ROUTLEDGE HISTORY OF WORLD PHILOSOPHIES

HISTORY OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Edited by
Bo Mou

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VOLUME 3

Routledge History of World Philosophies

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PREFACE

The main objective of this volume is to provide a reference book which gives a systematic, comprehensive, in-depth but accessible, and up-to-date examination of the major and most important movements of thought that have shaped Chinese philosophy over the past 3,000 years.

It is organized around a series of significant movements of thought and philosophical currents in Chinese philosophy, which are classified into four major, distinctive periods, and the book begins with my introduction to some methodological issues concerning studies of Chinese philosophy. The main text of the book is made up of eighteen essays, organized into five parts, which have been written by experts on the subjects. Generally speaking, each chapter in the main text is intended to fulfill the four aims and thus consist of the four contents. (1) The author presents an authoritative and reliable survey of the state of the art of study of the topic or subject under examination in a balanced and systematic way. (2) At the same time, the author gives his or her interpretation and critical understanding of the subject matter and interpretation of the particular issues, which are essential to the integrity and systematic character of his/her chapter. (3) The author gives reliable English translations (either by the author him/herself or by someone else) of some significant passages from the relevant Chinese source texts and literature via in-text citations. (4) The author presents a bibliography at the end of each chapter that gives a relatively complete but selective listing of the relevant works.

I am grateful to Tony Bruce, Senior Publisher at Routledge, for initiating the idea of this volume and for his persistent encouragement and support throughout the process. I am thankful to the other three editors at Routledge, Sonja van Leeuwen at the early stage, and Amanda Lucas and Andrew Watts at the later stage, for their kindly professional assistance. My thanks also go to Monica Kendall for her careful copy-editing work and helpful suggestions.

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ON SOME METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES CONCERNING CHINESE PHILOSOPHY: AN INTRODUCTION

Bo Mou

This volume examines (1) how Chinese philosophy, as shaped by various movements of philosophical thought throughout its 3,000-year history, approaches issues and concerns of philosophical significance, and (2) the ways in which Chinese philosophy thus makes its contribution to the common philosophical enterprise. As any reflective practice of how to approach something in philosophy inherently involves its methodology, and as a goal of any reflective study essentially bears on its methodological approach, both (1) and (2) intrinsically involve methodological issues. These methodological connections constitute the methodological dimension of the theme of this volume. The introduction focuses on this methodological theme in the following way. In Section 1, in view of (2) above, I will explain the methodological orientations and emphases of this volume as a whole. In Section 2, in view of (1) above, I will highlight and explain some representative methodological approaches in Chinese philosophy that bear on various movements of thought and that are philosophically significant. In Section 3, in view of both (1) and (2), a meta-philosophical methodological framework is suggested, whose central part lies in a set of adequacy conditions for methodological guiding principles concerning how to look at the relationship between seemingly competing methodological approaches within Chinese philosophy or from distinct philosophical traditions.

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The main objective of this volume is to provide a reference book that gives a systematic, comprehensive, and up-to-date examination of the major and most important movements of thought that have shaped Chinese philosophy over the past 3,000 years.

The term 'history' in the title of the book means three things. First, the whole period of the Chinese philosophical tradition including both ancient (i.e., classical)

Chinese philosophy and modern Chinese philosophy is covered. Second, the volume pays due attention to historical links between relevant ideas and movements of thought. Third, the ideas and movements under examination are placed in a broader historical context. But this by no means implies that this book has solely a historical orientation, or that its aim is only to describe historical facts. Rather, it concentrates on the philosophical interest of the topics in question and emphasizes how these ideas can contribute to the common philosophical enterprise. To fulfill this purpose, the volume as a whole emphasizes philosophical interpretation as a methodological approach to thinkers and their texts in a philosophical tradition. It also stresses the philosophical-issue-engagement orientation as a methodology that aims to contribute to common philosophical issues and concerns via the constructive engagement of distinct approaches.

1.1

For the sake of the reader's understanding and to provide some necessary conceptual resources, I intend to give a preliminary clarification of two key terms that appear in the title of this introduction: 'philosophy' and 'methodological'.

When talking about the 'common' philosophical enterprise, we mean the kind of reflective inquiries denoted by the expressions in Western phonetic language and Chinese ideographic language respectively: 'philosophy' in English is from the Greek *philosophia*, which literally means the love of (*philo-*) wisdom (*Sophia*); and '哲學', pronounced *zhe-xue* in Mandarin Chinese, which literally means learning (學) of wisdom or sagacity (哲). However, the Chinese term is a recent creation borrowed from Japanese translation practice.[1] Indeed, traditionally the Chinese did not distinguish between philosophy and religion or other forms of learning. The aspects or layers of Chinese thought distinguished by this modern term are those that coincide most with what Westerners call 'philosophy' in their own tradition. Now, what is philosophy? In the literature, one might find various characterizations: (1) philosophy is the exploration of classic, perennial, or fundamental questions in fields of philosophical study such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and logic (for example, what is being? What are its fundamental features? What is knowledge? How should I live?); (2) philosophy is the exploration of those basic concepts or underlying assumptions in various other fields of study (for example, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of biology, etc.); (3) philosophy can be certain orientations, styles and/or standards of reflective exploration such as critical, rigorous, analytic, synthetic, non-authoritarian, non-empirical, etc.; (4) philosophy can be certain characteristic ways of approaching the above fundamental questions or the most basic concepts such as rational justification, semantic ascent (exploring an object through inquiring into (the meaning of) linguistic/conceptual items that signify the object), conceptual analysis, etc.

