentiment and scenery. Conceiving of the loftiest possible realm of humanity, one may concentrate on the above-described ideal in one's mind in order to actualize it. Such a realm harmonizes individual words and deeds with all human societies and even extends this harmony to the whole universe. In traditional Chinese philosophy, the major role of human beings is to "be human" in pursuing the ideal of a harmonious society. As the central element in nature and the community, man assumes a great responsibility.

Chinese philosophy profoundly influenced the Chinese national mentality. I believe that this mentality reveals both the strengths and weaknesses of Chinese thought and culture.

In brief, the Chinese mentality may be characterized by the pursuit of harmony and unity. Most distinguished Chinese philosophers viewed reality positively and endeavored to transform the conflict-ridden societies they lived in into harmonious communities. Although their ideals and doctrines did not bring about actual political changes, Chinese rulers used philosophical ideas as window dressing. For instance, the ideals of great harmony and supreme peace degenerated into emperors' reign-titles, and rulers called themselves the emperor

or empress of Supreme Peace. Peasant revolts throughout history used "supreme peace" as a catchword for their righteous cause. At the end of the Eastern Han 东汉 dynasty (25-220), the Yellow Turban Rebellion used the slogan "The Way of Supreme Peace" to organize farmers; Sung dynasty (960-1279) peasant-revolts were aimed at "destroying all inequality in order to achieve supreme peace;" in modern times, the peasant-rebellion led by Hung Hsiu-ch'ian 洪秀全 was known as the "Supreme Peace Army" (T'ai p'ing chun 太平军) belonging to the "Heavenly Kingdom of Supreme Peace" (T'ai p'ing t'ien kuo 太平天国). Despite its preeminence in the Chinese mind, the ideal of attaining supreme peace has never been actualized. At most, the illusion of "supreme peace and a prosperous world" was realized during short periods of history. Chinese traditional idealism is basically fantasy. Past sages might have promulgated the ideal of "governing the country and bringing peace to the world" with true sincerity, but since its actualization is impossible, their intentions have to be looked at as little more than idealized feudalism.

We can observe that Chinese thought has always been characterized by a search for unity. From its earliest beginnings, Chinese philosophy stressed the unity of two concepts, or the mutual relationship between several concepts. In the Book of Changes, ch'ien 乾 and k'un 坤 (later yin 阴 and yang 阳) represent concepts of duality in unity; the "Great Principle" chapter in the Book of Rites was based on the system of "five elements" related through dualistic unities. Once Heaven and man were looked upon as dualistic philosophical concepts, Chinese philosophy began to place more emphasis on the unity of Heaven and man. This way of thinking is rational in its stress on harmony and unity, and in its objection to excess and insufficiency. Under certain conditions, this ideal is beneficial to social stability and social development, as well as to the investigation of the actual relationships between objects. Social development requires a period of relative stability, while thought-cultures benefit significantly by mutual assimilation and confluence. History has alternating periods of maintaining the status quo and reformation. Since the Ch'in 秦 and Han dynasties (221 B.C.-220 A.D.), China has been in a state of great unity. Situations of fragmentation or division were always temporary. At the same time, the Han people and the minority nationalities formed a unified country while at the same time assimilating foreign cultures. Based also on the concept of

unity, Chinese medicine stresses an organic connection between man and his environment, between the human body and human spirit, between the organs of the body, as well as between various remedies. Ch'i 气 (vitality) was used to explain the unity of things and the reason behind their mutual influence. There is a similarity here to the findings of modern physics. Despite the contributions of Chinese philosophy, we cannot overlook the shortcomings in this national way of thinking. An overemphasis on harmony and unity resulted in the prolonged stagnation of feudal society, the slow growth of capitalism, exaggerated national pride and a lack of progressive thinking. Chinese traditional philosophy lacks a systematic epistemology and a tradition of logic. Theoretical thinking in Chinese philosophy has not undergone analysis, and is rich in terms of the cognition of essences, similar to some of the conclusions of modern science. But without the necessary analysis and argument, it cannot develop into modern science. Because of the excessive attention paid to mutual relationships and unity and total disregard of advanced anatomy, the traditional Chinese failed to mature along the path taken by modern science in the West. We must reform our traditional ways of thinking, applying logical discourse and scientific epistemology to the concepts of relationship, unity and cosmic harmony. We should stress specific analysis, avoid the long-recognized shortcomings in our philosophy, and make good use of the tenets of Western philosophy, in order to establish a school of scientific philosophy with Chinese traits.

(Translated by Yuk Wong)

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## **The Concept of Harmony and Its Significance in Chinese Philosophy**

“Human beings are stepping in the direction of contradicting Nature!” This statement at the beginning of Scientists’ Warning to Mankind was issued by 1,575 scientists, all over the world, in 1992. The over exploitation of natural resources, environmental pollution, overpopulation and the destruction of ecological balance have annihilated not only the harmony in Nature itself, but also that between man and Nature, which in turn endangers human existence and man’s own living condition. In the modern world, the cravings for material benefits, the dispute on the ownership of natural resources, and the expansion of power desire lead to antipathy and even warfare between different countries, nationalities and regions. The over emphasis on money and material indulgences leads to tension, loneliness and sense of loss in human society. Therefore, children, youngsters and old men cannot communicate with each other because of isolation between different generations and human beings as a whole, which will definitely result in human disharmony and finally in the collapse of human society. In some cases, endless cravings for sensual indulgences have resulted in the disharmony between human body and soul with the appearance of split personality and psychological imbalance, and even mental disturbance, alcoholism, slaughter, suicide, etc, which have become social ailments and ruined order and peace in human world. Faced with those crises we have to make a rational reflection of the past two centuries. By the end of the 20th century, human beings have become aware of the necessity of replacing “antagonism” with “dialogue,” and of replacing “armament race” with “peaceful and friendly competition.” Therefore, we are optimistic enough to predict a forthcoming 21st century with a mainstream of “peace and development.” In order to survive and better themselves in such an information era with rapid development of science and technology, human beings are obliged to realize the ideal of “a peaceful society with a coordinated development.”

From a philosophical perspective, a rational orientation can be designed for the development of human society in the forthcoming century. In my view, to realize the ideal of "a peaceful society" is preconditioned by the harmony between human beings, in a broader sense, the harmony between countries, nationalities and regions. On the other hand, to realize the ideal of "a coordinated development" is preconditioned by the harmony between man and Nature. Here, I would like to cite a concept called "Tai He" from I Ching, that is, the Book of Changes. To my understanding, the concept of "Tai He" means a perfect universal harmony. As Ching indicates, "Bao He Tai He," that is, if the harmony in Nature is kept, everything in it will be in a harmonious development. The concept of Tai He is also available in Zhuang Zi. Besides, a lot of illustrations of the concept of "He" (i.e. harmony) can be found both in Zhuang Zi and in Laotse. We might conclude that both Confucianism and Taoism are much concerned with the concept of harmony, which definitely contributes a lot to the present worldwide debate on this concept "Tai He" literally means "perfect harmony," which, in my view, is equal to "universal harmony," which can be categorized as the following aspects.

#### **The Harmony in Nature**

Laotse is the first philosopher advocating the respect for Nature, which therefore characterizes Taoism philosophy. In his opinion, human beings should imitate the earth; the earth should imitate the universe; the universe should imitate "Tao," in essence, human beings should imitate Tao, which is undoubtedly natural. Furthermore, a universe with "Tao" is clear; an earth with "Tao" is orderly; a kingdom with tao is peaceful. In a word, what Laotse means by "Tao" is a world with universal harmony. Both Zhuang Zi and Laotse visualize "Nature" as a harmonious entity. The former even names the harmony in Nature as "ultimate beauty" or "cosmic music." In both view, human beings should try to coordinate themselves with the harmonious Nature so as to retain the peace in human world. Therefore, we might conclude that both of them base their philosophy on the concept of the harmony in Nature. The Confucianists also visualize Nature as a harmonious entity. As Confucius indicates, both the rotations of celestial bodies and the growth of everything on the earth are natural. Once, at sight of the flowing river, he sighed, "The river is flowing incessantly, without any consideration of the changes

of day and night," which, in my view, reflects his concept of the harmony in Nature. As Yi Zhuan (i.e. The Commentaries on the Book of Changes) indicates, the shift of Yin and Yang is compatible with the rotations of celestial bodies. The development of everything in Nature contains the following states, namely, yuan (i.e. the beginning), heng (i.e. the growth), li (i.e. the maturity) and zhen (i.e. the completion), which, in my opinion, also manifests the concept of the harmony in Nature. Yi Zhuan labels the perfect harmony in Nature as "Tai He," which shapes the concept for the later generations of Confucianists. For instance, as Wang Fuzhi indicates in his notes to Zhangzai's Zheng Meng (i.e. The Correct Enlightenment) before everything on the earth is created, it is in perfect harmony; after everything appears on the earth, the state in which the perfect harmony is still retained can be regarded as "Tai He," that is, the ultimate or the greatest harmony. In The Doctrine of the Mean, one of the Confucianists classics, harmony is considered as the fundamental principle in human world. All these aforementioned examples manifest Confucianists' concentration on the concept of the harmony in Nature.

### **The Harmony between Man and Nature**

As the I Ching points out, Nature is subject to constant changes and further development, which is also its fundamental principle. Therefore, human beings should make unremitting efforts to better themselves. Confucius adheres that it is only man who can carry forward such fundamental principle. Therefore, I Ching equates mankind with the universe and the earth, which comprise "three capabilities." Human beings should strive for the harmony between man and Nature, as Confucius puts it, to integrate themselves into Nature. As a matter of fact, the Confucianist concept of the harmony between man and Nature intends to visualize man as an integral or rather, the most important, constituent of Nature. In other words, man and Nature is closely related, rather than dichotomous, to each other.

Taoism philosophy also contains the concept of the harmony between man and Nature. As it indicates, Nature treats all things equally so as to make them grow naturally; therefore, the ruler should imitate Nature and treat his subjects equally so as to make them live happy lives. As Lao-tse points out, "Tao" is characterized by "natural inactivity." Therefore, the ruler should coordinate himself rather than interfere, with the development of Nature. If he obeys the principle of

“natural inabilities,” he could identify himself with “Tao.” Zhuang Zi also advocates that man should not interfere with the harmony in Nature. Instead, he should try to be compatible with nature so as to integrate themselves into it.

### **The Harmony between Human beings**

Advocating that man is born good-natured, Confucianists adhere to coordinating human relationship by means of moralistic self-cultivation so as to accomplish an ideal human society in harmony. As Confucius indicates, social etiquettes aim at adjusting human relationship to perfect harmony. Zhuxi defines real harmony between human beings as the relationship which is compatible with Nature and is of man’s own free will. If the harmony is achieved by enforcement, the stability in human society will not last long. In his view, on the condition that the perfect harmony is retained in human society, human beings can better themselves so as to accomplish their self-fulfillment.

As for how to establish a harmonious human relationship, Confucius calls on everyone to strengthen his own moralistic self-cultivation and to do good to society. In *The Book of Rites*, one of the Confucianist classics, a blueprint of an ideal human society in perfect harmony is depicted—a peaceful world with harmonious human relationship where everyone is contributing to public benefits.

Taoism philosophy advocates that human nature originates in “Tao,” which is characterized by “natural inability;” therefore, the ruler should carry forward the principle of “natural inability” so as to establish a peaceful and self-sufficient society without any conflicts and controversies, laotse even describes a utopian world where everything is of its own nature without any concepts such as kindness, justice, loyalty or confidence.

### **The Harmony between Human Body and Soul**

Since Confucianists base their ideal of a harmonious human society on moralistic self-cultivation, they have put considerable emphasis on the harmony between body and soul. In their view, life, death, fortune and fame are all predestined; therefore, man should strive for morality and scholarship rather than for longevity, fortune or fame. He once praised Yan Hui, one of his disciples, for his morality and scholarship, who lived a simple life yet retained a harmony between his body and

soul. Mencius also considers the body—and—soul harmony as the most important pursuit in human life; therefore, such factors as life span, food, shelter, clothing, and transportation are of no importance. In a word, Confucianists emphasize moralistic self-cultivation in a pursuit of a harmony between body and soul.

Unlike Confucianists, Taoists seek for the harmony between human body and soul by means of complying with Nature and transcending the ego. As Lao Tse points out, the sage can play an exemplary role and thus can serve as the leader in human world, for he adheres to “Tao,” that is, to shrink from self-complacency, which, in their view, complies with Nature. Zhuang Zi even proposes a state of mind called “supreme transcendence,” that is, to transcend all inner and outer distractions so as to achieve a body-and-soul harmony, which means a complete mental freedom. As I have proposed, the concept of “universal harmony” consists of the aforementioned four categories, namely, “the harmony in Nature,” “the harmony between man and Nature,” “the harmony between human beings” and “the harmony between human body and soul.” In my opinion, a modernized re-interpretation of the concept, after eradicating its pseudoscientific elements, could provide a possible solution to current social ailments.

Before a further discussion, I have to answer this unavoidable question—since the concept of universal harmony can exert positive impacts on human world, why has not it played an important role in Chinese history? In my view, we have to associate this question with specific social and historical situation in China. Historically speaking, China, for a long time, has been characterized by a self-sufficient agricultural society with low production level on the basis of feudal dictatorship and small-scale peasant economy. In such a socio-historical context, the concept of universal harmony is all but a utopia, even sometimes, an embellished justification for dictatorship. In other words, China lacks ideological resources for freedom and democracy, which characterize modern society and can therefore nurture the concept of universal harmony. As Yan Fu puts it, freedom serves as the foundation of modern Western society while democracy is its practical embodiment. In my opinion, Yan Fu has pointed out the essence of modern society, which not only suits to the West, but also to the East. Relatively speaking, human creativity is cultivated in modern society to a greater extent than in pre-modern (i.e. ancient)

society. The modern era has seen a thriving of natural sciences, technology, humanities, social sciences, literature and arts, which result in an ideological context of protecting and respecting individuality and personal freedom. Therefore, we might conclude that creativity originates in freedom. The concept of universal harmony in Chinese philosophy can only be given to a full play in a modern society with high tide of science and technology, with abundant supply for human life and with the ideological context of "freedom" and "democracy." Since creativity originates in freedom, the practical implementation of universal harmony must give individuality and creativity to their full play, while democracy, as an institution, can guarantee their full play. On the condition that most people can give their individuality and creativity to a full play, a human society with universal harmony could be possibly established.

What I mean by a modernized re-interpretation of the concept of universal harmony in traditional Chinese philosophy is that we must try to coordinate this concept with those of freedom and democracy in modern society. In light of freedom and democracy, the traditional concept of universal harmony in Chinese Confucianism and Taoism philosophy can be feasible and inspirational in modern society. As I have aforementioned, the humanism-oriented Confucianism is based on harmony between body and soul achieved by means of moral self-cultivation, which can be further extended to the harmony between human beings, the harmony between man and Nature, and the harmony in nature. On the other hand, the naturalism-oriented Taoism is based on complying with Nature, and is pre-conditioned by the harmony in Nature, which can be likewise extended to the harmony between man and nature, the harmony between human beings and the harmony between human body and soul. In spite of their different orientations, both Confucianism and Taoism aim at establishing a harmonious human society. Moreover, humanism and naturalism, as their respective orientations, are mutually beneficial.

Finally, I must point out that any ever-lasting valuable ideologies must be adapted to the need of the times and moreover, must manifest more and more new connotations. In the mainstream of peace and development, the re-interpreted concept of universal harmony in Chinese Confucianism and Taoism philosophy will serve as one of the major ideological forces in the 21st century.

In conclusion, human society must be oriented to a coordinated cultural development on the basis of Eastern-Western communication, rather than to conflicts between Western and non-Western civilizations. The concept in Chinese philosophy will play an important role in the forthcoming 21st century with the mainstream of peace and development; and meanwhile, will contribute to philosophical innovation in the context of Eastern-Western dialogue in the new era.



## Theories of Life and Death in Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism: An Outline

Theories of life and death in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism (Taoism) can be discussed by comparing the following: (1) Confucianism and Daoism (Taoism) and (2) Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism).

### *Confucianism and Daoism*

Confucianism regards both life and death as a responsibility to society, while Daoism (Taoism) holds that both life and death should be in conformity to nature.

The fundamental concept of the Confucian view of life and death is: "Life and death are determined by fate, and wealth and nobleness are determined by heaven," thereby emphasizing life rather than death. Confucius once said, "How can one know about death before he knows clearly about life?" In one's lifetime, one should fulfill one's responsibility in realizing the ideal of a harmonious society. "It is man who can find and develop ways and ideas, and not *vice versa*." Man should consider it his duty to testify to the workings of the "way of heaven." Heaven pursues its eternal movement, and a gentleman should make unremitting efforts to improve himself." Since Confucianism lays more emphasis on responsibility in one's lifetime, it neglects the world after death. According to Confucianism, man can be "immortal." *Zuo Zhuan* proposes that man can be "immortal in three ways:" to set a fine example in virtue; to achieve a great career; and to leave behind great writings.

This "immortality," in spirit only, has social and ethical significance, but has not direct connection with life. When Zhang Zai, a famous Confucianist in the Song Dynasty, wrote Xi Ming, his final sentences were: "When living, I work with the social trend; and, when I am gone, the world will be in peace." When living, man should try his best to fulfill his social responsibility and strive to realize an ideal society. One should ask oneself "to set a goal for the world, to live for

the people, to study sages of the past, and to work for a peaceful world in the future." This idea of Zhang Zai is actually what Confucius sought after as "the way of heaven prevailing all over the world" and also the "three programs and eight items" in *Da Xue* and the idea of Great Harmony in *Li Ji Li Yun (Book of Rites)*. If a man does what he can to fulfill his responsibility before his death, he will feel composed and have no qualms when he leaves this world.

Therefore, Confucianism does not lay too much emphasis on death. To realize one's idea, one can "end one's life for benevolence" and "give one's life for righteousness." This thought once exerted profound influence on China's literati and officialdom in feudal society. Before his execution, Wen Tianxiang, a national hero in China's history, wrote the following on his clothing belt: "Confucius teaches benevolence and Mencius teaches righteousness. For the sake of righteousness, perfect benevolence could be attained. What else can a man learn from the sages? After my death, I will feel no qualms at all." In the last analysis, life in Confucianism is to fulfill one's responsibility to society and death is the same. If one fulfilled his social responsibility before death, he will die "immortal."

The founder of Daoism (Taoism), Lao Zi (Lao Tzu), did not much discuss the issue of life and death. At one place in his work, he touched upon the issue as "enjoying longevity," a notion which has something to do with his idea that, if one does not play too much emphasis on his life, it may be easier for him to preserve his thought. However, Zhuang Zhou (Zhuang Zi) discussed this issue and considered both life and death as natural phenomena. When living, one should do everything in conformity to the law of nature and not seek anything beyond one's ability. In *Ying Di Wang (Fit for Emperors and Kings)*, there is a story in which Hundun (Chaos) was killed when he helped to bore seven openings for seeing, hearing, eating and breathing. According to Zhuang Zi, "death" is nothing but a "rest." "When death befalls me, I begin my rest." So when his wife died, he sang to the beating of bronze bowls. But there were "Perfect Men" or "Godly Men" who were beyond life and death. They could attain a state in which "both heaven and earth exist with them and all things are one with them." However, this "living beyond life and death" is somewhat different from "living in eternity" and it is only meant for a "spiritual state."

By the Wei and Jin dynasties, the Metaphysical School became popular and was often referred to as “New Daoism (Taoism).” It developed the thought of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) and particularly that of Zhuang Zi. In *Zuang Zi* as interpreted by Guo Xiang, both life and death were but different states in which all things existed. To life, life is life, but to death, life is death; to life, death is death, but to death, death is life. So whenever life or death is mentioned, people just give out different views from different viewpoints. Since life and death are both states in which all things exist, when living, one should live in composure and, when dying, one should die in composure. This idea of Guo Xiang was evidently derived from that of Zhuang Zi.

Another philosopher named Zhang Zhan interpreted the work of *Lie Zi* (Great Thinkers in Ancient China). He thought that everything had its beginning and end, sometimes gathered together and sometimes dispersed. The life of anything was supposed to be its beginning: “gathering takes a certain shape.” The death of anything was supposed to be its end: “when dispersing, things go to nothingness.” “By life is meant an air that gathers temporarily the ether of anything. Temporary gathering will eventually disperse and temporary ether will finally go to nothingness.” Therefore, man should know his source and his final destination, namely deliverance. Both Guo Xiang and Zhang Zhan were influenced by the Daoist thought that both life and death were but natural phenomena.

#### *Buddhism and Daoism*

Almost all religions seek to solve the problem of what will happen to man after his death, but Daoism (Taoism) in China alone chooses to tackle the problem of “how can man avoid death.” The basic belief of Daoism (Taoism) is “living in eternity” and for “the body of flesh to become immortal.” *Tai Ping Jing* states, “Daoism (Taoism) has all along taught conservation. Man can live in eternity and get away from death.” *Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) Xiang Er Zhu* also says, “The reason people are converted to Daoism (Taoism) is the wish to live in eternity.” Therefore, finding a solution to the question of life and death, seeking deliverance and immortality, and finally reaching the state of “living in eternity” are the characteristics of Daoism (Taoism).

*Xiao Dao Lun*, published in the North Zhou Dynasty, quoted *The Preface to Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)* written by Ge Xun, “Daoism (Taoism) preaches life, while Buddhism preaches death.” *San Tian Nei Jie Jing*

also said, “Lao Jun (Daoist Buddha) advocates achieving life and Sakyamuni advocates achieving death.” According to Buddhism, the sufferings and pains of man lie in “being in life.” Being in life means the spirit is associated with flesh and cannot be freed, that is, the spirit is still in the circle of *samsara* (wheel of life) before it reaches *nirvana*. Only when the spirit leaves the flesh can it arrive at the state of nothingness and be delivered from the sea of bitterness.

Daoism (Taoism) advocates realizing immortality in the flesh, that is, a body combined with spirit achieves immortality. In this way, man can leave bitter reality and enter the world of immortality. When commenting on the difference between Daoism (Taoism) and Buddhism on the issue of life and death, the Daoist monk Qi said, “The wonder of Daoist teachings lies in the seeking of oneness through intense meditation, in achieving immortality without dying. The essence of Buddhist teachings leads to meditation by ridding oneself of miscellaneous disturbing thoughts, by seeking no life and naming death clay eternity. I never heard of not dying by seeking death.” Tang Falin also said in *Bian Zheng Lun* (Book of Dialectics), “Wai Er Yi said that Lao Jun elaborates the preaching of living in eternity with no life or death. Sakyamuni establishes the religion of eternal nothingness with no life or death. Nei Er Yu said that Li Ran explains the essence of both life and death: “Fearing life that troubles life will bring about grey hairs. Sakyamuni reveals the sign that explains both life and death. Going to the final nothingness that silences nothingness will honor the body in gold.” Buddhism advocates “no life,” for whenever there is life there is death. Daoism (Taoism) advocates “no death,” for “no death” means living in eternity. Though their views are totally different, both Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism) seek deliverance by dealing with the issue of life and death.

(Translated by Hou Mingjun)

## **The Past and the Present of Chinese Religion**

The international conference of The Past and the Present of Chinese Religion is co-sponsored by International Academy for Chinese Culture and the American New Christianity Research Institute. As the Chairman of the International Academy for Chinese Culture, on the behalf of our colleagues, I warmly welcome our counterparts to this conference.

The conference could not be held today without Professor Cheng Zhongying's suggestions; he teaches in the University of Hawaii and serves as an instructor of the International Academy for Chinese Culture, and the American New Christianity Research Institute. I thank the American New Christianity Research Institute for its support. I appreciate the subsidization of the American New Christianity Research Institute, and Professor Cheng Zhongying's work as a liaison person for the conference.

The International Academy for Chinese Culture is the first high-level unofficial academic organization in China. It was established in December, 1984. Its aim is to carry forward the fine tradition of Chinese culture, strengthen the academic and cultural interchange at home and abroad, and promote the modernization of Chinese culture. During the last five years, the Academy did what it could do for Chinese culture entering into the world and foreign cultures' coming into China. It is one of our tasks to hold various meetings on humanities and social sciences. We have held several international conferences such as conference on Liang Shumin's academic thought, issues of the Modernization in China and Japan, and the May Fourth Movement, as well as the Chinese intellectuals' recent celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Movement. We run other small-sized symposiums and seminars several times a year. The purpose of these meetings and symposiums is to advocate the academic interchange, strengthen connections and mutual understanding of scholars from different countries and regions, and push forward Chinese culture into the process of modernization. Through various meetings, the Academy has established a wide network with scholars at home and

abroad. The opening of this meeting of the Past and the Present of Chinese Religion, I believe, can provide an opportunity to set up a fine, friendly, and cooperative relationship among scholars and experts of religious studies at home and abroad.

China has a continuing history over four to five thousand years. It has a rich culture, including religion as an important part of it, which play a big role in human social life. Thus, it is necessary to study religion.

Zhang Guangzhi 张光直, a professor at Harvard *University* of the United States, said in one of his articles: "I predict that the social sciences of the 21st century are China's century." He thought that the past one hundred years was the prosperous period of the Western social sciences, but we should pay attention to a fact that all the theories and methods of the Western social sciences came from the Western historical experience, because the Western social scientists of the past did not know much of the Eastern history. But from the perspective of human history, Chinese historical records are very plentiful, and the newly discovered materials recent years are also very rich. If we analyse and study Chinese historical materials while studying and absorbing Western historical theories, we will enrich and develop modern historical theories. We might also think out some new universally applicable rules for social sciences. In my opinion, Zhang Guangzhi's idea is quite significant and deserves our attention. In my viewpoint, China has a large number of religious documents and archaeological materials. There are materials on ancient Chinese religion in inscriptions on bones or tortoise shells of the Shang Dynasty, and inscriptions on ancient bronze objects, and various classical documents of the pre-Qin Dynasty. There are also many new findings unearthed in recent years. Buddhism came from India, but we already have at least ten to twenty thousand volumes of Chinese materials on Buddhism and abundant Tibetan Buddhist materials. We have collected over five thousand volumes of *Dao Zang* 道藏 on religious Daoism (Taoism), a native Chinese religion, and there are about one to two thousand volumes of Daoist materials which we have not yet calculated and compiled in *Dao Zang* 道藏. There is also plenty of Catholic and Christian materials in China. Particularly, we have probed the religions in the regions of minority nationalities and the folk religions of Han nationality and have accumulated many materials in recent years. Can we create some more universally

significant religious theories as we deeply and systematically study these materials with reference to social life? I believe it is possible.

It is necessary to study religious history in the current situation in order to create a religious theory which has more universal meaning. This meeting will discuss the history and current situation of Chinese religion. If we can put forward some new systematic theory for studying religions in this meeting, it will, of course, be meaningful, but it will also be very difficult. Moreover, we can consider the meeting as the beginning to advancing new theories with more universal meanings. But by systematically and widely studying the history and current situation of Chinese religion, such advance will be possible.

I think if we want to reach a positive result regarding religion as a cultural phenomenon and an academic problem for study, an atmosphere of free and academic thinking is required. We just finished a symposium about the May Fourth Movement. I stated in that meeting that free and academic thinking is one of the important reasons for the great success of the Movement. Around the time of the Movement, Chinese academia and theorists were very active and prosperous. All kinds of thought was introduced into China at the time, such as anarchism, pragmatism, new positivism, Nietzsche's philosophy, Schopenhauer's philosophy, Bergsonism, neo-Kantianism, Babbitt's New Humanism and Marxism. There were scholars to disseminate and promote all of these trends. At the same time, some scholars tried to reconcile Eastern and Western cultures and some others strongly sought to preserve and promote the inherent quintessence of Chinese culture. All of these schools freely explored how to develop Chinese culture on an equal basis. The spirit of free discussion in the May Fourth Movement is in accordance with the general trend of pluralism and openness of global cultural development after the breakdown of Euro-centrism. The scholars who are attending this meeting are from different countries and regions and have different social backgrounds and beliefs, thus, different ideas are hard to avoid. In this sense, our meeting should be based on the spirit of plurality and open-mindedness in order to discuss freely NS to realize the purpose of promoting mutual understanding and friendship, as well as the development of the academy.

At last, I wish the meeting fully success and everyone good health and happiness! Thank you all for being here.

(Translated by Hu Yeping, Edited by Yan Xin)

(Note: This article is the opening speech of the international conference on the Past and the Present of Chinese Religion in Beijing in May, 1989)

**Part VI**  
**Dialogue of Cultures**



## **Between Having a Wall and Having no Wall: Is There any Need for a Wall between Cultures?**

Our discussion of whether there is any need to have a wall between Cultures reminds me of a story told in The Book of *Zhuang Zi*, in the chapter entitled "the Mountain Tree." The gist of the story goes like this. There was a very oddly shaped tree and because there was nothing it could be used for the woodcutter did not cut it down and thus the tree survived. This meant that if the tree had grown into useful timber it would have been cut down and would not have been able to survive. There was also a goose. The goose got killed and cooked as food for *Zhuang Zi* and his disciples merely because it could not cackle. That is to say, if the goose could cackle it would not have been killed and would have saved its life. So those disciples asked *Zhuang Zi*, what position they should take in such cases, since the tree survived because of its worthlessness while the goose got killed because it could not cackle (being worthless)? *Zhuang Zi* replied that he would probably take a position halfway between worth and worthlessness in order to survive. The story suggests that things do not have absolute meanings but only relative ones. In our discussion of cultural issues, such as whether there should be a wall or no wall between one culture and another, if we consider the issues in terms of Chinese philosophy we may find that having a wall and having no wall more often complement each other although they seem contradictory. Nothing substantial, perhaps, will come out of a discussion of whether or not there should be a wall between cultures, because either side might cite something in its own favor. But it might conceivably sound more plausible if we say that between different cultures there seems to be a wall and no wall at the same time. So in Chinese philosophy we usually do not put the statement in positive terms and say that there should or should not be a wall between cultures. Instead, we say that the ideal position should be between having a wall and having no wall. If we see the development of Chinese culture as a whole, we will find that when confronted with

foreign cultures Chinese culture often maintains its position between having a wall and having no wall.

We all know that China has a written history of at least four or five thousand years, and today's Chinese culture is not the same one of four or five thousand years ago, or the one two or three thousand years ago, or the one thousand or one hundred years ago. It has in fact absorbed or assimilated cultures of bordering nations, Indian Buddhist culture and especially cultures of Western countries in modern times and yet it remains Chinese culture. Whether China has been equally successful each time it has assimilated foreign cultures is something for historians to decide. Philosophers should discuss issues of a different kind; we should discuss the methods used by Chinese culture in absorbing foreign cultures and the significance of such methods.

Although a mere story in itself, the story in The Book of *Zhuang Zi* mentioned above, shows an important way of thinking in Chinese philosophy, a way which (after the Wei and Jin Dynasties, i.e., after the fourth century) has later been merged with ways of thinking in Indian Buddhism. When we say "having a wall" we mean "not non-being," when we say "having no wall" we mean "not being." So in Chinese philosophy we have concepts like "neither being nor non-being," "neither continuous nor discontinuous," "neither substantial nor unsubstantial." These concepts constitute a mode of thought of "neither X." It may conceivably be meaningful if we apply this mode of thought to the discussion of whether there should be a wall or no wall between cultures.

#### **Neither Being nor Non-Being (非有非无 fei you fei wu)**

"Neither being nor non-being," a concept originally associated with teachings of prajna in Buddhism, has become a very important mode of thought in Chinese philosophy since Buddhism came into China. Concepts of this kind may actually be found in the writings of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi prior to the period of China's Dynasty (the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C.). For example Lao Zi said "Great form is shapeless, the Tao is hidden and nameless" (The Book of *Lao Zi*, chapter 41), "Tao is always nameless" (chapter 32), and that "as the mother of all things it is unnameable" To speak of Tao as "the mother of all things" is to speak of it as being, but to speak of Tao as having no name and no shape is to speak of it as non-being. Zhuang Zi also

observed that “where there is recognition of right there must be recognition of wrong; where there is recognition of wrong there must be recognition of right.” (The Book of *Zhuang Zi*: Discussion on Making All Things Equal). The implication here is that if there is something positive there should be something negative, if there is something negative there must be something positive. All these conceptions involve the concept of “neither being nor non-being.” If we take this concept as one concerned with space and use it in our exploration of issues between cultures, we may reach a conclusion like this: a culture should have no wall (not being) and at the same time have a wall (not non-being) against a different culture. Take the cultural relations crosswise; that is, to view it within the same given historical period, if a culture builds a wall against another culture, this culture will become a museum for visitors only; it will not be able to communicate with other cultures, nor will it be easy for this culture to influence other cultures, to join the great tied of cultural development of humankind as a whole (especially in the case of modern and contemporary times). On the other hand, if a culture has no wall at all, it will not consciously preserve and make full use of its distinctive features and, as a result, it will be in danger of being unable to survive as an independent culture. It will neither communicate with nor have influence upon other cultures.