With the various characterizations of philosophy, we notice that some fundamental features of philosophical inquiry as engaged by various philosophical traditions are similarly identified, characterized, and highlighted. They turn out to be kindred in spirit. Philosophical inquiry can ask any fundamental question, and can have various

fundamental concerns, about the world and human beings. Philosophical inquiry is critical in nature in the sense that it does not blindly claim or accept anything and that nothing is absolutely safe from a philosophical inquirer's gaze.[2] Philosophical inquiry establishes its conclusions intrinsically through argumentation, justification, and explanation (to be discussed in Section 2.3). Philosophy is a type of reflective inquiry and is variously and diversely implemented and manifested.

At this point, one preliminary question about the identity of Chinese philosophy can be discussed. Some say that (historically speaking) ancient Chinese thought lacked any separation of literature, history, and philosophy; and so how can a history of Chinese philosophy be singled out? This is true in the sense that writers in the classical period did not conceptualize a distinction between intellectual disciplines that we can today. Applying that distinction to ancient Chinese disciplines reveals about the same degree of overlap and distinctiveness as it does to ancient Western intellectual disciplines – which didn't distinguish what we now call philosophy from wisdom or 'natural philosophy' (early science). With that distinction we can soundly and reflectively focus on the philosophical aspects and dimensions of texts that also have historical and literary value and content. So nothing in this observation about Chinese thought prevents us from reflecting on the philosophical significance of an idea or approach in the tradition where its philosophical value and inferential connection with other concerns, issues, ideas, or approaches could also be given a historical or literary description. In giving the philosophical dimension we legitimately focus on an interest or agenda that we now have in trying to understand an aspect of Chinese culture, and can do so without denying that other kinds of understanding and elaboration are possible. In the same way we can answer the familiar charge that ancient Chinese thought made no distinction between philosophy and religion and thus cannot, and should not, be examined with the focus solely on its philosophical dimension. We have the conceptual resources to distinguish between themes, ideas, and arguments that are more or less philosophical or religious. Given our understanding of philosophical inquiry and how its methodology differs from a religious methodology, the overlap of subject matter and the fact that the methods are mixed do not prevent our highlighting and discussing the philosophical distinctions. This reflects how the historical overlap might and might not be relevant to a proper understanding of both ancient Chinese philosophy and religion. For the above reasons, this volume is called 'History of Chinese Philosophy', rather than 'History of Chinese Thought', or 'History of Chinese Religious Thought'.

A deeper understanding of the rationale behind the above reflective practice is related to the two methodological emphases of this volume. Before moving onto a discussion of this, we will clarify the term 'method' or 'methodological approach'.

It is known that the term 'philosophical method' or 'methodological approach' in philosophical inquiries can mean a number of things. Given that the term 'methodological approach' means a way of responding to how to approach an object of study, without due clarification and differentiation the term might be taken to mean a methodological perspective (or a perspective method), a methodological instrument (or an instrumental method), or a methodological guiding principle (or a guiding-principle method).[3]

Roughly speaking, a methodological perspective is a way to approach an object of study that is intended to focus on a certain aspect of the object and capture or explain the aspect in terms of the characteristics of that aspect, together with the minimal metaphysical commitment that there *is* that aspect of the object or that the aspect is genuinely possessed by the object. There is a distinction between eligible and ineligible methodological perspectives concerning an object of study. If the aspect to which a methodological perspective is intended to point is genuinely possessed by the object of study, it is considered eligible in regard to that object. Otherwise, the methodological perspective is considered ineligible. It is noted that a methodological perspective is a methodological-perspective simplex, in contrast to a methodological-perspective complex, which integrates two or more perspective simplexes into one. Below, unless otherwise specified, by 'methodological perspective' I mean a methodological-perspective simplex.

A methodological instrument is a way in which to implement, or give tools to realize, a certain methodological perspective. (I will discuss two major types of instrumental methods in philosophy, especially in the case of Chinese philosophy, in Section 2.3.)

A methodological guiding principle is a way concerning a certain methodological perspective (or a group of perspectives), or a certain methodological instrument to implement the methodological perspective, in regard to an object of study, which is, or should be, presupposed by the agent who takes that perspective (or one or more among the group of the perspectives) and its related instrument for the sake of guiding and regulating how the perspective or the instrument should be evaluated (its status and its due relation with other perspectives or instruments) and used (how to choose among the group of perspectives or instruments), and how the purpose and focus that the perspective serves should be set. There is a distinction between adequate and inadequate methodological guiding principles concerning methodological perspective(s) in regard to an object of study.