Two cases in Chinese history may serve as good examples. One is the introduction of Buddhism into China after the first century. On the whole the Chinese welcomed Indian Buddhism yet their attitude towards this foreign culture was one of “neither having a wall nor having no wall.” On the one hand we were open-minded to the introduction of Buddhism as a whole, and on the other hand we used our native culture to interpret (here of course misreading were involved) and even transform it. Consequently, what happened was cultural choices between cultures. As a result, Chinese culture benefitted from Indian Buddhist culture, and at the same time, the latter managed to develop in China. The other case is the attitude adopted by the Chinese to close the door against Western culture from the end of the seventeenth century through the middle of the nineteenth century. During this period, although some Western learning was allowed to be introduced into China, Western culture as a whole had had virtually little effect upon native Chinese culture; that is to say, a man-made wall was built against Western culture. There

were of course many psychological factors at work behind this sort of opposition against the entrance of Western culture, yet, in essence, this attitude went against the traditional Chinese mode of thought of “neither being nor non-being,” and thereby resulted in a loss of vitality in Chinese culture.

“Being” and “non-being” are a pair of relative terms and “neither being nor non-being” is an important mode of thought in Chinese philosophy, and to speak of having a wall and having no wall does not give an accurate illustration of features of Chinese philosophy. Conforming to traditional Chinese mode of thought is putting it as “not having no wall” and “not having a wall.” The most ideal position for each of the cultures spatially fixed in a synchronic state, is one halfway between “neither having a wall nor having no wall” against other cultures. When dealing with cultural issues in this Chinese mode of philosophical thinking, we should neither stick to not having a wall nor to having no wall. Either way will lead to a rigid treatment of the issue. We should instead endeavor to find a way out for cultures half-way between not having a wall and not having no wall.

### **Neither Continuous nor Discontinuous** (非常非断 fei chang fei duan)

One of the three verifications in Buddhism is that all things, physical or psychological, are variables in the flow of time. In light of this, the concept of being neither continuous nor discontinuous also appears very often in Buddhist sutras. For example, it is written in the sutras that “things seem to have moved to another place and yet at the same time they seem not to have moved to another place,” which is what we call being neither continuous nor discontinuous.<sup>1</sup> If we take this concept of being neither continuous nor discontinuous as a concept that deals with time, and if we use it in our discussion of the relations between two (or more) cultures in the flow of time, it is perhaps reasonable to say that when a culture comes into contact with another culture in the flow of time some changes will inevitably occur (being not continuous); at the same time, the native culture, with all its conservatism and coagulating power, will resist foreign cultures. Eventually, foreign cultures have to make some changes to adapt

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<sup>1</sup> In the Platform Scriptures, the term “continuity pairing with non-continuity” is used. Xiong Shill uses the term “being neither continuous nor discontinuous” in his “On Substance and Function.” (Long Meng: United Press), p. 5.

themselves to certain needs of the native culture (being not discontinuous), in order to have any effect.

Again, let us take the introduction of Indian Buddhism into China for example. It took Indian Buddhism about one thousand years to get assimilated into and merge with Chinese culture after its first introduction. At first Indian Buddhism depended upon native Chinese culture and in this way was able to develop itself. During the Northern and Southern Dynasties (from 4th to 6th centuries A.D) Indian Buddhism as an alien force came into conflict with native Chinese culture and then in the Sui Dynasty and early Tang Dynasty it prevailed. According to Record Books in The Books in The Book of the Sui Dynasty there were at that time ten or a hundred times as many copies of Buddhist sutras as copies of Confucian classics in the private possession of ordinary readers. Many princes and ministers, men of letters and scholars, believed in Buddhism. Chinese philosophy was able to develop in Buddhism, which seemed for a time to have replaced China's traditional culture. Yet, as a matter of fact, it was at this time that sinolized Buddhist schools came into being; such as the Tiantai school, the Huayan school, the Zen school, the last being the most important. These sinolized Buddhist schools acted as a king of medium until Confucianism gained ground after the mid-Tang Dynasty, During the Sung Dynasty New Confucianism appeared in China, which benefitted from Buddhism and was later called the rational school of the Sung and Min Dynasties.

This process serves as a good illustration for the development of a culture which, in its long contact with a foreign with a foreign culture, sometimes seems to discontinue, yet, in fact, does not and there appears a general trend of being neither continuous nor discontinuous in its development. In modern times, Chinese culture experienced the impact of Western culture and strongly opposed tradition after the May Fourth Movement, demanding the introduction of science and democracy from the West. Some leaders in the movement and, later, some scholars, proposed the theory of full Europeanization. It seemed that Chinese culture was again faced with a crisis and was in danger of being discontinued, yet in the thirties and forties, a modern New Confucianism, a cultural conservatism and other ideological trends appeared, which were in direct opposition to the theory of full Europeanization. After 1949, there was again a kind of cultured gap in mainland China, which may be said to have existed until people

had finally realized the negative effect it had produced. So, in my opinion, when a culture experiences the impact of another powerful, foreign culture, some crises and gaps may appear for a certain time. However, on the whole and in the long run, the culture will develop in a way that is neither continuous nor discontinuous.

**Neither Substantial nor Insubstantial (非实非虚 fei shi fei xu)**

How does one draw a moon in Chinese painting? Although in general there is no way to do it, Chinese painters have found a method called "painting the clouds to set off the moon." They paint only the clouds surrounding the moon and, consequently the moon will show itself. The painters do not paint the moon, so the moon is insubstantial (being not substantial); yet there is a moon in the picture, so it is at the same time "substantial" (being not insubstantial). Thus "being neither substantial nor insubstantial" has become a very important principle in the theory of Chinese painting. When we apply the concept of "being neither substantial nor insubstantial" in our discussion of walls between cultures we may regard the issue as one that concerns the relationship between cultures, or, to be more exact, the state in which two cultures relate to each other. Any culture, differing in background, race, experience and many other accidental factors, possesses distinctive features different from those of other cultures. These distinctive features, once shaped, will become a tradition with coagulating power (being not insubstantial). Given nature of humankind, there will usually appear some opposition to break through the coagulating tradition. This opposition becomes all the more apparent when facing the impact from a foreign culture, and will become an antitraditional force. In view of the fact that this force against tradition is actually not substantial, and the traditional culture sometimes seems powerless before the powerful opposition against it. Viewed from both perspectives, a culture often shows itself as "being neither substantial nor insubstantial."

In Chinese philosophy, there is an important concept called "wu, non-being, which illustrates quite well the concept of being neither substantial nor insubstantial. "Wu" does not mean "non-existence" but rather "non-prescriptive existence." In terms of Chinese philosophy, a tone in traditional Chinese music cannot be both "gong" and "shang" at the same time, but "no sound" can be "gong" and "shang" at once, it can be any of the tones. As far as shape is

concerned, a thing cannot be “round” when it is “square,” yet “being shapeless” can be regarded as “round” as well as “square,” it can be any of the shapes. So “non-being can become any “being.” “Non-being” is “insubstantial,” because it is not prescriptive; yet “non-being” is also “substantial” (not insubstantial), it can become any “being.” To speak of a “wall” between cultures in our discussion is also to state things symbolically. The word “wall,” when viewed in terms of a relationship of one culture to another or in terms of the state of existence of a culture is symbolic being “neither substantial nor insubstantial.” A living culture should show its prescriptive side in order to survive and at the same time show the the non-prescriptive side, to adapt itself in order to develop. As far as culture is concerned “traditional culture” and “cultural tradition” are two different things, the former refers to an established culture, which is the accumulation of culture over the past years, already solidified and prescriptive, therefore, “substantial;” while the latter refers to the trend along which an established culture flows in actual life, it is active, constantly changing, often non-prescriptive, so it is “insubstantial.” Actually, aside from culture all other things as well show their existence as being “neither substantial nor insubstantial.”

A culture is a nation’s mode of life and is viewed from the perspectives of time and space, and state it as a unified body. From the perspective of Chinese culture, we see that a living culture, when it comes into contact with other cultures, will show itself as “neither being nor non-being.” “Neither continuous nor discontinuous” and “neither substantial nor insubstantial.” The method used here in dealing with issues “not in a positive way” is called the “negative method.” It is what Lao Zi meant when he said that “truth sounds like its opposite.” The negative method only indicates what a thing is not, it does not show positively what a certain thing is. In other words, it does not describe things in positive terms, so this method reveals the positive in a negative manner. It tends to use “not being” to show “non-being,” to use “not non-being” to indicate “being,” and so on. In Chinese philosophy this negative method often requires placing a “mean” between two extremes, yet this “mean” is not the creation of a second “middle point,” it only presents itself in negating two extremes. If a second “middle point” is created, it means certain affirmation of this “middle point,” which does not accord with the “negative method” in Chinese philosophy. So in dealing with the

issue of walls between cultures in this way of thinking characteristic of Chinese philosophy, it is, perhaps, not accurate to use the phrase "between having a wall and having no wall." It would be more accurate to use the term "between not having a wall and not having a wall." From the viewpoint of traditional Chinese philosophy it is more fitting for a culture, in its relation to many other cultures, to develop "between not having a wall and not having a wall."

It is perhaps revealing to use this Chinese way of thinking in our interpretation of "misreadings" between cultures. Actually misreading exists not only in the confrontation of two different cultures, but also within the same cultural tradition over a certain length of time. For example, there are some misreadings in Zhu Xi's understanding of Confucius's and Mencius's notion of Virtue (ren). With Confucius and Mencius, Virtue concerns human nature; with Zhu Xi Virtue concerns not only human nature but also Heavenly principles. Is Zhu's understanding of Confucius' virtue a kind of misreading? In my opinion it is and at the same time is not; that is to say, it is not a misreading and not a non-misreading as well. A cultural tradition, when interpreting or comprehending the text of another cultural tradition, may show itself at its best if the reading is "not a misreading nor a non-misreading." By a non-misreading I mean the kind of reading that is always related to the original text; by not a non-misreading I mean the same reading which is related to different cultural backgrounds and to the creative power of individuals. If there is no misreading between cultures there will be no discourse between cultures; in other words, no necessity for the discourse between cultures to exist. Just because there are misreadings (that is not non-misreading) it is possible to have different opinions and just because there are different opinions, it is possible for a discourse to take place; just because there exists "non-misreading," it is possible to have common topics for discussion, and since there are common topics for discussion it is possible to have discourses. So "misreading," between cultures is neither unavoidable nor meaningless under certain circumstances.

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## **The Possible Orientations of Chinese Culture in the Context of Globalization**

In the context of globalization today, human culture will remain diverse because after World War II, with the collapse of the colonial system, the former colonies and oppressed peoples have the urgent task of confirming their independent status in all aspects, while a nation's unique culture (language, religion, values, etc.) is one of the most important pillars for the recognition of it. This, therefore, provides the conditions for the diversified development of world culture. In addition, the rise of postmodern trends of thought in the Western world in the latter part of the last century have had tremendous impact on the modernist ideas of clarity, determinacy, and ultimate value and the integrity of the theoretical system lead to the pursuit of indeterminacy, disorder and anti-centrism. These have strengthened multicultural development. The Chinese culture, as a component of human culture, needs to walk out of the debates on "China versus the West" and "the ancient versus the contemporary" that have lasted for hundreds of years. We need to approach a new stage of mastering the knowledge of these four perspectives to realize the transformation of the Chinese culture. At present, due to the diversity of world culture, the Chinese culture has also formed its own diversified pattern.

In the history of China, there were two significant cultural imports, one being the import of the Indian Buddhist culture since the first century, and the other being the import of the Western culture since the end of the sixteenth century, especially in the mid nineteenth century.

The import of the Indian Buddhism into China has undergone three historical phases. (1) From the late Western Han Dynasty to Eastern Jin Dynasty, Buddhism first attached itself to astronomy and astrology in Han Dynasty and then to the metaphysics in the Wei and Jin Dynasties. (2) After the Eastern Jin Dynasty, there had been contradictions and conflicts between the Chinese culture and the Indian one due to cultural differences, with the two influencing and absorbing each other. (3) Since the Sui and Tang Dynasties, several

Chinanized Buddhist sects, such as Tiantai, Huayan and Chan had come into being, while the Indian Buddhist culture being influenced by Confucianism and Daoism in China. Meanwhile, there appeared Confucianism emphasizing the traditional Chinese subjectivity and Daoism absorbing Buddhism. It can be maintained that the Indian Buddhist thoughts had been completely fused in the Chinese culture till the Song Dynasty. This historical process of the import of the Indian Buddhist culture into China can function as a frame of reference for us to draw experiences and inspirations from when we study that of the Western culture into China.

When it was imported into China in the late sixteenth century, Western culture, similarly, attached itself to the Chinese Confucian culture, which was interrupted due to the "debates on the rites." It was not until the mid nineteenth century that the Western culture flooded into China with the invasion of the Western imperialists. During the hundreds of years, there have been debates on "China versus the West" and "the ancient versus the contemporary," which are, in effect, the ones on the "wholesale Westernization" versus the "ontological culture." These indicate that there has been the trend of opposing "the ancient" against "the contemporary" and "China" against "the West." This simplified thinking mode of dealing with the intercultural issues is harmful to the healthy and reasonable development of culture. At present, we should abandon the opinion of opposing "the ancient" against "the contemporary" and "China" against "the West" and walk Out of the debates. We might claim that the cultural development in China nowadays is at the transitional point from the second phase of the import of Indian Buddhism (the Southern and Northern Dynasties) to the third phase (Sui and Tang Dynasties), namely, from the phase of cultural contradictions and conflicts between the two cultures to the one when the local culture begins to digest the Western one. In this third phase, the development of our Chinese culture will go beyond the debates on "China versus the West" and "the ancient versus the contemporary" and into the phase when we absorb and fuse the Western culture in an around and profound way to help the Chinese culture develop from the tradition to the modern, giving rise to the situation of multi-cultural development. I will illustrate this orientation with the example of Chinese philosophy. I believe that under these circumstance, there are

at least three “carry-on-with” orientations for the construction modern Chinese philosophy:

(1) On the basis of absorbing and fusing the Western philosophy, we can “carry on with” the traditional Chinese philosophy to talk about the “Chinese philosophy.” “Carry-on-with” and “abide-by” issues were raised by Feng Youlan. In his view, his “New Confucian Philosophy” carries on with rather than abides by the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties. By the same token, the philosophy of the philosophers in the Song and Ming Dynasties, the so-called “Neo-Confucianism,” came into being after absorbing and fusing the Indian Buddhist philosophy which had a great impact on it. Such philosophers in the 1930s and 1940s as Xiong Shili, Feng Youlan, He Ling, Jin Yuelin, Zhang Dongsun and Zhang Shenfu constructed the modern Chinese philosophy by absorbing the Western philosophy under the latter’s impact. We can take Feng Youlan as an example. His New Confucian Philosophy is new because it introduces into Chinese philosophy Plato’s “universals” and “particulars” as well as the thought of “the latent” of the New Realization Philosophy. He divides the world into “truth” (or called as “idea” or “tai chi”) and reality. A matter in reality becomes a matter relying on the “idea.” In this way, his New Confucian Philosophy carries on with the thought that “the principle is one and its manifestations are many” of the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties on the one hand and applies the thoughts of “universals” and “particulars” from the Western philosophy into the Chinese philosophy on the other hand, giving impetus to the modern transformation of the Chinese philosophy. In reality, the scholars in the 1930s and 1940s have generally been so. Of course, Feng Youlan’s “New Confucian Philosophy” has also left unresolved issues. As is stated in the seventh volume of *The Newly Compiled History of Chinese Philosophy (The History of Modern Chinese Philosophy)*, Feng maintains that “idea” is non-existence but being for one thing and it is still “existence” for another. There is a clear contradiction here. Therefore, if we attempt to push on the development of the Chinese philosophy, we should carry on with the “New Confucian Philosophy” instead of the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties. One of the conditions to achieve this goal is for us to further absorb and digest the Western philosophy and help the Chinese philosophy have more universal significance in the dialogues between

China and the West. Meanwhile, we should pay more attention to the strong points of the Chinese philosophy and establish the cultural subjectivity of our own so as to make a special contribution to the human culture. We can also note that although there is a tradition of discussing the “relationship between knowledge and action” in the traditional Chinese philosophy and the doctrine of “the unity of knowledge and action” once occupied a dominant position, the doctrine was often linked with morality and ethics, lacking epistemological basis. This issue was raised by He Ling in the 1930s as he stated: “Studying the issue of ‘knowledge and action’ uncritically and discussing directly about morality will definitely lead to dogmatic ethics. Ethics studies the code of conduct and the concept of good, so if we do not study the relevant knowledge and the truth related with the good, we will certainly be trapped in the baseless dogmatisms.” Therefore, we “must investigate thoroughly the knowledge basis of ethics.”<sup>1</sup> We can see that such Chinese philosophers in the 1930s and 1940s as Zhang Dongsun, Xiong Shili, He Ling, Jin Yuelin and Feng Youlan all noticed the lack of “epistemological” theory in the traditional Chinese philosophy and made an attempt to learn from the Western philosophy to complement the deficiency in this aspect. In view of this, the establishment of the real modern Chinese philosophy is impossible without the Western philosophy. That is to say, paying constant attention to and drawing nourishment from the Western philosophy is the necessary means, by which Chinese philosophy can develop and go to the world.

(2) We can carry on with the Western philosophy to construct Chinese philosophy by introducing the ideological resources of the latter into the former. In China’s history, there was the experience of carrying on with the Indian Buddhist philosophy. During the Sui and Tang Dynasties in China, several Chinanized Buddhist sects, such as Chan, Tiantai and Huayan had come into being. They absorbed the thoughts from Confucianism and Daoism, becoming the Chinese Buddhist philosophy different from the Indian one. We can maintain that the Chinese philosophy once benefited from the Indian Buddhist

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<sup>1</sup> He Ling, “New Understanding of the Unity of Knowledge and Action,” *Chinese Philosophy in the Fifty Years* (Liaoling Educational Press, 1989). In *Chinese Culture and Globalization: History and Challenges for the 21 Century*, edited by Torbjorn Loden (Stockholm University, 2007).

philosophy whereas the latter was carried forward in China. For more than a century, various schools of Western philosophy have entered China one after another and greatly influenced Chinese philosophy. Facing Western philosophy and its strong impacts, can Chinese philosophers introduce Chinese philosophical thoughts into Western philosophy and form several Chinese-influenced schools of Western philosophy as they did in the Sui and Tang Dynasties? Here, I will take hermeneutics as an example to illustrate the point. Currently, there is a "trend of hermeneutic thoughts" in the West, and since the 1980s, scholars from a variety of disciplines in the Chinese academia have been applying the Western hermeneutics to the investigation of the different aspects of the Chinese culture, thus some Chinese scholars (including the overseas ones) have been trying to construct the "Chinese hermeneutics." Because there is a very long history of interpreting the classic and rich archives of thoughts in China, the issue of the construction of the Chinese hermeneutics has been raised under the influence of the Western one. In his *The Modern Interpretations of Chinese Philosophy*, Professor Jing Haifeng takes the four people, namely, Fu Weixun, Cheng Zhongying, Huang Junjie and Tang Yijie, as an example to illustrate their efforts in constructing the Chinese hermeneutics. Fu's "creative hermeneutics" divides a philosopher's thinking into five levels, constructing the Chinese hermeneutics from the perspective of the hermeneutic methodology. It is characterized by the introduction of the thinking methodology of the Taoist philosophy (such as Lao Zhuang philosophy) and the Chinese Buddhist philosophy (such as Chan) into hermeneutics. Cheng differs from Fu in his emphasis on the hermeneutic theory of the methodology, paying special attention to the ontological meanings of interpretations. He mainly introduces the thoughts of the *Book of Changes* into hermeneutics, believing that the Chinese ontological hermeneutics is different from the Western one characterized by the static interpretation of ontology in that it is characterized by "the dynamic interpretation from ontology," which is based on the "life ontology," with knowledge being unified in mind. Based on his analysis of Mencius and his study of Mencius' thinking, Huang reveals the characteristics of the interpretation of the classics in China. Tang has sorted out the history of interpreting the classics in China by analyzing different types of interpretations in Pre-Qin philosophy. With all these attempts being made, more effort is still needed for the

establishment of a “Chinese Hermeneutics.” However, all these attempts are of great significance at any rate, which will enrich the hermeneutic theory. In fact, in the last century, some scholars had been attempting to establish the “Chinese phenomenology” and “Chinese semiotics.” In this connection, the current philosophical circles in China are perhaps adding the Chinese philosophical thinking resources to the factions (branches) of the Western Philosophy to form some Chinanized factions (or branches) of the latter as they did in the Sui and Tang dynasties. This attempt of the Chinese philosophers to introduce the Chinese philosophical thinking into a faction (or branch) of the Western philosophy to form one different from the latter, will enrich Western Philosophy (as Chan, Tiantai and Huayan did during the Sui and Tang dynasties) on the one hand, and will open up more extensive space for the development of the Chinese philosophy (such as the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties), helping the Chinese philosophy enter the diversified philosophy of the world in a better way.

(3) We should establish a Marxist philosophy with Chinese features: Marxism is originally a branch of Western philosophy. It is quite necessary for us to have a separate study on Marxism because it has had a tremendous impact on Chinese society since the last century. Here, I would like to take the late philosopher Feng Qi as an example. Feng attempted to make the Marxist philosophy the one with Chinese features on the basis of absorbing the traditional Chinese philosophy and the Western analytical philosophy. In the “introduction” of his *Three Discussions on Wisdom*, he states: “This book aims at understanding humanity and nature based on the dialectics of the epistemological process of practice, particularly through the leap of ‘transforming knowledge into wisdom’.” First of all, Feng is not to solve the problem of the Western Philosophy, but that of “humanity and nature” in the Chinese philosophy through the practical materialist dialectics. Secondly, he thinks that “transforming knowledge into wisdom” (namely, the intuition of wisdom) is the way of solving the problem. “Transforming knowledge into wisdom” is borrowed from the language of Buddhism, which requires that “knowledge” be elevated to “wisdom” to reach the spiritual realm of transcendence. Thirdly, he believes that the purpose of philosophy is to regard the process of understanding the world and that of understanding oneself as the same one to achieve the “transformation

of theories into methods and virtues." Marxism believes that theories and methods are unified, while Chinese philosophy has always maintained that "theories" and "virtues" are unified. Feng Qi requests that "theories," "methods" and "virtues" should be unified. He explains: "on the one hand, philosophical theories should be transformed into thinking methods and implemented in their own activities and research areas; on the other hand, they should be transformed into their own virtues and embodied as their own personalities through their own practice." Thus, although based on the Marxist materialist dialectics, Feng's Philosophy is to settle the issue of Chinese philosophy and its way is to reach the ideal moral realm of life by the Buddhist way of thinking absorbed into the Chinese philosophy ("transforming knowledge into wisdom"). Undoubtedly, this is the Marxist philosophy with Chinese "features." A Chinese-influenced traditional Marxism will make Marxism in China bear more epochal and ethnic characteristics, as was Western Marxism in Europe (such as the Frankfurt School) in the last century.

Of course, for more than one century, there have been cultural "revivalists" in Chinese academia. After World War I, traveling back from Europe, Liang Qichao claimed that the Western culture had declined, which would be rescued by the Chinese culture; the "Declaration of Chinese Cultural Ontology" also appeared in the 1930s. Especially in the 21st century, some Chinese scholars have raised the issue of "reestablishing Chinese Confucianism." They maintain that "the all-round rejuvenation of Confucianism must be achieved in response to the challenges posed by the Western civilization" and that "the rejuvenation of Confucianism is the urgent task on hand for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Therefore, they advocate Confucianism as the state religion in China to achieve the so-called "unification of the state and the religion" practiced ever since the ancient times. I think that this attempt to close one's own culture and to exclude without analysis the Western culture is certainly unadvisable and against the current trend of globalization, thus can not be realized.

The above-mentioned three possible orientations of the development of the Chinese philosophy might be ways for the Chinese philosophy to go beyond the debates on "China versus the West" and "the ancient versus the contemporary," to approach the new road that fuses the knowledge of the ancient and the

contemporary as well as of China and the West and to let various schools of philosophical thoughts strive in more extensive fields. That is to say, to construct a modern Chinese Philosophy, we should uphold the subjectivity of Chinese philosophy on the one hand, and also absorb the essence of Western philosophy on the other. This requires that we should not only carry on with traditional Chinese philosophy, but also have the courage to carry on with Western philosophy (or a China version of Western philosophy). We should not simply abide by the history of Chinese and Western philosophy, but move on with them as background. This will open up new prospects for the development of philosophy.

## Constructing Chinese Philosophy in a Sino-European Cultural Exchange

In December 2002, I published a fourteen-volume series, *Ershi Shiji Xifang Zhexue Dongjian Shi (History of the Dissemination of Western Philosophy to China in the 20th Century)*.<sup>1</sup> My reason for engaging in this study was to review the history of the importation of Western philosophy into China in order to more fully understand the development of the discipline of “Chinese Philosophy.”

There is no such word as “philosophy,” or *zhexue*, in the Chinese language. The term *zhexue* was coined by a Japanese scholar Nishi Amane (1829-97), who borrowed the two Chinese characters *zhe* (“wisdom”) and *xue* (“study”) to refer to “philosophy” originated in Ancient Greece and Rome. This new term was introduced into China by a Chinese scholar, Huang Zunxian (1848-1905), and was accepted by Chinese scholars. Although this term *zhexue* was accepted by Chinese scholars in the late nineteenth century, the problem remained, regarding whether China had “philosophy” of the sort that was comparable to Western philosophy. Indeed, this issue is still being debated by contemporary scholars in the field.

Western philosophy was imported into China at the end of the nineteenth century. Its foremost and most influential introducer, Yan Fu (1853-1921), had translated into Chinese numerous Western philosophical texts especially those pertaining to evolutionary theory. In quick succession, the texts of Kant, Descartes, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche were introduced into China. These movements provided a perspective on the issue of whether philosophy exists in China. Some Chinese scholars discovered that although “philosophy” was not an independent discipline, there were ample philosophical themes and questions in the classical Chinese canons, such as *Shang Shu (Book of*

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<sup>1</sup> 1. Tang Yijie, ed., *History of the Dissemination of Western Philosophy to China in the 20th Century (Ershi Shiji Xifang Zhexue Dongjian Shi)*, 14 vols. (Beijing: Shoudu shifan daxue chubanshe, 2002).

*History*), *Yi Jing* (*Book of Changes*), *Lun Yu* (*Confucian Analects*), *Lao Zi*, and *Zhuang Zi*, that were comparable to those in Western philosophy. There were also significant differences between the inquiries in these canons and those in Western philosophy, and the study of these differences was invaluable to scholarship.

We must acknowledge that, before the importation of Western philosophy, there was no scholarly study of Chinese philosophy in its own right, as a field distinct from “canon studies” (*jing xue*) and “traditions of the masters” (*zi xue*). From the first half of the twentieth century, there was a surge into China of the fields of Western philosophy including Marxism, Pragmatism, Realism, Analytic Philosophy, Ancient Greek Philosophy, and nineteenth-century German Philosophy. This had a powerful impact on scholarship in China. As a result of their engagement with Western philosophy and its frameworks, Chinese scholars attempted to compile voluminous collections of classical canons and commentaries associated with Kong Zi (Confucius), Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi, and so forth, in order to establish a discipline of “Chinese philosophy.” In the early stages, such study focused only on the thoughts of particular individuals or isolated topics. By the twentieth century, however, the field of Chinese philosophy had been founded primarily through the route of studies in Chinese intellectual history. During this period, several volumes of “History of Chinese Philosophy,” including Hu Shih’s (Hu Shi) *Zhongguo Zhaxue Shi Dagang* (*Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy*)<sup>2</sup> and Feng Youlan’s (Fung Yulan) *Zhongguo Zhaxue Shi* (*History of Chinese Philosophy*),<sup>3</sup> were authored by scholars who sought to demonstrate that Chinese philosophy had pre-Qin (before 221 BCE) origins. In other words, these Chinese thinkers were consciously separating philosophical study from studies in classics and studies under masters, and establishing Chinese philosophy as an independent disciplinary field. Nevertheless, all these accounts of Chinese intellectual history were greatly influenced and defined by the frameworks supplied by Western philosophy.

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<sup>2</sup> Hu Shih, *Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy* (Beijing: Dong Fang Press, 1996), originally entitled *History of Pre-Qin Sophism* (*Xian Qin Mingxue Shi*), written between 1915 and 1917 and first published in 1922.

<sup>3</sup> Feng Youlan, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1 (first published in 1931) and vol. 2 (first published in 1934) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shuju, 1962).

From the 1930s, Chinese philosophers were absorbing and adapting Western philosophy in their accounts of Chinese philosophy. This led to the articulation of several modern versions of Chinese philosophy. The prominent thinkers of this period include Xiong Shili, Zhang Dongsun, Feng Youlan, and Jin Yuelin. Unfortunately, after 1949, such attempts to construct strains of modern Chinese philosophy were abruptly halted, as were studies that sought to engage dialogue between Chinese and Western philosophies.

It was not until the 1980s, when China embraced reforms toward a more open society, that the study of Chinese philosophy was again permitted. The doctrines of existentialism, Western Marxism, phenomenology, structuralism, hermeneutics, postmodernism, semiotics, to name a few, were introduced in China. This not only broadened the horizons of Chinese philosophers, but also provided many different perspectives for richer, in-depth scholarship in Chinese philosophy.

From this brief retrospective on the history of the importation of Western philosophy into China, I would like to make the following proposals in order to generate further discussion.

### **Western Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy as an independent Discipline**

There was neither an original Chinese term *zhexue* nor did Chinese philosophy as an independent discipline originate in China. It was only in engagement with and response to Western philosophy that elements of philosophical ideas and philosophical questions were identified in the Chinese classics. Hence, the “Chinese philosophy” that had been developed through this period was primarily constructed according to paradigms and frameworks provided by Western philosophy. Take Feng Youlan’s *History of Chinese Philosophy* for example. Its structure, terminology, and perspectives were mainly borrowed from their equivalents in Western philosophy. These include concepts such as idealism and materialism, ontology and cosmology, monism and dualism (or pluralism), empirical and transcendental, phenomenon and essence, universals and particulars, thought and existence, and the like. These conceptual frameworks were employed to explain certain notions in Chinese thought including *dao*, *tian*, and *xin*. Existing ideas, issues, terminologies,

concepts, and logic were shaped by Western philosophy. Fortuitously, the result was greater clarity in the specification of issues and outline of concepts, as well as greater precision in logic. I suggest that this was a necessary step in the creation of a viable “Chinese philosophy.”

Modern Chinese philosophy of the 1930s and 1940s is comprised by scholarly work that characteristically *continues* rather than *follows* the traditional discourse of Chinese philosophy. That is to say, in the process of studying and adapting Western philosophy, Chinese philosophers transformed Chinese philosophy from the traditional to the modern. This continued development in Chinese philosophy had to meet the criteria of Western philosophy; attempt to “converge the Chinese and the West” was primarily involved supplementing the shortcomings of Chinese scholarship with those of Western scholarship. Let me demonstrate this with two representative examples. The first is Xiong Shili’s doctrine of the Neo-Weishi Lun (Yogâcâra Buddhism),<sup>4</sup> and the second Feng Youlan’s Neo-Confucianism (*xin lixue*).<sup>5</sup>

Xiong Shili’s Neo-Weishi Lun is only partially complete. The completed section, the “Doctrine of the Jing” (*jing lun*), is a treatise that covers topics in the field of ontology (*benti lun*) in Western philosophy, albeit with some Chinese characteristics. The other section which he had originally planned to write was the “Doctrine of the Liang” (*liang lun*). Had it been written, this section would have covered a topic area roughly equivalent to epistemology (*renshi lun*) in Western philosophy. His other works allow us a glimpse as well into his view of Chinese philosophy as it stands in relation to Western philosophy. Xiong believes that traditional Chinese philosophy tended to place more emphasis on experiential wisdom (*tiren*) rather than on rational judgment or analysis (*sibian*). For Xiong, this is where discussions on epistemology in Western philosophy can benefit Chinese philosophy: He envisaged an epistemological approach that synthesized experiential wisdom with rational analysis.