Given the above specifications, there are two preliminary points concerning the relation between a methodological perspective and a methodological guiding principle, which are especially relevant and will be illustrated and tested in the subsequent discussion. First, generally speaking, the merit, status, and function of a methodological perspective *per se* can be evaluated independently of a certain methodological guiding principle that the agent might presuppose in her actual application of the perspective. One's reflective practice *per se* of taking a certain methodological perspective as one's working perspective amounts to neither losing sight of other genuine aspects of the object nor rejecting other eligible perspectives in one's background thinking nor presupposing an inadequate methodological guiding principle which would render ineligible other eligible methodological perspectives (if any). Second, however, it does matter whether one's taking a certain methodological perspective is regulated by an adequate or inadequate guiding principle, especially for the sake of constructive engagement of seemingly competing approaches. When one's application of an eligible methodological perspective as part of one's reflective practice is guided by some adequate guiding principle and contributes to adequate

understanding of the object of study, one's application of that perspective would be philosophically constructive.

To help the reader capture more easily the above abstract presentation of the nature and status of the three methodological ways and their distinction, I will use the following 'method-house' metaphor to illustrate the points involved. Suppose that a person intends to approach her destination, say, a house (the object of study), which has several entrances – front door, side door, and roof window (a variety of aspects, dimensions, or layers of the object of study). She then takes a certain path (a certain methodological perspective) to enter the house, believing that the path leads to the entrance on this side (say, the front door) or the entrance on that side (say, a side door) of the house. If a path really leads to a certain entrance of the house, the path is called 'eligible'; otherwise it is called 'ineligible' (thus the distinction between eligible and ineligible methodological perspectives). When she takes a certain path to enter the house, she holds a certain instrument in her hand (a methodological instrument) to clear her path, say, a hatchet if the path is overgrown with brambles or a snow shovel if the path is heavily covered with snow. She also goes with a certain idea in her mind (a methodological guiding principle) that explains why she takes that path, instead of another, and guides her to have some understanding, adequate or inadequate, of the relation of that path to other paths (other methodological perspectives), if any, to the house. Surely such a guiding idea can be adequate or inadequate (adequate or inadequate methodological guiding principle): for example, if she recognizes and renders other eligible paths also eligible and thus compatible with her current path, then her guiding idea is adequate; in contrast, if she fails to recognize that and thus renders her current path exclusively eligible (the only path leading to the house), then her guiding idea is inadequate, though her current path *per se* is indeed eligible.

In the context of philosophical inquiries, for one thing, there is the need to refine the notion of methodological approach into these three distinct but related notions of methodological approach for the sake of adequately characterizing the three distinct but somehow related methodological ways. For another thing, in view of their distinction and connection, at least at the conceptual level, we might regard the three methodological ways as three dimensions of (philosophical) methodology or of the concept of methodological approach, although this by no means takes it for granted that any methodological way that has ever been historically taken was actually presented in its agent's mind indiscriminately as an inclusive methodological approach which manifestly reveals all the three dimensions.

With these clarifications of the two key terms, an explanation of why this volume is called 'History of Chinese *Philosophy*', and thus an introduction to necessary conceptual resources, I will discuss the two methodological emphases of this volume.[4]

1.2

The first emphasis is on philosophical interpretation[5] of the ancient thinker's texts instead of mere historical description. Note that, generally speaking, the primary purpose of this methodological orientation is to enhance our understanding of a

thinker's ideas and their due implications of philosophical significance via relevant effective conceptual and explanatory resources, whether those resources were actually used by the thinker herself. It is clear that a purely historical approach does not fit here: to elaborate and understand the thinker's ideas does not amount to figuring out exactly what resources the thinker actually used and exactly what explicit ideas she actually thought of; instead, such interpretation and understanding might include the interpreter's elaboration of the thinker's points including their subtle implications, which might not have been explicitly considered by the thinker herself, and/or the interpreter's representation of the thinker's point in clearer and more coherent terms or in a more philosophically interesting way, which the thinker herself might not have actually adopted.[6] In both cases, given a thinker's ideas (in one tradition or account) under interpretation, some effective conceptual and explanatory resources well developed in another tradition or account can be consciously used to enhance our understanding of, and to elaborate, the thinker's ideas.[7]

In this way, the use of external resources might really enhance our understanding of a thinker's ideas or clarify some original unclear or confusing expression of her ideas. Consequently, the endeavor *per se* of using external resources in this orientation is not automatically inappropriate and thus is not doomed to be a sin, as it would be in the merely historical orientation. Note that when those explanatory and conceptual resources are used, they are not intended to assign the same degree of articulated systematization and of mastering some conceptual and explanatory resources to an ancient thinker but to enhance our understanding of her ideas delivered in the text. For this interpretative purpose, it is not merely legitimate but beneficial to employ more explicit or clearer conceptual resources to elaborate some otherwise implicit and hidden thing (say, coherence and connectedness) in a thinker's ideas that was sometimes less clearly delivered or expressed in some paradoxical way for lack of those contemporary explanatory and conceptual resources that are unavailable to the ancient but now available to us.[8] Note also that, when a thinker's line of thought and her ideas lack articulated systematicity in their language expressions, that does not amount to saying that the thinker's line of thought and her ideas *per se* go without (implicit and hidden) coherence and connectedness deep in a thinker's ideas. Consequently, we cannot base ourselves merely on this lack of articulated systematicity in language expression and therefore judge that the thinker's text itself is not a philosophical work when the text was indeed intended to deliver her reflective ideas. At this point, with the previous and current methodological considerations, some further elaborations of the thinker's line of thought and her surrounding reflective ideas via adequate conceptual and explanatory resources available to us are genuinely needed, instead of being the mere issue of preference, for the sake of enhancing our understanding of the thinker's ideas including their due implications.[9]