In his approach to Neo-Confucianism, Feng Youlan asserts that his vision was not to follow, but to continue, the Neo-Confucianism of the

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<sup>4</sup> Tang Yijie and Xiao Jiefu, eds., *Xiong Shili Lunzhu Ji Zhiyi: Xin Weishi Lun (Collected Works of Xiong Shili (1): New Doctrine of Consciousness Only)* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> Feng Youlan, *Xin Li xue (New Rational Philosophy)* (Changsha: Commercial Press, 1939).

Song (960-1280) and the Ming (1368-1644) Dynasties. Feng's approach resulted in an introduction into Chinese philosophy the "universals" (*gong xiang*) and "particulars" (*shu xiang*) of Platonic philosophy, as well as ideas in Neo-Realism (*xin shizai lun*). Using this schema, the world is divided into "truth" (*zhenji*) or principle (*li*) or great ultimate (*taiji*) and "reality" (*shiji*). Accordingly, things in reality become what they are according to their essence or principle. In adapting the bipolar concepts of truth and reality, Feng was able to continue the Neo-Confucian doctrine of the "many sharing the one" (*li yi fen shu*). Another Neo-Confucian work of Feng Youlan, entitled *A New Understanding of Words* (*Xin Zhi Zan*),<sup>6</sup> discusses philosophical methodology and its relation to epistemological questions. According to Feng, Western philosophy excels in analysis while traditional Chinese philosophy excels in intuition. His treatment of Neo-Confucianism combines, and reaps the benefits of, both these approaches.

Both Xiong Shili and Feng Youlan drew from traditional Chinese thought to articulate Chinese philosophy. However, they continued the tradition by taking on Western philosophy as the fundamental framework. Unfortunately, such exciting developments in Chinese philosophy were forestalled by external circumstances.

From the discussion above, it is clear that whether we understand Chinese philosophy in terms of its early forays into Chinese intellectual history or its continuing development in the early modern period in Chinese history, we must recognize that it was very much shaped by Western philosophy.

### **Paradigm and Framework of Western Philosophy and Potential Problems in Chinese Philosophy**

As humans, we inevitably share a number of common characteristics that cut across different civilizations and cultures. Nevertheless, each civilization or culture is unique in geographical, historical, and even accidental aspects. Naturally, we expect that Western philosophy will have distinctive characteristics due to its evolution within a particular sociocultural environment. Likewise, Chinese philosophy will necessarily be influenced by social and

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<sup>6</sup> Feng Youlan, *Xin zhi yan* (*A New Understanding of Words*) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1946).

cultural factors and hence will possess certain particularities. Thus, injudicious and unrestrained construction of Chinese philosophy according to the terms of reference in Western philosophy will unavoidably be problematic. I believe there are at least two fundamental problems.

The first problem concerns the obliteration of characteristics of Chinese philosophy that may be of unique significance to philosophical inquiry. I will discuss two key features of Chinese philosophy that will help to demonstrate this point. Western philosophy from the time of the ancient Greeks and especially from Descartes on, has regarded more highly the systematic construction of philosophical knowledge. By contrast, thinkers in the Chinese tradition have put more emphasis on the pursuit of certain paths or goals in order to realize one's virtue or efficacy (*jingshen jingjie*). A passage in the Confucian *Analects* portrays Confucius's emphasis on the "inner," personal pleasure associated with learning: "The Master said, 'They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who delight in it'" (*Analects* 6:18).<sup>7</sup> The ultimate pursuit of life is not merely to attain knowledge or acquire skills; Yan Hui, Confucius's much loved disciple, harmonized his love of learning and personal conduct (*Analects* 6:3). In Yan Hui, the body and mind, the exterior and the interior, were in harmony.

The Daoist philosopher Zhuang Zi pursued *jingshen jingjie* of spontaneous wandering in his first chapter, "Xiaoyao you,"<sup>8</sup> that was not cramped by conventional aspirations and values. Similarly, a well-known Chan Buddhist poem articulates the *jingshen jingjie* of being comfortable in different environments:

The spring flowers, the autumn moon;  
Summer breezes, winter snow.  
If useless things do not clutter your mind,  
You have the best days of your life.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> James Legge, trans., *The Four Books* (Taiwan: Culture Book Company, 1981), 195. The following quotations from this book will show chapter and page number(s) in parenthesis.

<sup>8</sup> Angus C. Graham, trans., *Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001), 43-47. Graham translates "Xiaoyao you" as "Going Rambling with a Destination."

<sup>9</sup> Wumen Huikai (Mumon Ekai), *The Gateless Gate* (Wumen guan in Chinese; Mumonkan in Japanese). English translation by Katsuki Sekida, *Two Zen Classics*:

The spirit of such a philosophy characterized by reflective personal engagement with its insights is distinct from those predominant in Western philosophy, but its value for humanity cannot be underestimated.

Another distinctive and fundamental characteristic of traditional Chinese thought is its balance of holistic and individual perspectives. The key notions in traditional Chinese philosophy include “the unity of heaven and humanity” (*tian ren he yi*), “the myriad of things are one” (*wanwu yiben*) and “the unity of body and mind, the exterior and the interior” (*shenxin neiwai heyi*). These fundamental paradigms stand in contrast to the subject-orientated approaches and the subject-object dichotomy that are dominant in (Western) Anglo-analytic philosophy. If this subject-orientation and its attendant dualistic frameworks are used as reference points from which to understand Chinese philosophy, the distinctive characteristics of the latter will not be sufficiently articulated. On the other hand, it is important to note that the themes in Chinese philosophy outlined above are more closely aligned in spirit and approach with those in continental European philosophy, such as, for instance, in Phenomenology, which emphasizes the intersubjective nature (*hu zhu ti xing*) of an individual’s engagement with the world. To bring to the fore these features in traditional Chinese thinking will benefit both Chinese and Western philosophies.

The second source of potential problems is related to the translation of Chinese terms and phrases into English. There are many notions in traditional Chinese thought such as *tian*, *dao*, *xin*, *xing*, *you*, *wu*, and *qi*, with distinctive meanings within specific philosophical frameworks that are difficult to express in correspondence with Western philosophy. For example, *tian* (often “thinly” translated as “Heaven”) has at least three meanings:

- (a) supreme and ultimate heaven, sometimes expressed in terms of a personal god;
- (b) naturalistic heaven that incorporates a sense of the natural environment; and

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*The Gateless Gate and the Blue Cliff Records* (Boston: Shambhala Press, 2005, previously published in 1995 by Weatherhill Press). Translation available online at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/zen/mumonkan.htm> (accessed on 23Feb. 2007).

(c) heaven associated with a transcendent order; this is the ground of normative principles (*yili*) that may also have implications for ethical conduct.

Another example is *qi*, which may be interpreted in at least three ways:

- (a) material existence;
- (b) vitality and consciousness, as for instance in Mencius' and energetic and dynamic *qi* (*huo qi zhi qi*) or the *Guanzi's* essential *qi* (*jing qi*); or
- (c) the ultimate, as for instance in the "one *qi* evolved into three" (*yiqi hua sanqing*) theme in Daoist thought.

It is not easy to find parallels to all these meanings of *qi* in Western philosophy. Strictly speaking, some of them cannot be translated, and I suggest in these cases to use transliterations. Here, I refer to an example of the successful use of transliteration in order to preserve the original insights of a doctrine. When Buddhist thought was introduced into China, several important notions including "prajna" (*banruo*) and "nirvana" (*niepan*) were only transliterated. In time these transliterations were adopted into the Chinese language, and their original Indian Buddhist meanings were retained. It is important to note that the Dharma exponent, Xuan Zang (600-664), deliberately articulated five principles of "no translation" (*wu bufan*) in relation to the concepts in the Buddhist canons.<sup>10</sup> We may follow this example to sustain the potency and uniqueness of certain distinctive notions in Chinese philosophy, rather than assimilate them according to Western terminologies. However, some indiscriminate superimpositions of categories and paradigms in Western philosophy have already reduced the amplitude and distinctiveness of several concepts in Chinese thought. There is a need to handle these concepts carefully,

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<sup>10</sup> According to the Song Dynasty scholar Zhou Dunyi, Xuan Zang's *wu bufan* recommends that Sanskrit terms should only be transliterated, rather than translated, in the following five situations: the terms are arcane, such as in incantations; they have multiple meanings; there are no equivalent terms in Chinese; traditionally these terms have been transliterated and not translated; and if translation might obscure a profound concept. [Zhou Dunyi, *Fanyi Minyi Xu* (*Preface to the Explanation of Buddhist Terms*) (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1984), 54.1055].

including attending to translation and transliteration issues so as not to erroneously circumscribe them. Careful consideration of these issues will enhance the contribution of Chinese philosophy to contemporary philosophical debates.

### **Future Developments in Chinese Philosophy**

In my view, scholars of Chinese philosophy should continue the serious and systematic study of Western philosophy, paying special attention to its new trends. In particular, these new developments reflect concerns about globalization and its implications for human understanding, advances in science and technology and their impact on the environment, moral development, and conceptions of human well-being, to name a few. Here, I make a suggestion for future research.

I draw upon the history of the adaptation and synthesis of Buddhism into Chinese culture to illustrate how we might approach the engagement of Chinese and Western philosophies. During the Sui and Tang Dynasties (from the sixth to the eighth centuries), several sinicized Buddhist schools emerged in China. These schools developed the doctrines of Indian Buddhism by integrating within it Confucian and Daoist ideas.

In engaging Chinese and Western philosophies, one important methodological approach is to employ relevant themes and concepts in Chinese thought to explicate and embellish ideas in Western philosophy. This kind of study not only broadens the scope of Western philosophy, but also makes new contributions to the discipline of philosophy. We are now aware that this is an emergent approach as, for instance, in the theses of scholars who discuss Chinese hermeneutics, Chinese phenomenology, Chinese semiotics, and the like. In this light, the phrase "Chinese philosophy" should apply not only to "the philosophy of the Chinese," but also to philosophy that influences contemporary debates in a distinctive way.

This method is compatible with the kind of constructive strategy used by a number of Chinese scholars in the 1930s and 1940s, which I had referred to earlier. Scholars including Xiong Shili and Feng Youlan constructed the early Chinese philosophical traditions in resonance with Western philosophical themes and concepts to create a modern Chinese philosophy. Indeed, scholars now may even extend and continue the work of Xiong Shili and Feng Youlan, just as they

continue the traditions of Confucius, Mencius, Zhu Xi, and Wang Yangming in their engagement with Western philosophy. In brief, scholars in the field of Chinese philosophy should both take up the standpoint of its proper tradition and effectively absorb and adapt new ideas in contemporary Western philosophy. In contemporary Chinese-Western cultural exchange we should, in our dialogues, place these philosophies on equal footing. This will allow philosophical discussions to achieve significant developments in the twenty-first century. Active engagement in these discussions will enhance the development of philosophy, Chinese and Western, in an increasingly globalized world.

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### Chinese Glossary

banruo 般若 *Lun Yu* 《论语》  
 benti lun 本体论 niepan 涅槃  
 dao 道 qi 气  
*Ershi Shiji Xifang Zhexue Dongjian renshi lun* 认识论  
*Fanyi Minyi Xu* 身心内外合一  
 Feng Youlan 冯友兰 shu xiang 殊相  
 gong xiang 共相 sibian 思辨  
*Guanzi* 《管子》 taiji 太极  
 Hu Shi 胡适 wanwu yiben 万物一本  
 hu zhu ti xing 互主体性 weishi 唯识  
 Huang Zunxian 黄遵宪 tian 天  
 Huo qi zhi qi 活气之气 tiren 体认  
 jing lun 境论 wu 无  
 jing qi 精气 wu bufan 五不翻  
 jingshen jingjie 精神境界 Wumen Huikai 无门慧开  
 jing xue 经学 *Xian Qin Mingxue Shi* 《先秦名学史》  
 Jin Yuelin 金岳霖 *Lao Zi* 《老子》 “Xiaoyao you” “逍遥游”  
 li 理 xin 心  
 lianglun 量论 xing 性  
 liyifenshu 理一分殊 xinxue 新理学  
 shenxin neiwai heyi 《二十世纪西方哲学东渐史》  
*Shi Shang shu* 《尚书》

shiji 实际 《翻译名義序》  
xin shizai lun 新实在论 zhenji 真际  
*Xin Zhi Yan* 《新知言》 zhexue 哲学  
Xiong Shili 熊十力 *Zhuang Zi* 《庄子》  
Xuan Zhuang 玄奘 *Zhongguo Zhexue Shi*  
Yan Fu 严复 《中国哲学史》  
*Yi Jing* 《易经》 *Zhongguo Zhexue Shi Dagang*  
yili 义理 《中国哲学史大纲》  
yiqi hua sanqing 一气化三清 Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐  
you 有 zi xue 子学  
Zhang Dongsun 张东荪



## On the Clash and Coexistence of Human Civilizations

### “The Clash of Civilizations” and the “New Empire” Theory

In 1993, an essay entitled “Clash of Civilizations?” was published in the summer issue of *Foreign Affairs*, U. S. A., by Samuel Huntington. In 1994, I criticized the American Hegemonism represented by Huntington in an essay titled “On Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations?,” published in *Philosophical Studies*<sup>1</sup>. Between the publications of these two essays, Huntington’s theory was widely discussed and criticized in all aspects by many scholars at home and abroad. To respond to these challenges as well as to amplify and revise his own theory, Huntington published his chef d’oeuvre, *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order*, in 1996, which had marked some changes in his arguments. For example, in the Foreword to the Chinese translation, he writes: “The global politics, for the first time in human history, has become multipolar and multicultural.”<sup>2</sup> In the section “The Commonalities of Civilization,” he points out:

Some Americans have promoted multiculturalism at home; some have promoted universalism abroad; and some have done both. Multiculturalism at home threatens the United States and the West; universalism abroad threatens the West and the world. Both deny the uniqueness of Western culture. The global mono-culturalists want to make the world like America. The domestic multiculturalists want to make America like the world. A multicultural America is impossible because a non-Western America is not American. A multicultural world is unavoidable because global empire is impossible. The preservation of the United States and the West requires the renewal of Western identity. The security of the world requires acceptance of global multi-culturality.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 《评亨廷顿(文明的冲突?)》，载《哲学研究》，1994年第3期。

<sup>2</sup> 《中文版序言》，亨廷顿：《文明的冲突与世界秩序的重建》，周琪，刘绯，张立平，王圆译，新华出版社，1999年。

<sup>3</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, 1996), p. 318.

Although there are still some arguable points in the above-quoted paragraph, the opinion that “the security of the world requires acceptance of global multiculturalism” is undoubtedly prudent enough. Why did this change occur in Huntington’s point of view? It was because he had felt the global challenges and threats endangering the Western (or American *de facto*) hegemony, and the domestic problems of racism and the like, that he proposed the “remaking of a world Order.” In the section, “Renewal of the West?” Huntington claims:

The West obviously differs from all other civilizations that have ever existed in that it has had an overwhelming impact on all other civilizations that have existed since 1500. It also inaugurated the process of modernization and industrialization that have become worldwide, and as a result societies in all other civilizations have been attempting to catch up with the West in wealth and modernity. Do these characters of the West, however, mean that its evolution and dynamics as a civilization are fundamentally different from the patterns that have prevailed in all other civilizations? The evidence of history and the judgments of the scholars of the comparative history of civilizations suggest otherwise. The development of the West to date has not deviated significantly from the evolutionary patterns common to civilizations throughout history. The Islamic Resurgence and the economic dynamism of Asia demonstrate that other civilizations are alive and well and at least potentially threatening to the West. A major war involving the West and the core states of other civilizations is not inevitable, but it could happen. Alternatively the gradual and irregular decline of the West which started in the early twentieth century could continue for decades and perhaps centuries to come. Or the West could go through a period of revival, reverse its declining influence in world affairs, and reconfirm its

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position as the leader whom other civilizations follow and imitate.<sup>4</sup>

We conclude from the above that, on the one hand, Huntington has felt “the gradual and irregular decline” of Western leadership in the world and the potential threat to the West coming from those countries undergoing or having undergone the process of modernization and industrialization by imitating the West. Surely this is a reality unacceptable for him and some Other Western scholars, especially for certain political leaders (George W. Bush, the current American president, for instance), involved with what to them is an unsolvable puzzle: Why do those resurgent Islamic movements or rising Asian countries that have accepted the Western way of modernization and industrialization become a threat to the West instead? According to their reasoning, these countries should and could only play the role of Western adherents or loyal subjects in all spheres, especially in politics and culture. Nevertheless, the reality contradicts their expectations, resulting consequently in an anxiety in the Western mind. On the other hand, the deep-seated dream Huntington really cherishes is the “renewal of the West,” to “reconfirm its position as the leader whom other civilizations follow and imitate.” The performance of the Bush administration after the “911” incident can be regarded from this standpoint as an attempt to reconfirm American hegemonic leadership over other civilizations.

After Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, another book, *Empire: A Global Political Order*, coauthored by Antonio Negri (Italy) and Michael Hardt (U.S.A.), was published in 2000. The basic judgment of this work on the current global situation is as follows: “Empire is materializing before our very eyes;” it presents its rule as a regime with no territorial or temporal boundaries; “this new global form of sovereignty is what we call Empire,” “the political subject that effectively regulates these global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world.”<sup>5</sup> Embracing this doctrine, many scholars in the United States propagate “New Empire” theories. For example, John J. Mearsheimer, professor of politics in the University of Chicago, asserted in his *Tragedy of Great*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 302.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Handt and Antonlo Negri, *Empire*, “Preface” (Harvard University Press, 2000).

*Power Politics* (New York, 2002) that as every state seeks the maximization of its share of world power, no balancing structure could exist, and the best defense is to offend (which provides a theoretical basis for the “preemptive strike” theory advocated by President Bush). Another “post-modern state” theorist is Robert Cooper, Foreign Office adviser of British prime minister Tony Blair, who divides all states into three types: first, post-modern states, e.g. North American and European countries and Japan; second, modern states, i.e. nation-states like China, India, Brazil, and Pakistan; and third, pre-modern states, such as African and Middle East countries and Afghanistan. Cooper put forward and reiterated the concept of “New Imperialism,” which means that post-modern states should use their national power (including military power) to control modern states, as well as to contain barbaric acts in pre-modern states such as mass slaughter.<sup>6</sup> More aggressive still, the American neoconservative in the 21st century have advocated three core creeds: the extreme adoration of military force; the claim of an American “benign hegemony;” the emphasis on the exportation of American democracy and values. In accordance with this tone, President George W. Bush delivered his speech at the commencement of West Point on 1 June 2002, which could be summarized in the following basic principles. First, America should maintain its power of “preemptive strike.” Second, American values are universal. Third, the United States should maintain an unchallengeable military force.<sup>7</sup> This “New Empire” doctrine would inevitably arouse “clashes” among the states and nations of other civilizations, and its central rhetoric has already been echoed by Huntington’s theory of the “clash of civilizations.” In “Clash of Civilizations?” Huntington makes two basic proposals. His first proposal is to “limit the expansion of the military strength in Islamic and Confucian states;” to “maintain the military superiority of

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<sup>6</sup> C.f. 佩里·安德森 (Perry Anderson) 等, 《三种新的全球化国际关系理论》 (“Three Recent Theories On International Relationships in Globalization Era”), 《读书》2002年第10期。

<sup>7</sup> C.f. 陈光兴: 《(帝国)与去帝国化问题》 (“Empire and the problem of de-empirization”), 《读书》, 2002年7期; 崔之元: 《布什原则, 西方人文传统, 新保守主义》 (“Principles, Bush, Western humanity tradition and Neoconservatism”), 《读书》, 2003年。《布莱尔的自由帝国主义理论奏效吗?》 (“Would Blair’s Liberal Imperialism work?”), originally Tony Blair’s speech: “The best defense of our security lies in the spread of our values” (Sunday Telegraph, May 30, 2004).

the West in East and SouthWest Asia" to "exploit the differences and conflicts among Islamic and Confucian states." The second proposal is to "strengthen international institutions that reflect and legitimate Western interests and values and to promote the involvement of non-Western states in those institutions."<sup>8</sup> From these proposals we conclude that because of the "clash of civilizations" kindled by the West, headed by the United States, on cultural differences (values, for example), the world has become pandemonium with an increasing regional wars.

Should civilizations survive only in "clashes" in order for the universal "New Empire" doctrine to materialize? Why could they not "coexist" in peace?

#### **"Coexistence of Civilizations" and the New Axial Age**

Human history has recorded enough cases of clashes caused by cultural (or religious) differences among states, nations, or regions. Nevertheless, in view of the general tendency of history, we find that the development of civilizations among different states, nations, and regions should be dominated by mutual absorption and convergence. In my opinion most conflicts among these states, nations, and regions were not provoked by cultural differences. As my knowledge of Western culture (both civilization and culture are concerned with a comprehensive lifestyle of a nation, civilization can thus be seen as a magnified culture) is limited, I am not authoritative enough to speak on this issue. Here I would like to quote Bertrand Russell to justify a proposition that the present Western civilization is formed by absorbing and syncretizing several cultural elements. In 1922, after Russell's visit to China, he wrote the following in an essay titled, "Chinese and Western Civilization Contrasted:"

Contacts between different civilizations have often in the past proved to be landmarks in human progress. Greece learnt from Egypt, Rome from Greece, the Arabs from the Roman Empire, medieval Europe from the Arabs, and Renaissance Europe from the Byzantines.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "Clash of Civilizations?" p. 49, in *Foreign Affairs* (Summer, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Bertrand Russell. "Chinese and Western Civilization Contrasted," in *The Problem of China* (London, 1922).

Although it might be arguable whether Russell was accurate enough on each of his points, two, however, are undoubtedly correct. The first of these two points is that contacts between different cultures are important dynamics for the progress of human civilizations. The second point is that European culture today has absorbed many elements from other national cultures, including some from the Arabian. Another observation based on the progress of Chinese culture would be even more forceful to prove that clashes of civilizations are always temporal, whereas mutual absorption and convergence are far more important.

In the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, different local cultures existed in China, including the Central Area (Henan) culture, Qi Lu (Shandong) culture, Qinling (Shannxi) culture, Jingchu (Southern) culture, Wu Yue (Southeast) culture, and Ba Shu (SouthWest) culture. All of them were amalgamated later into a generally unified Chinese (Huaxia) culture. The possibility of the coexistence of two cultures would be especially illuminated by the importation of Indian Buddhism in the first century A. D. Buddhism spread in China peacefully; its cultural differences with indigenous Confucianism or Taoism had never brought their disciples into war. The Chinese imperial courts suppressed Buddhism only on three occasions, which were caused without exception by political or economic factors. Generally speaking, Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist cultures coexist well in China. A famous French sinologist (Kristofer Schipper) once asked me: "Why is China multicultural?" After some thought I gave him two probable reasons. First, from the ideological point of view, the Chinese always advocate "harmony in diversity" (和而不同), that is, the harmonious coexistence of diverse cultures. Secondly, in terms of political systems, the Chinese emperor was the highest authority dominating the fates of religious, philosophical, and ethical cultures in China. For the sake of social stability, the emperor did not want to see conflicts or wars provoked by cultural differences. Thus he usually sponsored the "debate of three schools," summoning the representatives of Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist scholars to debate in the imperial court, arbitrating their respective statuses according to the degree of success in debate, instead of allowing conflicts or even wars.

From the abovementioned arguments and historical experiences, I conclude that Huntington's theory of the "clash of civilizations" is, at

any rate, ex parte, serving merely American international politics. He says as follows:

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in the new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.<sup>10</sup>

Huntington's observation is insightful in certain cases, such as on the Palestinian-Israel conflict in the Middle East, Kosovo conflict, or even the Iraqi War, where some cultural (religious and ethical) elements catalyzed the outbursts of wars. Yet upon closer analysis, the basic causes of wars or conflicts are not cultural, but political and economic. The Palestinian-Israel conflict was a contest for regional hegemony, the Iraqi War mainly for oil, and the Kosovo conflict for the strategies of power politics. But cultural differences have not provoked conflicts between many nations, such as in Sino-Indian, Sino-Russian, or even Sino-European relations. In fact, there have been no serious conflicts or wars (for whatever reason) between them, especially in the last decade. Thus the "clash of civilizations" theory hardly fits the present global situation, nor will it be the future perspective of mankind. Instead, the "coexistence of civilizations" should be the only outlet for human society, and a future goal we should strive for.

Perhaps a clearer picture of our age may help to illuminate this problem. In my opinion, we find ourselves in a New Axial Age.

The idea of an Axial Age was proposed by German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969). According to his theory, around 500 B.C., great thinkers appeared almost simultaneously in Ancient Greece, Israel, India, and China, and they contributed their original ideas to the solution of the problems which are of great concern to humankind. Distinctive cultural traditions were then formed respectively by

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<sup>10</sup> *Clash of civilizations*, p. 22, op. cit

Socrates and Plato in Ancient Greece, Lao Zi and Confucius in China, Sakyamuni in India, and Jewish prophets in Israel, which, after more than two thousand years of progress, have become the principle part of human intellectual wealth. These regional cultural traditions were independent in their origins and developments, without mutual influence. "Until today mankind has lived by what happened during the Axial Period, by what was thought and created during that period. In each new upward flight it returns in recollection to this period and is fired anew by it. Even since then it has been the case that recollections and reawakening of the potentialities of the Axial Period—renaissances—afford a spiritual impetus."<sup>11</sup> For example, the Europeans in Renaissance had traced the origin of their culture back to Ancient Greece, which had rekindled the European civilization and left its mark in world history. Similarly, the Song and Ming Neo-Confucian thinkers in China, stimulated by the impacts of Indian Buddhism, rediscovered Confucius and Mencius of the pre-Qin Period, and elevated the indigenous Chinese philosophy to a new height. In a certain sense, the current development of world multiculturalism might become a new leap forward on the basis of the Axial Age 2000 years ago. Have the contemporary human cultures created, or will they create, a New Axial Age? Judging from certain evidences, we may well draw such a conclusion.

First of all, since World War II, with the gradual collapse of colonialism, the once colonized and oppressed nations have taken upon themselves the urgent task of reaffirming their independent identities by all means, most importantly by their unique cultures (such as languages, religions and social values). We know that Malaysia after World War II insisted on using Malay as their national tongue to emphasize the nation's unification; and after the establishment of Israel, the Israelis decided to revive Hebrew as a vernacular, although for a long period of time in the past, Hebrew had only been used in religious ceremonies. "The central elements of any culture or civilization are language and religion."<sup>12</sup> Some political leaders and scholars in Eastern countries also put forward the "Asian values" centered on community to distinguish themselves from the Western "universal values" centered on the individual; and so on and

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<sup>11</sup> Karl Jaspers. *The Origin and Goal of History*. Michael Bullock, trans. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, p. 59, op. cit.

so forth. Even Huntington began to understand that “non-Western civilizations generally are re-affirming the value of their own cultures.”<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, the Axial Age around 500 B.C. was a time of axial civilizational entry into the Iron Age, and of great leaps forward in productivity, which in consequence produced great thinkers. Now we have entered the Information Age, when another great leap forward in human society is just happening. Because of the economic globalization, the integration of science and technology, and the progress of information network, different regions all over the world are tightly connected, and local cultural progress could no longer be independent as they once were in the “Axial Age” two thousand years ago. Instead, they will be developed in the midst of discords, conflicts, and through mutual influences or mutual absorptions. The self-understanding of each culture is undoubtedly limited, as is described in a famous poem of Su Shi (1037-1101):

They know not Lushan Mountain’s real face;  
So long as they continue to stay in her embrace.<sup>14</sup>

This couplet tells us that a different perspective from another cultural system, i.e. from a cultural “other,” might provide us with a more comprehensive view of our own culture. In an essay entitled “Why Is China Necessary for Us Westerners in Studying Philosophy?” Francois Jullien, a French scholar, writes: “We have chosen departure, which means a choice for leaving here, in order to create a space for thinking from a distant perspective. This detour in steady steps distinguishes itself from exoticism. We have made our trip traversing China in this manner in order to better understand Greece, which, though curtailed off from our knowledge by a lapse of time, is something inborn and inherited by us through birthright. For the purpose of enhancing this perspective, we have to cut off this umbilical cord and constitute an exterior viewpoint.”<sup>15</sup> Scholars at home and abroad have gradually accepted his kind of intercultural study in the spirit of intersubjectivity and inter-reference, together

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 20 op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> 苏轼,《题西林壁》:“不识庐山真面目,只缘身在此山中。”

<sup>15</sup> As the translator fails to find the French version of this essay, this translation is based on the Chinese translation,《为什么我们西方人研究哲学不能绕开中国?》, published in《跨文化对话》, 5th issue, p. 146 (上海文化出版社, Jan. 2001).

with its methodology of judging one's own culture from the standpoint of an "other" culture. Why, then, should we understand our culture from another's perspective? It is just because we desire to inherit and develop the cultural tradition of our own. This view undoubtedly poses a serious problem of how to preserve the proper traits of a culture and pass on its lifeline. As we know, economy can be globalized, science and technology can be integrated, but civilizations can never be mono-culturalized. In the history of the progress of human society to date, neither has it been possible nor wise for any culture to reject all external influences; only when the essence of the target culture is sufficiently digested could it be better to absorb foreign cultures to nourish its domestic culture. "When we keep in contacts and exchanges with the Western world," Fei Xiaotong said, "we should make our own treasures part of the world cultural heritage. Indigenization first, globalization second."<sup>16</sup> That is to say, our own cultural roots should be protected when learning from other cultures. Thus, the cultural progress in the 21st century, concerning all human societies, should be both national and universal.

Thirdly, judging from the status quo of human societies and cultures, a new pattern of cultural diversity with a global consciousness has already been formed or is still being formed. Perhaps the 21st century will be dominated by four principle cultural systems, the Euro-American, the East Asian, the South Asian, and the Islamic (Middle Eastern and North African). Each of the four cultures has a long tradition and a population of over a billion. Of course other cultures, such as the Latin American and African, have influenced the future of human society in the 21st century. Nevertheless, at least in the present, the influence of these cultures have been far less than that of the four principle cultures mentioned above. If human society hopes to end the present chaos, it should especially criticize cultural Hegemonism and cultural Tribalism. It should not only face this new cultural Axial Age but also make unremitting efforts to promote the dialogues among states or nations belonging to different cultural traditions in order to coordinate all the cultures into a project of solving the common problems challenging human society. Undoubtedly, the four principle cultures are burdened with a major

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<sup>16</sup> 费孝通,《从反省到文化自觉和交流》,《费孝通文集》第14卷,第395页(群言出版社,1999).

responsibility for the current human society. At present, human society stands on a historic turning point, and every nation or country should seriously reexamine its own culture in the historical perspective. This is especially true for those nations in Euro-American, East Asian, South Asian or Islamic cultural regions, because of the crucial functions they perform in contemporary human civilization. This kind of reexamination is surely quite necessary for the future of human society. The cultural tradition is a reality de facto for every nation or state, especially for those nations and states with a long history and crucial influence on contemporary human society, for it is deeply rooted in the hearts of its people, forming the spiritual prop of this particular nation or state.

Let us return to our own cultural tradition, make it a starting point, and seek in it the source of our power and our spiritual prop, in order to promote the development of our contemporary culture, and to solve the pressing problems that have existed in human society. In this sense, the Euro-American, East Asian, South Asian and Islamic cultures, with their long historical traditions, might help to promote human society in the 21st century to the level of a “New Axial Age” comparable to the Axial Age 2,500 years ago. Different cultural traditions would subsist in this New Axial Age, each with a population too large to be eliminated—even with wars, there would be only little or temporary effects. Thus, in the long run, the coexistence of civilizations is predictable.