It is also important to note that an interpreter in a project in studies of Chinese philosophy with the reflective-interpretation-concerned orientation, instead of a mere historical orientation, can, or rather tends to, focus on a certain aspect, layer, or dimension of a thinker's ideas based on the purpose of the project, the reflective interest of the interpreter, etc. Indeed, instead of a comprehensive coverage of all

aspects or dimensions of the object of study, focusing on one aspect or dimension is a kind of simplification. Now the question is this: Is any simplification *per se* doomed to be indiscriminately a sin of *over*simplification? Surely, when a project aims at accurately describing relevant historical facts and pursues what the thinker actually thought, and what resources were actually used (by her), simplification is always *over*simplification; any simplification is guilty of being negatively excessive and thus identical with falsification. Nevertheless, it should be clear that, if the purpose of a project is to interpret or elaborate one aspect or dimension instead of giving a comprehensive historical description, charging the practitioner of this project with *over*simplification or with being excessive in simplifying the coverage into one aspect or dimension would both be unfair and miss the point.

Let us agree that a project in studying Chinese philosophy should be guided by a comprehensive understanding. But a reflective project in philosophy (including those studies of Chinese philosophy) that takes a certain methodological perspective through focusing on one aspect of the object of study is not incompatible with a comprehensive understanding. At this point, what needs to be recognized is an important distinction between a methodological perspective as a current working perspective and a methodological guiding principle that an agent presupposes when taking the methodological perspective and that would be used by the agent to guide or regulate how the current perspective would be applied and evaluated in view of some other eligible perspectives. As emphasized above, one's reflective practice *per se* of taking a certain methodological perspective amounts to neither reflectively rejecting some other eligible perspectives nor presupposing an inadequate methodological guiding principle which would render ineligible other eligible methodological perspectives (if any). What is at issue is whether the interpreter has assumed an adequate methodological guiding principle to guide and regulate how to look at the relation between the current methodological perspective used as a working perspective and other eligible methodological perspectives that would point to other aspects of the object of study. Consequently, when one evaluates a project in studies of Chinese philosophy, what really matters is for one to look at and understand what kind of methodological guiding principle is presupposed behind the working perspective.

1.3

The other methodological emphasis of this volume is on the relevance and significance of the thinkers' ideas and their movements of thought related to the common philosophical enterprise and contemporary development of philosophy. This emphasis is intrinsically related to one significant methodological orientation in studies of Chinese philosophy, that is, the philosophical-issue-engagement orientation that aims to contribute to common philosophical enterprise. The primary purpose of this orientation in studies of ancient thinkers is to see how, through reflective criticism and self-criticism, these thinkers could constructively contribute to the common philosophical enterprise and/or series of common concerns, issues and topics of philosophical significance,[10] rather than to focus on providing a merely historical or descriptive account. Typically, addressing a common issue of philosophy, substantial

ideas historically developed in distinct philosophical traditions are directly compared in order to understand how they could jointly and complementarily contribute to this issue in philosophically interesting ways. Insofar as the foregoing constructive-engagement purpose in treating various common concerns and issues of philosophical significance is most philosophically interesting, this philosophical-issue-engagement orientation and its methodological strategy directly, explicitly, and constructively conducts philosophical engagement and is thus considered to be most philosophically interesting. To highlight the characteristic features of a reflective project with this as its primary orientation, let us examine the appropriateness of three sorts of charges that have sometimes been (explicitly or implicitly, directly or indirectly) brought against projects with this orientation in studies of Chinese philosophy, that is, against the 'sins' of oversimplification, overuse of external resources, and blurring assimilation.

A typical procedure of conducting a philosophical engagement in such projects could be both conceptually and practically divided into three phases:

1 the pre-engagement phase in which certain ideas from distinct accounts or from different traditions that are *relevant* to the common concern under examination and thus to the purpose of the project are focused on and identified;
2 the engagement phase in which those ideas *internally* engage with each other in view of that common concern and the purpose to be served; and
3 the post-engagement phase in which those distinct ideas from different sources are now absorbed or assimilated into a new approach to the common concern under examination.

The three alleged 'inappropriate things' or 'sins' may be considered to be typically associated respectively with these three phases. The 'sin' of oversimplification regarding a certain idea identified from a certain account or tradition may be typically associated with reflective efforts in the pre-engagement phase; the 'sin' of overuse of external resources regarding elaborating a certain idea from a certain account or tradition may be typically associated with reflective efforts in the engagement phase; and the 'sin' of blurring assimilation may be typically associated with reflective efforts in the post-engagement phase. Now let me briefly evaluate the appropriateness of the three 'sin' charges respectively in the corresponding three phases; looking at the 'sins' in this way will help to highlight features of projects in studies of Chinese philosophy primarily with the philosophical-issue-engagement orientation.

Pre-engagement

In the pre-engagement phase, it might be not only legitimate but also adequate or even necessary to provide simplification and abstraction of some ideas in one account or tradition through a perspective: this perspective *per se* is presented in most relevant terms to the common concern addressed, and the purpose served in a philosophical-issue-engagement concerned project, while without involving those irrelevant elements in the account or tradition from which such a perspective comes, though the latter

might be relevant to figuring out the point of those ideas. The reasons are these. First, the primary concern of the project is not with how such an idea is related to the other elements in the source account or tradition but with how it is relevant to approaching the commonly concerned philosophical issue. Second, while one needs to understand the point of an idea in the context in which it was raised, once one understands the point (either through employing data provided by projects with the historical-description-concerned orientation and/or the interpretation-concerned orientation or through one's own background project with one of the these two orientations), there would be no present purpose served by discussing background. Third, it is clear that such an approach *per se* does not imply denying the social and historical integrity of the idea in the source account or tradition; the point is that the existence of such integrity cannot automatically guarantee an indiscriminate priority or even relevance of expressly addressing it in any projects in studies of Chinese philosophy without regard to their orientations and purposes.

Engagement

In the engagement phase, relevant (eligible) perspectives from different source accounts or different traditions would constructively engage each other. From each party's point of view, the other party is something external without; but, from a broader philosophical vantage point and in view of the commonly concerned issue, the distinct views may be complementary within. In this context, the term 'external' would miss the point in regard to the purpose here: the pivotal point is not this or that distinct perspective but the issue (and its comprehensive approach) to whose various aspects those perspectives point; in view of the issue, all those perspectives become internal in the sense that they would be complementary and indispensable to a comprehensive understanding and treatment of the current philosophical issue.

Post-engagement

In the post-engagement phase, some sort of assimilation typically results from the preceding reflective engagement; that is, such assimilation would adjust, blur and absorb different perspectives into one new approach as a whole; this would be what is really expected in this kind of reflective engagement in studies of Chinese philosophy, instead of a sin.

It should be noted that, if a project of studies of Chinese philosophy, which explicitly has one of the previously mentioned orientations (the reflective-interpretation-concerned orientation, the philosophical-issue-engagement orientation, and the historical-description-concerned orientation), is considered as a project-simplex in studies of Chinese philosophy, a project in reflective practice concerning Chinese philosophy might be a complex that goes with a combination of two or more orientations. A comprehensive project concerned with a historical figure often consists of such a combination. Recognition of the characteristic features of the aforementioned three distinct orientations/purposes and their respective methodological approaches would help us discriminatively treat, and evaluate, different stages or parts of a project-complex of studies of Chinese philosophy.

Traditionally, to my knowledge, projects primarily with the foregoing philosophical-issue-engagement orientation and the reflective-interpretation-concerned orientation (especially when resorting to contemporary development and resources of philosophy) have yet to receive due emphasis, for reasons that I will explain in Chapter 18 below. Consequently, there is serious need to emphasize projects primarily with the philosophical-issue-engagement orientation and the interpretation-concerned orientation, though this emphasis certainly would not deny the legitimacy and due value of the historical-description-concerned orientation as one effective approach but stress the conceptual compatibility, constructive complementarity, and mutual enhancement of these methodological orientations as complementary methodological perspectives when they are taken under the guidance of adequate methodological guiding principles.

One methodological guiding principle that constitutes one rationale underlying my foregoing analysis is to emphasize or supplement what is insufficient and overcome or reduce excessiveness, insofar as a merely historical approach has been viewed (sometimes or among some) as the exclusive 'legitimate' or 'orthodox' way of studying Chinese philosophy, while the interpretative approach and the constructive-engagement approach have yet to sufficiently achieve due attention. Indeed, this point is kindred in spirit with one central methodological insight that is nicely delivered in Chapter 77 of Lao Zi's *Dao-De-Jing* (道德經) as follows:

> Is the *Dao* of Heaven not like stretching a bow?
> Bring down what is higher [than the balance point];
> Lift up what is lower;
> Reduce what is excessive;
> Supplement what is insufficient.
> The *Dao* of Heaven reduces what is excessive and supplements what is insufficient.

2

At the end of the last section, Lao Zi's methodological insight was cited to deliver one central meta-methodological point of the methodological emphases made in this volume. This citation also serves as a reminder of a transition to another front on which methodological issues concerning Chinese philosophy are addressed here. In this section, I will highlight a number of representative methodological approaches that have their more or less across-the-board character in the history of Chinese philosophy: the *yin-yang* methodological model of interaction at the level of methodological guiding principles; the Confucius-style becoming-aspect-concerned approach at the level of methodological perspectives; and some distinct applications of logical argumentation and evocative argumentation at the level of methodological instruments.