### **Can Chinese Culture Contribute to the Coexistence of Civilizations?**

If the Chinese people want to make contributions to the “coexistence of civilizations” in contemporary human society, they must first know their own culture well, which means they must have a cultural self-consciousness. The so-called “cultural self-consciousness” enables people in a certain cultural tradition to give serious consideration to or earnestly reexamine their own culture’s origin, history, characteristics (including both merits and weakness), and potential for progress. It is fair to say that the Chinese nation is on the brink of a national renewal. To achieve this goal, we must on the one hand have some self-knowledge about Chinese culture, properly estimate its place in human civilizations, and try to ascertain the genuine spirit of this ancient culture, in order to present its true

essence to contemporary human society. On the other hand, we must analyze the weak points of our own culture as well, to better absorb other cultures' essences, and to give a Chinese culture a modern reinterpretation, so that it can adapt to the general tendency in the development of modern society. Only in this way may our country become a vanguard in the development of a global culture, and create a brave new world together with other cultures.

Confucianism and Taoism were two principle schools of thinking in traditional Chinese culture, and generally considered to be complementary to each other. Of course, since Indian Buddhism was introduced into China, Buddhism has also played an important role in Chinese society and culture. Now I would like to discuss whether the Confucian and Taoist thinking can provide meaningful resources to the doctrine of the "coexistence of civilizations."

**The Confucian Doctrine of Ren (仁, benevolence, virtue) as a  
Resource of Thinking with a Positive Meaning for the  
"Coexistence of Civilizations."**

"The Way originates in Emotion" (道始于情), as prescribed in "Destiny is the resource of Human nature" (性自命出), is a manuscript text in Guodian Bamboo Slips 《郭店竹简》. "The Way" here means "the Way of Humanity" (人道), i.e. the set of principles in dealing with human (or in other words, social) relationships, which is different from "the Way of Heaven" (天道), i.e. the laws of nature or of the universe. Human relationships are established on the basis of emotion, which is the starting point of the Confucian doctrine of Ren. A disciple named Fan Chi once asked Confucius: "What is Ren?" Confucius's answer was: "To love people." Where is the origin of this idea—"to love people?" The Doctrine of the Mean quotes a saying of Confucius thus: "Ren is the characteristic element of humanity, and the great exercise of it is in loving relatives."<sup>17</sup> The spirit of Benevolence and Love (仁爱) is rooted in human nature, and to love one's relative is the most basic exercise of it. But the spirit of Ren goes far beyond this level. To quote Guodian Bamboo Slips: "To love and love deep, that is love; but to enlarge the love for one's father to the love for human being, that is Ren."<sup>18</sup> "The enlargement of filial piety is

<sup>17</sup> 《中庸》：“仁者，人也，亲亲为大。” C.f. The Doctrine of the Mean, Chapter 20.

<sup>18</sup> 《郭店竹简·唐虞之道》：“孝之放，爱天下之民。”

to love all the people below Heaven.”<sup>19</sup> From these sayings we observe that the Confucian Doctrine of Ren demands to enlarge “the love for relatives” to “the benevolence on people,” i.e. to “enlarge one’s self-concern to the concern for others” (推己及人), to “treat with reverence the elders in your own family, so that the elders in the families of others shall be similarly treated; treat with the kindness due to youth the young in your own family, so that the young in the families of others shall be similarly treated”<sup>20</sup>—that is Ren. It is not easy to practice the doctrine of “enlarging one’s self-concern to the concern for others,” which requires the “practice of Ren” to be rooted in “the Way of Loyalty and Forgiveness” (忠恕之道), i.e. “Never do to others as you do not wish done on yourself,<sup>21</sup> wishing to be established himself, he seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others.”<sup>22</sup> (“Loyalty is the complete devotion of oneself; Forgiveness is the deduction of one’s self-concern.” 朱熹,《四书集注》).

If Ren is to be extended to the whole society, it would be as what Confucius once said: “To subdue one’s self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue. If a junzi (君子: gentleman, nobleman) can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will return to Ren (after his example). Is the practice of Ren from a man himself, or is it from others?”<sup>23</sup> “To subdue one’s self” and “to return to propriety” are usually interpreted as two parallel teachings, but I do not consider this the best explanation of this doctrine. “To subdue one’s self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue” actually means the behavior of “returning to propriety” based on the “subduing of one’s self” can be regarded as Ren. Fei Xiaotong had his own interpretation about this doctrine: “Only after one has subdued one’s self could one return to propriety. The return to propriety is prerequisite for one to enter the society and become a social man. Perhaps it is just on this point Western and Eastern civilizations have parted, that is, whether

<sup>19</sup> 《郭店竹简·五行》：“亲而笃之，爱也。爱父，其攸爱人，仁也。”

<sup>20</sup> 《孟子·梁惠王上》：“老吾老以及人之老，幼吾幼以及人之幼。” C.f. Mencius, Chapter 2.

<sup>21</sup> 《论语·颜渊》：“己所不欲，勿施于人。” C.f. The Analects, Chapter 12.

<sup>22</sup> 《论语·雍也》：“己欲立而立人，己欲达而达人。” C.f. The Analects, Chapter 6.

<sup>23</sup> 《论语·颜渊》：“克己复礼曰仁...” C.f. The Analects, Chapter 12.

to expand or to subdue one's self."<sup>24</sup> I think Fei's remark makes a lot of sense. Zhu Xi also had an exegesis on this doctrine. "To subdue means to conquer," he said, "and the self means one's personal desires. To return means to restore and the propriety means the laws and patterns of the Principle of Heaven." According to this exegesis, one should subdue one's personal desires to abide by proprieties and social criteria. Ren is one's natural virtues ("Love is born in nature."<sup>25</sup>); and propriety is exterior conventions that rule one's behavior, the function of which is to adjust social relationships so that people could live in harmony, as is summed up in one of Confucius's old saying: "The most valuable function of propriety is harmony."<sup>26</sup> Only if one abides by proprieties and social criteria willingly, i.e., by an innate will to love people, can one fulfill the demands of Ren. Thus Confucius asked: "Is the practice of Ren from a man himself, or is it from others?" He made a distinction between Ren and propriety: "If a man be without Ren, what has he to do with the rites of propriety? If a man be without Ren, what has he to do with music?"<sup>27</sup> He who performs the rites or music without a heart of Benevolence and Love is a hypocrite, and serves a purpose of cheating. It is in this sense that Confucius thought, if people would pursue Ren self-consciously and practice what a heart of Benevolence and Love demands according to the proprieties in everyday life, then harmony and peace would be achieved in a society. "If a junzi can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will return to Ren." In my opinion, this teaching of Confucius is not totally meaningless for the political leaders of a state or the ruling class in developed countries (United States in particular). "The politics of Ren" (仁政), or "the Way of a virtuous emperor" (王道) instead of "the Way of hegemony" (霸道), is indispensable to "rule the state" (治国) and to "harmonize all under Heaven" (平天下). If "the politics of Ren" or "the Way of a virtuous emperor" is practiced, different cultures would be able to coexist and develop in peace; while "the Way of hegemony" will bring forth the "clash of civilizations," resulting in mono-culturalism and

<sup>24</sup> 费孝通:《文化论中人与自然关系的再认识》,见《北京大学中国社会与发展中心,北京大学社会学系,北京大学社会学人类学研究所ISA工作论文》,2002年2月。

<sup>25</sup> 《郭店竹简·语丛二》:“爱生于性。”

<sup>26</sup> 《论语·学而》:“礼之用,和为贵。” C.f. The Analects, Chapter 1.

<sup>27</sup> 《论语·八佾》:“人而不仁如礼何?人而不仁如乐何?” C.f. The Analects, Chapter 3.

cultural Hegemonism. If Confucian doctrine of Ren is applied to the regulating of intercultural relationships, clash or war of civilizations will be avoided, and the coexistence of civilizations, achieved.

Of course, even the Confucian doctrine of Ren is no miracle drug to solve all the problems about the existence of civilizations in contemporary society. Nevertheless, as a set of moral self-regulations based on Benevolence and Love, it would undoubtedly be of some practical significance to harmonize the coexistence of civilizations if practiced as a principle to regulate intercultural and cultural relationships.

It is not easy to make different cultures get along in harmony and thus to make states and nations in different cultural traditions coexist in peace.

Probably the Confucian doctrine of “Harmony in Diversity” (和而不同)<sup>28</sup> could provide us with an illuminating resource of thinking. According to Confucius, “The virtuous (junzi) get on in harmony without agreeing to each other; the base (xiaoren,) agree with others without harmony.”<sup>29</sup> Junzi, as intellectuals with moral discipline practicing the Way of Loyalty and Forgiveness, should try to get on with others in harmony in spite of their different opinions; but those with no morality or discipline always force others to accept their opinions, thus could not maintain a harmonious relationship with others. If this doctrine of “Harmony in Diversity” could be applied as a principle in dealing with intercultural and cultural relationships, it can play a very positive role in resolving the conflicts among states or nations. It would be especially true in dealing with those discords and conflicts provoked by cultural differences (e.g. the differences in religious beliefs or social values) among states or nations, if we practice the teaching of “Harmony in Diversity” as principle to resolve these conflicts.

“Harmony” and “Sameness” are generally regarded as two different concepts in traditional Chinese thinking. There was even “a

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<sup>28</sup> In this context, I translate this saying as “Harmony in Diversity,” instead of “Unity in Diversity”--the latter is another popular translation of this term. Tong (同) means Agreement when applied on human relationships, or Sameness/Homogeneity on material objects. Thus the translator would use different translations according to the contexts, and translate the “不同” as diversity, disagreement, or heterogeneity, etc. Translator’s note.

<sup>29</sup> 《论语·子路》：“君子和而不同，小人同而不和。” C.f. The Analects, Chapter 12.

debate on the differences between Harmony and Sameness" in China's history. As a passage in *Zuo Zhuan* relates, once the Duke of Qi asked Yan Zi. "Is there only Ju who can get along with me in harmony?" The reply of Yan Zi was. "Ju merely expresses the same opinion with Your Highness,—how can it be called harmony?...Is there any difference between Harmony and Sameness?" asked the Duke. "They are quite different," replied Yan Zi.

Harmony is like well-cooked dish, you must concoct fish and meat with water, fire, vinegar, sauce, salt and plum, and then cook the dish with firewood. The cook harmonizes these flavors to make it moderate. If it is too light, then salt should be added; if too salty, then water. When Junzi dines with such a dish, his heart would be pacified. This is analogous to the relationship between the King and his magistrates. But Ju is different from it. When Your Highness say that something is right, he agrees; when Your Highness say the opposite, he agrees as well. It is as if to moderate water with water,—who could tolerate to eat such a dish? Or as if a zither always plays the same tune,—who could tolerate to enjoy such music? This is why Sameness differs from Harmony. 《左传·昭公二十年》

Another saying of Shibo (史伯) was recorded as follows:

In fact, only Harmony can activate the growth of lives, and Sameness would stop it on the contrary. Harmony is to moderate something with heterogeneous things—only in this way, the lives would flourish and find their belongings. If something is supplemented by homogeneous things, it can only be abandoned after its exhaustion. Thus the ancient virtuous emperors had concocted Earth with Metal, Wood, Water and Fire<sup>30</sup>, to transform it into miscellaneous lives.<sup>31</sup> 《国语·郑语》

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<sup>30</sup> In ancient Chinese philosophy, Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth are Five Processes (五行), i.e. five basic elements, to make up the world. Translator's note.

<sup>31</sup> 《国语·郑语》：“(史伯曰): 夫和实生物, 同则不继. 以他平他谓之和, 故能丰长而物归之; 若以同裨同, 尽乃弃之. 故先王以土, 与金, 木, 水, 火杂, 以成百物.”

From the above quotations, we understand that Harmony and Sameness are totally different concepts. Only under the presupposition of difference and correlation could things “be moderated with heterogeneity,” and the diverse things progress together in harmony with one another. “To supplement something with homogeneity” is to aggregate the sameness, which would only suffocate the lives. The supreme ideal of traditional Chinese culture is that “miscellaneous lives are nourished together without harming each other; miscellaneous ways are practiced together without counteracting each other.”<sup>32</sup> The “miscellaneous lives” and “miscellaneous ways” refer to Diversity; and the “without harming each other” and “without counteracting each other” refer to Harmony. This doctrine would provide us with inexhaustible resources of thinking for the coexistence of diverse cultures.

Now in Western countries, people of insight have already admitted the possibility of coexistence of civilizations, that the clash or war provoked by mere cultural differences should be avoided. They believe that different nations and states should be able to achieve common understanding through cultural exchanges, dialogues, and discussions. This would be a process moving from “Diversity” to mutual understanding. This mutual understanding is neither to extinct nor to assimilate the individual cultures, but to find a cross point in two different cultures and to use it as the basis to promote the progress of both cultures,—such is the function of “Harmony.” It is just because of the differences of diverse cultures that human civilizations have become so colorful, and that the complementary and interactive setup is formed gradually in the ever-flowing river of human history. Cultural differences might lead to clashes or even wars, but not all differences are destined to cause clashes or wars. Especially in an era when science and technology are rapidly developing, a massive war, if it really happens, would easily destroy humankind itself. Thus we must endeavor to maintain a harmonious coexistence through intercultural dialogues. Many scholars at home and abroad have recognized the importance of mutual understanding achieved through dialogues between different cultures. Habermas, for instance, begins to emphasize the concepts of justice and solidarity. In

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<sup>32</sup> 《中庸》：“万物并育而不相害，道并行而不相悖。” C.f. The Doctrine of the Mean, Chapter 30.

my opinion, they are significant principles in dealing with international cultural relationships. Habermas' "Principle of Justice" can be understood as follows: every national culture has a right to protect its independence and autonomy and to develop freely according to the will of its people. His "Principle of Solidarity," on the other hand, can be interpreted as an obligation to sympathize, understand and respect other national "cultures. By uninterrupted dialogues and communication between different national cultures, there will be a time, sooner or later, when a positive cycle of interactions can be formed.<sup>33</sup> Another advocator of this principle is Gadamer, the German philosopher who passed away only recently. He proposed that "understanding" should be extended to the level of "universal dialogue." Because of this extension, the relationship between subject and object (as cognitive or grammatical concepts) is possible to be transformed from inequality to equality; in other words, only when the dialogues are conducted on equal basis, can there be any meaningful dialogue and fruitful result. Gadamer's consciousness of equality between subject and object and his theory of "cultural dialogue" are important ideas urgently needed in our time,<sup>34</sup> illuminating enough for us to understand properly and thoroughly the cultural or national relationships between China and other nations. Nevertheless, whether it is Habermas' principles of justice and solidarity or Gadamer's theory of universal dialogue, their common presupposition should be the principle of "Diversity in Harmony," since only when nations and states in different cultural traditions coexist in harmony through dialogues, can they acquire equal rights and obligations and only then the "universal dialogue" between them may become meaningful and fruitful. Thus, the Confucian principle of "Harmony in Diversity" based on the belief that "harmony is the most valuable"<sup>35</sup> should be practiced as one of the basic principles in dealing with intercultural relationships. This principle, if adopted by all states and nations, would become a positive factor not only in eliminating the discords, conflicts and even

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<sup>33</sup> 乐黛云,《文化相对主义与比较文学》,《跨文化之桥》(北京大学出版社,2002年).

<sup>34</sup> 潘德荣,《迦达默尔的哲学遗产》,香港《21世纪》,2002年4月号;于奇智,《哲人的人文化成》,香港《21世纪》,2002年8月号.

<sup>35</sup> 《论语·学而》:"和为贵." C.f. The Analects, Chapter 1. (Also: note 23). Translator's note.

wars, but also as a dynamics in promoting the development of all states and nations through exchange and communication. It is just in this sense that Bertrand Russell said: "Contacts between different civilizations have often in the past proved to be landmarks in human progress."<sup>36</sup> The contemporary human society needs different cultures to develop their traditional characters through mutual absorption and convergence, in order to bring about the coexistence of civilizations on a new basis.