In so doing, I intend to fulfill multiple purposes or meet several methodological needs. First, it is more illuminating to look at these across-the-board methodological approaches in a broad methodological framework or from a more comprehensive meta-

philosophical point of view and thus give them meta-philosophical commentaries, even if some of them are more or less discussed in subsequent chapters; distinct angles from which to look at them will broaden and enhance the reader's understanding. Second, it is more constructive to look at them in comparative engagement with some other seemingly competing approaches that have been historically prominent in other traditions. Third, some of them are not explicitly discussed as a separate topic in subsequent chapters and thus need to be addressed here. Fourth, I intend to clarify some unjustified conflations that are associated with certain ready-made understandings of some of these methodological cases. (Considering the nature of this chapter, I adopt the strategy of presenting my views positively in this connection, instead of giving a critical review.) Fifth, I intend to explore these methodological cases in order to draw some methodological implications that will be articulated in terms of adequacy conditions as one central portion of a suggested methodological framework that I will present in the next section. Sixth, clearly, the discussion in this section is not intended to exhaust all methodological approaches with similar characters that have been suggested throughout the history of Chinese philosophy; rather, the methodological cases presented here serve as methodological samples and illustrations for the sake of helping the reader understand and treat similar methodological cases presented in subsequent chapters.

2.1

At the level of methodological guiding principles among the methodological resources of classical Chinese philosophy, one representative sample case that I intend to highlight in this section is the *yin-yang* methodological model of interaction, sometimes plainly but vaguely labeled 'the *yin-yang* way of thinking', as revealed in the Chinese classic *Yi-Jing* (*I Ching*易經; The Classic on Yi) in its classical sense.[11]

It has been considered that the *yin-yang* way of thinking as revealed in the *Yi-Jing* reflects some collective wisdom of ancient Chinese people on how to understand the fundamental way of the world and how to look at happenings around us. It has profoundly influenced the orientation of mentality, and methodological strategies, of subsequent Chinese thinkers in various schools or movements of thought. For the sake of understanding how classical Chinese philosophy can contribute to the common philosophical enterprise concerning methodological strategy and of understanding the orientation and characteristics of Chinese philosophical thought, the *yin-yang* way of thinking of the *Yi-Jing* is one of the most important sources.[12]

The *yin-yang* methodological model of interaction in the *Yi-Jing* is not given in a straightforward way but revealed through the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision concerning the way the world is. To this extent, in order to understand the *yin-yang* methodological way of thinking in the *Yi-Jing* one needs to understand the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision concerning the fundamental relation between changing and unchanging (the two basic meanings of the term 'yi') or, in more reflective terms, between becoming and being.[13]

The *yin-yang* metaphysical vision is sometimes identified as a changing/becoming-aspect-concerned metaphysical way of thinking; it is sometimes taken as a paradigm

view of championing overwhelming priority of becoming over being. Though such an alleged *yin-yang* metaphysical vision takes many other opposites to be *yin-yang*-complementarily constituted, it separates being and unchanging from becoming and changing and renders the former inferior to the latter in regard to metaphysical status. It is arguably right to say that this is at least an incomplete characterization of the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision in the *Yi-Jing* text. In fact, insofar as Parmenides and Plato represent a tendency of maintaining overwhelming priority of being over becoming, while Heraclitus in the West and Buddhist account in the East represent a tendency of championing overwhelming priority of becoming over being, the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision in the *Yi-Jing* offers a third approach that can be characterized in terms of 'becoming-being complementarity': it renders neither of them absolutely dominant over the other but *yin-yang* complementary in the sense that becoming and being, or changing and unchanging, are interdependent, interpenetrating, and inter-transformable in view of their metaphysical status and character. Whether it is correct to characterize some schools in Chinese philosophy in terms of the priority of becoming over being, the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision as delivered in the original text of the *Yi-Jing* is not a mono-view simplex as the becoming-concerned perspective alone, but is instead a multilayered metaphysical-vision complex that suggests a balanced metaphysical guiding insight: it is arguably adequate to characterize this metaphysical guiding insight in terms of becoming-being complementarity. For one thing, the *Yi-Jing* presents two complementary metaphysical perspectives to look at things in the universe, that is, the changing/becoming-concerned perspective and the unchanging/being-concerned perspective that point respectively to the two most fundamental modes of existence in the universe, rather than merely the former one. For another thing, in the *Yi-Jing* text, the two complementary metaphysical perspectives are guided and coordinated by a fundamental *yin-yang* metaphysical guiding insight that renders even the most fundamental modes of existence, changing versus unchanging and becoming versus being, likewise complementary.[14]

The foregoing *yin-yang* metaphysical-vision complex itself suggests a methodological-vision complex, insofar as the quasi-metaphysical notions of changing/becoming and unchanging/being as two most fundamental categories of the way things not only categorize two most fundamental modes of existence but also generalize two most fundamental aspects or layers, becoming aspect and being aspect, of almost any (if not all) objects under examination, and insofar as the changing/becoming-concerned (or the unchanging/being-concerned) *metaphysical* perspective starts with, or is based on, a becoming-aspect-concerned (or being-aspect-concerned) *methodological* perspective that points to the becoming (or being) aspect of the things under metaphysical examination. In this way, and to this extent, the foregoing *yin-yang* metaphysical vision suggests a fundamental methodological vision whose characteristics can be elaborated in this way:

1 It is a two-dimensional methodological-vision complex which consists of its methodological-perspective dimension and its methodological-guiding-principle dimension.

2 Its methodological-perspective dimension consists of two complementary methodological perspectives, the becoming-aspect-concerned methodological perspective and the being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective.

3 Its methodological-guiding-principle dimension renders the two fundamental methodological perspectives, the becoming-aspect-concerned perspective and the being-aspect-concerned perspective, likewise interacting, interdependent, interpenetrating, and complementary.

The *yin-yang* methodological model of interaction suggested in the *Yi-Jing* is a reflective elaboration of the basic methodological points of the aforementioned *yin-yang* metaphysical-methodological vision concerning the interaction between changing/becoming and unchanging/being in the *Yi-Jing*. The basic points of this model are these. Anything in the universe intrinsically contains two mutually contrary but correlative and complementary forces, *yin* (陰) and *yang* (陽). The *yang* is considered to be the positive, active, and manifestly strong aspect/mode/force in any thing, while the *yin* is the negative, passive, yielding one in the same thing. The constitution and interaction between *yin* and *yang* is considered to have the following characteristics:

1 universal: *yin* and *yang* coexist within everything in the universe;
2 fundamental: their interaction within is the ultimate source or pushing force for everything's becoming-process (forming, developing, altering, and changing);
3 complementary: they are interdependent and interpenetrating; and they need each other for completion;
4 holistic: they are united into one thing within rather than separate without;
5 dynamic: they interact in the process of dynamic development; and
6 harmonious equilibrium: their interaction moves toward harmonious balance through cooperation within.

A reflectively worthy question emerges: does or can the *yin-yang* complementarity model of interaction exhaust all the rationales, or the due methodological guiding principles, concerning the interaction between contrary forces? At this point, the Hegelian sublation model of interaction, which was historically suggested in the Western philosophical tradition, is a seemingly competing model of interaction: it is kindred in spirit with the *yin-yang* model in some connections while distinct in some other connections.

Hegel introduces a dynamic and essentially historical perspective into what had hitherto been a supposedly static and timeless framework for understanding the nature and development of human knowledge (Mind).[15] The Hegelian model of interaction consists of what Hegel calls a 'three-step' movement from *thesis* to *antithesis* to *synthesis*: any given thesis intrinsically involves some internal contradictions that will generate an antithesis (the negation of the original thesis). But the interaction and confrontation between thesis and antithesis in turn lead to fresh tensions or contradictions, thus bringing about the synthesis of the two, which attempts to resolve the previous contradictions by *sublation* (*Aufhebung*): to preserve or incorporate what

are reasonable and valuable in the contraries into a new and deeper perspective and discard what are not (negation of the negation). But then the synthesis will itself be subject to further dialectical tension: the process repeats itself in the struggle toward the truth that is the eventual and distant culmination of an arduous dialectical process undergone by Mind. In the context of how to treat two seemingly opposite points of view or philosophies, the Hegelian approach would perceive two views as coming into a conflict (thesis and antithesis); thereafter, a resolution is derived via the dialectical process of sublation. In the sublation, two views or two philosophies are at first perceived as antagonistic to each other or in a collision of opposites; in the dialectical collision, the resolution is first to jettison what is no longer valuable or reasonable within the two opposing approaches and then to salvage what is valuable or reasonable; the final stage is to synthesize what remains of the two so as to form a third viewpoint which contains something valuable of the two previous views but also transcends either of the previous views or philosophies.

The two models of interaction have their common points in some respects and are distinctive in others:

1 Both models highlight the universal existence of two correlative contraries, *yin* and *yang* or thesis and antithesis.
2 Both emphasize that the relations between the contraries are interdependent and interactional.
3 The interactional relation is considered fundamental since the interaction of the two contraries constitutes the ultimate source and final pushing force for the transformation and development of all things in the universe.
4 The independent relation is dynamic rather than static.
5 As far as the dynamic development is concerned, both stress reaching equilibrium or a kind of (dynamic) balance.

However, on the other hand, there are some interesting distinctions in regard to focus and emphasis. First, as far as their emphasis on the interaction between the contraries is concerned, the *yin-yang* way emphasizes cooperation within, while the Hegelian dialectical way stresses opposition without. And second, insofar as both emphasize equilibrium, the *yin-yang* way endeavors to reach harmony within the *yin-yang* unity through complementarity, while the Hegelian way endeavors to reach synthesis without or beyond thesis–antithesis through sublation. The two models can thus be complementary when they are applied to distinct situations of contrary-force interaction for which they are respectively suitable. As explained above, such a complementary character is one of the central features that the *yin-yang* model of interaction is intended to capture, though here what interact are the two models themselves.