**The Taoist Doctrine of the Way (tao) Can Provide Significant Resources of Thinking to Prevent "the Clash of Civilizations."**

If Confucius is a "man of virtue" (仁者), then Lao Zi is a "man of wisdom" (智者). The Way is the fundamental concept in Lao Zi's *Tao Te Ching*, while "the spontaneity and doing-nothing" (自然无为: to obey natural laws without offences) are the basic features of the Way. "The spontaneity and doing-nothing are the Way of Heaven," said Wang Chong in his *Dan Heng*.<sup>37</sup> All kinds of conflicts in contemporary human society are undoubtedly caused by the greedy desires for power and wealth. Those great powers, in their pursuit of selfish gains and expansion of power, exploit the resources of underdeveloped countries and practice power politics, which is the fundamental cause of global chaos. Lao Zi's doctrine of "spontaneity and doing-nothing" could be interpreted as to do nothing against people's will, which will render the society and the world peacefulness. Lao Zi once quoted the saying of an ancient sage: "As I do nothing, the people will reform by themselves; since I like quiet, they will keep order by themselves; when I seek no trouble, the people will prosper by themselves; when I have no desire, they will live in austerity by themselves."<sup>38</sup> It means: the ruler with political powers should neither interfere with his people (doing-nothing), nor disturb their everyday life (liking quiet), nor act against their will (seeking no trouble), nor exploit them insatiably (having no desire); thus, the people will reform by themselves, keep order by themselves, prosper by themselves, and live in austerity by themselves. If we give a modern interpretation of this teaching and apply it to the administration of contemporary society, it will not only

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<sup>36</sup> Op, cit.

<sup>37</sup> 王充,《论衡·初稟》.

<sup>38</sup> 《道德经》第 57 章,“我无为而民自化,我好静而民自正,我无事而民自富,我无欲而民自朴.” C.f. *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 57.

bring peace to a country but also function significantly in eliminating the clash of civilizations. We can interpret the above-quoted teaching as follows: in international politics, the more a country interferes with the affairs of other countries, the more chaotic the world will become; the more those great powers threaten others with military force, the more turbulent and disorderly the world will become; the more those great powers exploit the underdeveloped countries under the pretext of international aids, the poorer those underdeveloped countries will become; the more those developed countries desire and fight for the world dominance of wealth and power, the more immoral and terrorized the world will become. Therefore, in my opinion, the doctrine of “doing-nothing” may be an effective prescription for the leaders of the so-called “new empire.” If they would accept this prescription, the world will enjoy peace. Nevertheless, the “new empire” always bullies other states and nations by means of “willful acts” (有为), such as interference, exploitation or military threat, which are undoubtedly determined by its greedy nature as an empire. According to Lao Zi, “No calamity is worse than to be discontented. Nor is there a sin more dreadful than coveting. He who knows how to be content, truly he will always be so.”<sup>39</sup> Is not the “new empire” discontented and coveting? Lao Zi said again: “Is not the Way of Heaven much like a bow bent? The upper part has been disturbed, pressed down; the lower part is raised up from its place; the slack is taken up; the slender width is broader drawn. For thus the Way of Heaven cuts people down when they have had too much, and fills the bowls of those who are in want. But the way of man will not work like this: the people who have not enough are spoiled, for tribute to the rich and the surfeited.”<sup>40</sup> Why is the human society in this world today in a state of turbulence and disorder? Is not it totally caused by human beings themselves, especially those leaders of the “new empire” acting against the “Way of Heaven” and losing the “hearts of men,” practicing a policy of spoiling those who have not enough, in order to pay tribute to the rich and the surfeited? Is not it the root of discords,

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<sup>39</sup> 《道德经》第46章：“祸莫大于不知足，咎莫大于欲得，知足之足，常足矣。” C. f. Tao Te Ching, Chapter 46.

<sup>40</sup> 《道德经》第77章：“天之道，其犹张弓欤？高者抑之，下者举之；有余者损之，不足者补之。”

天之道，损有余而补不足，人道则不然，损不足以奉有余。” C.f. TaoTe Ching, Chapter 77.

conflicts and wars in contemporary world? Thus we find that the “clash of civilizations” theory is closely related to the theory of “new empire” hidden behind its back.

Lao Zi strongly opposed wars for the sake of preserving peace in the world. In Chapter 31, *Tao Te Ching*, he said: “Weapons at best are tools of bad omen, loathed by all. Thus those of the Way avoid them.”<sup>41</sup> In wars there are always people killed, production interrupted and social orders broken, thus Lao Zi thinks that war is evil, because people hate it, and virtuous statesmen would not push the country into war to solve their problems. Again Lao Zi said: “To those who would help the ruler of men by means of the Way: let him not with his militant might try to conquer the world; this tactic will be revenged by Heaven. For where armies have marched, there do briars spring up; where great hosts are impressed, years of hunger and evil ensue.”<sup>42</sup> This is generally true in the history of all nations. In China, after every major war, the population would be reduced dramatically, farmland dissented, production interrupted, and robbers and thieves infesting. The two world wars both ended in this way, and the current war in the Middle East is no exception. Whenever the leaders of the “new empire” provokes a war anywhere, they will surely be bogged down there, since the people in the conquered countries will not surrender, they will fight without the fear of death, as Lao Zi said: “The people do not fear at all to die; what’s gained therefore by threatening them with death?”<sup>43</sup> And: “As for those who delight to do murder, it is certain they can never get from the world what they sought.”<sup>44</sup> We see from history that those who had initiated wars, though momentary successes they might get, would finally fail and be dishonored. Hitler was such an example, and Japanese Militarism, another. As a “man of wisdom,” Lao Zi could observe the latent converse side with his wisdom, as he said: “On bad fortune the good fortune always leans; in good fortune the bad fortune always hides.

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<sup>41</sup> 《道德经》第 31 章：“夫兵者，不祥之器，物或恶之，故有道者不处。” C.f. *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 31.

<sup>42</sup> 《道德经》第 30 章：“以道佐入主者，不以兵强天下，其事好还师之所在，荆棘生焉，大军之后，必有凶年。” C.f. *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 30.

<sup>43</sup> 《道德经》第 74 章：“民不畏死，奈何以死惧之？” C.f. *Tao Te ching*, Chapter 74.

<sup>44</sup> 《道德经》第 31 章：“夫乐杀人者，则不可得志于天下矣。” Cf. *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 31.

<sup>45</sup>Now people in some countries are suffering, but it would be a necessary precondition prepared for their nation's renewal in future. Take the past hundred years of China's history, for example, it is just after being beaten repeatedly that the Chinese people had finally waken up. Today we may say that the Chinese nation is on the eve of a great renewal. In my opinion, leaders of every country, especially those of the "new empire," should learn some wise teachings from the *Tao Te Ching*, and realize that, in the long run, the politics of great powers and Hegemonism will have no future. Therefore, I consider the thinking of Lao Zi valuable in refuting the theories of "clash of civilizations" and of the "new empire." We advocate the theory of "coexistence of civilizations" and are in agreement with Lao Zi's idea of "doing-nothing," in the expectation of a world of Great Harmony, with peace and security, general progress and common wealth for humankind. Of course, as Lao Zi was born two thousand years ago, his philosophy cannot be used to solve all the problems that contemporary human society is confronted with (including the discords and conflicts among nations), but his wisdom should be of important value to illuminate our way. Our task is to rediscover and develop the essence of his thinking, to give it a modern interpretation, so that the general public can benefit from the edifications in the treasury of ancient Chinese philosophy.

Differences in religious beliefs, values and ways of thinking may lead to conflicts among nations and states; and conflicts can breed wars. However, we may ask: Are these conflicts inevitable? Would it be possible that these conflicts be resolved peacefully, without a war for cultural differences? We have to find a common resources of thinking in all national cultures advocating the coexistence of civilizations, in order to prevent any possible conflict or war. As argued above, the Confucianism and Taoism in Chinese culture could provide significant resources of thinking to bring about the peaceful coexistence of civilizations. I believe that the same kind of resources can be found in cultures of other nations and states as well. At the turn of the 21st century, we must make a careful choice whether to practice the theory of the "clash of civilizations" in dealing with the problems among nations and states, or a theory advocating the "coexistence of

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<sup>45</sup> 《道德经》第 58 章: "祸兮, 福之所倚; 福兮, 祸之所伏." C.f. *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 58.

civilizations” to bring peace to human society. It would be a blessing to humankind if we choose not the clash but the coexistence of civilizations. The Book of History teaches us: “All the states under Heaven should be harmonized.”<sup>46</sup> Like many other nations, the Chinese nation is a great one with a long and brilliant tradition of history and culture. Chinese culture is undoubtedly one of the most valuable treasures for mankind. With this cultural heritage, we should be able to make contributions to the peaceful coexistence of human civilizations, promote cultural exchanges, so that harmony might befall on this world of diverse cultures.

(Trans. by Yang Zhiyi; Revised by Shen Hong)

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<sup>46</sup> 《尚书·尧典》：“协和万邦。”



## Chinese Traditional Cultures and Corporate Management

Comments from Max Weber on the Confucian ideology and Chinese traditional cultures which can deter the development of the modern industrialization have proved its accuracy by the history, but, according to the comments from C. Cauchy, vice-chancellor of the Montreal University, Canada, on the 17<sup>th</sup> Philosophy Meeting at 1983, "From the past two hundred years, due to the success of the economic and technological achievements, the Western countries have proclaimed themselves to have advanced status. Now the gap between East and West has been narrowed to the point that there is a tendency of surpassing the Western economies by their Eastern counterparts. It is the right time to awake and learn from the East," According to the development of recent 30years, his opinion is logical and reasonable. The industrialization of the Japanese economy in 1970s and the leapfrog advancement of Four Little Dragons in Asia can lead to a better prediction of the economic development trend of Eastern and Western countries in 1990s. How can we explain the above-mentioned arguments which are both contradictory and correct? In my opinion, it can be explained by the comments of Japanese sociologist, Tomita.

Tomita commented in his "Fundamentals of Sociology" which was published in 1986, "Only the industrialization and modernization of Western countries are internally driven, which is a historical fact and can not be argued. So, all the non-Western societies can not depend on their own internal forces to industrialize and modernize their societies." But he argued that the weakness of Weber's comment was his negligence to speak of the spread of culture to have modernization; he classified the modernization process of Eastern world as "External Learning." It is a very reasonable comment. Why is that so? According to Tomita, it is because "the public create a strong initiative to escape the traditionalism, and introduce the Western idea with the co-existence of their traditional cultures." His comments had been verified by the historical development of the world from the past 30

years. They have tried to introduce the Western civilization and combine it with their local traditional cultures, surpassing the economies of Eastern countries over the West. What is the reason? In my opinion, it is somehow related to the Eastern culture (Confucianism).

Here I would like to elaborate my argument so that it would be beneficial to the Eastern countries for the enterprises management, even to the development of society, if they can better utilize the philosophy of Confucianism and Taoism on the methodological and theoretical foundation learnt from the Western society.

If the Chinese Confucianism and Taoism can not initiate the process of modernization and industrialization, would it be better for those countries having the traditions of Confucianism and Taoism to integrate some of the concepts of these two philosophies in order to further develop the economy? I believe it is not only possible but also mandatory. In the traditional Chinese culture, there are two important concepts. One is the concept of "harmony," which is from "Zhaoxi" We can explain it as "perfect harmony." Confucius introduced this concept into the society. He said, "It is preferred to have harmony and politeness would be treasured." The word "politeness" refers to the ceremony and rituals necessary to maintain the social order, and "harmony" is the most important principle. Another one is the concept of "nature" Everything should follow this principle, which is called "supreme nature."

If the essence of the Confucianism is "harmony" which regulates and maintains the various relationship in the society, the principle of "practices should follow nature" is to regulate the relationship between human and nature. We will realize the positive and negative aspects of the evolution of society brought to the mankind by looking back the history of the Twentieth Century. The breakout of World Wars I and II and the destruction of the natural environment are the consequences of not adjusting the relationship between mankind and nature. Those will have direct or indirect relationship with the operation of enterprises.

Will the development of one enterprise, the enterprise system of one country and the various enterprises in the world not consider the relationship between the citizens and society? According to my opinion, the operation and development of the enterprises, if it is reasonable, healthy and consistent, has to consider its internal

environment, which includes the employers, employees, various departments and the linkage between the departments themselves, and its external environment, which consists of customers, industry environment, societal and national interests. If there is no harmonious relationship inside the enterprise, it will encounter many problems, or even demise; if there is no harmonious external relationship, it will encounter many unexpected obstacles, or even bankruptcy. So, I believe, the concept of "treasure of harmony" from the Confucianism can provide a valuable concept to the enterprise management now and future. In the classics of Chinese Confucianism, "The Great Learning," it stipulated that the basis of harmony for the family, country and the world will rely on the harmony within oneself. From Confucianism, the harmony within oneself can influence others, and the harmony with others, country and society will involve the relationship between oneself and others, which will also create the problem of power and duty. So, the Confucius encourages the five relationships. As long as the mutual relationship can be managed, people can cooperate together. This is also true for the enterprises. The prosperity of the enterprises can be maintained only after the external and internal relationship is handled satisfactorily. It can mitigate the weakness of the competition-oriented culture of Western economies. The emphasis of Confucianism on self-grooming and development is to maintain the mutual development of the group. One's perfection is the condition to create a better environment for the enterprises.

In 1992, a report called "The Advice to Human from the Scientists" was published by 1575 social scientists, saying that "Human and nature are heading in a contradictory road." I believe this warning is just right. The advancement of the technology can initiate a large development to the society, but also create a major threat for the survival of people. Due to the excess exploitation of nature, the problems of environmental pollution, thinning of the ozone layer and the destruction of the biological balance are becoming very serious. For the cultural point of view, the principle of Taoism saying "nature is preferred" may help remedy the relationship between human and nature. According to Taoism, the human is a harmonious body, and Tao represents this natural harmony. The society will have no problems and the emperor can have a peaceful country by having Tao. Tsun Tsu thinks that human should follow the natural development and not to interrupt, so that it can achieve the stage of integration

between the human and universe. We can see the importance given by Taoism on the harmony between human and nature.

The traditional Chinese Confucian and Taoism cultures have a development process for more than two thousand years. During this period it was influenced by the Indian Buddhism. In the Tang Dynasty the impact of the Buddhism on the society was ubiquitous and significant, but the Chinese tradition culture could have a full-fledge development after absorbing the Buddhism culture in Shao Dynasty. It can explain the adaptability of the traditional Taoism and Confucianism cultures on the cultural perspectives. As said by Max Weber, the Confucianism and Taoism cultures could not initiate the process of modernization and industrialization, but under the background of the traditional culture as a basis from Taoism and Confucianism philosophy, after the adaptation of Western modern and industrial economy, the principles of relationship between mankind and nature from Taoism and Confucianism, "treasure of harmony" and "nature is preferred," can become the corporate mission under the modern identification.

These two concepts are only meaningful to the human society and enterprise administration. If it is needed to explore its functions by operationalizing these two concepts in the social life and enterprises management, it is a very complicated process. A lot of procedures have to be done. These concepts will not be transferred into practical consideration automatically, but if there is no meaningful opinion or concept to be promoted, there will not be practical and scientific solutions to realize these meaningful concepts.

Learning from the history, the process of modernization and industrialization was happened in the West about these kinds of experience. Now some of the countries in the East give a modern definition to some of the concepts in their traditional cultures and operationalize these concepts. The phenomenon is noticed by some of the scholars in the West, and they proclaim to learn it from the East, which can illustrate the importance of coexistence of the Western and Eastern cultures. It can also explain that some of concepts in Confucianism and Taoism are very important to the economic development of modern enterprises.

After the visit to China in 1920s, Western philosopher Russell had written one article "Comparison of Eastern and Western Cultures." It said "In the past it had proved many times the importance of the

cultural exchange to the human civilization process. Greece learnt from Egypt, Rome learnt from Greece, Arabia studied Roman Empire and Europe in the middle century followed Arabia. In all of these exchange activities, the developing countries as a student have surpassed the advanced countries as a teacher. During the process of interaction between China and foreign countries, China will at last surpass his counterparts which are more developed." It is very meaningful for Russell's arguments. China is still now a developing country and try to implement the modernization process. There is a must to learn and transfer the experience of Western economy, but when the Western countries are facing various kinds of problems concerning the relationship between mankind and nature, is it suitable for them also to introduce some of the Eastern concepts? For those Eastern entrepreneurs who are trying very hard to realize the modernization process, it is worthwhile to consider whether they have paid enough attention to the importance of these existing concepts. It seems to be an interesting topic to be discussed in the meeting between the Chinese and European entrepreneurs.

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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 Research 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.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

## PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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