The *yin-yang* way of thinking as a set of related methodological insights revealed in the *Yi-Jing* had a tremendous influence on the subsequent movements of thought in Chinese philosophy. As far as its influence concerning methodological guiding principles on the subsequent movements of thought is concerned, one prominent

case is the classical Doaism as presented in Lao Zi's *Dao-De-Jing* and Zhuang Zi's *Zhuang-Zi* (莊子). At the end of Section 1 above, the passage cited from Chapter 77 of the *Dao-De-Jing* showed how one of the central methodological guiding principles of the *yin-yang* methodological model revealed in the *Yi-Jing* – that is, that of overcoming excessiveness and seeking harmonious balance – is resorted to in Lao Zi's Daoist account. The methodological message delivered in Chapter 77 is one central methodological strategy that underlies, and thus helps us understand, various specific points of view on the issue of the metaphysical nature of the world around us, the issue of human morality, the issue of language understanding, etc. in the *Dao-De-Jing*. One of the prominent sample cases that well manifest and illustrate this fundamental methodological vision is the message delivered in the opening passage of Chapter 1 of the *Dao-De-Jing*, whose interpretative translation is given as follows:

> The *dao* can be reached in language ['*dao-ke-dao*' 道可道], but the *dao* that has been characterized in language is not identical with (or does not exhaust) the eternal *dao* ['*fei-chang-dao*'非常道].

The opening passage highlights and nicely manifests the foregoing fundamental methodological insight via Lao Zi's two-sided view on the relation between the metaphysical *dao* and its language understanding. Plainly speaking, on the one hand, it positively affirms the role of finite language expression in capturing finite parts of the *dao* and designating the *dao*; on the other hand, it alerts us to the limitation of finite language expressions in capturing eternal *dao*. In so doing, Lao Zi intends to overcome the excessiveness of emphasizing or celebrating only one side while ignoring or dismissing the other side.[16]

Let me say more about Zhuang Zi's methodological strategy in view of its connection with the *yin-yang* model, for I consider that Zhuang Zi's methodological model is essentially a substantial development of the *yin-yang* two-dimensional methodological model of interaction. Zhuang Zi's general methodological strategy, a version of objective perspectivism (or an early version of transcendental perspectivism),[17] is prominently and well delivered in Inner Chapter 2, 'Qi-Wu-Lun' (齊物論), of the *Zhuang-Zi*, especially in the following passage:

> Everything has its *that* aspect and its *this* aspect. One cannot see the *this* aspect of one thing if one looks at the thing from the perspective of the *that* aspect; one can see the *this* aspect if one looks at the thing from the perspective of the *this* aspect. One thus can say that the *that* and the *this* come from each other … Thus, the sage [is] not limited to looking merely at the *this* or *that* aspect [from the finite point of view] but looks at all the aspects of the thing in the light of Nature. The *this* is also the *that*, and the *that* is also the *this*. The *that* has one criterion of right and wrong, while the *this* has one criterion of right and wrong. Is there really a distinction between the *that* and the *this*? … When the *this* aspect and the *that* aspect cease to be viewed as opposite, it is called 'the pivot of taking the *Dao* point of view'. One's capturing the pivot is

like one's standing [at] the center around which all things revolve in endless change: one thus can deal with endless change from the *Dao* point of view, among whose many manifestations are the *this* and the *that*. Therefore it is said that the best way is to look at things in the light [of Nature].

The points of Zhuang Zi's two-dimensional methodological strategy can be reflectively elaborated in this way. First, as far as its perspective dimension is concerned, Zhuang Zi's point is this. Each thing has its various aspects, and one can take a finite perspective (as a working perspective) to look at one aspect: one can look at its *this* aspect, from a *this*-aspect-concerned perspective, and see it as a *this*, and one can also look at its *that* aspect, from a *that*-aspect-concerned perspective, and see it as a *that*. Its metaphysical foundation is thus: various aspects, the *this* aspect and the *that* aspect, ontologically depend on each other; various perspectives, the *this*-aspect-concerned perspective and the *that*-aspect-concerned perspective, thus actually complement each other. Second, as far as its methodological-guiding-principle dimension is concerned, for the purpose of looking at the connection of various aspects of a thing and/or of having a comprehensive understanding of the thing, Zhuang Zi also encourages us to look at things from a higher point of view which transcends various finite points of view; in this way, those different aspects cease to be viewed as opposite or incompatible but complementary.

Zhuang Zi's model actually develops the foregoing *yin-yang* model in two ways. First, as far as the methodological-perspective dimension is concerned, though the *yin-yang* model implicitly manifests its perspective dimension via a most fundamental *yin-yang* pair (that is, the becoming/changing-aspect-concerned perspective and the being/unchanging-aspect-concerned perspective) in its metaphysical vision concerning the interplay of becoming/changing and being/unchanging, Zhuang Zi's model explicitly presents its perspective dimension: it more comprehensively recognizes the legitimacy of various finite or local eligible methodological perspectives ('*this*' or '*that*' perspectives, in Zhuang Zi's terms). Second, as far as the methodological-guiding-principle dimension is concerned, though the *yin-yang* model reveals its aforementioned methodological guiding principles through its various explanatory remarks on specific interactions between particular manifestations of the two most fundamental *yin-yang* forces (that is, becoming/changing versus being/unchanging), Zhuang Zi's model explicitly characterizes its methodological guiding principles in its meta-discourse such as the one cited above. These methodological guiding principles are not merely kindred in spirit with those in the *yin-yang* model (for example, both emphasize the complementary and balanced interaction of *yin-yang* or 'this'–'that' perspectives that point to distinct aspects of the same object), they also reflect Daoist emphasis on the holistic orientation via the *dao* unification and on the equal status of complementary perspectives in such a holistic context of the *dao* unification.

In sum, Zhuang Zi emphasizes a holistic or global understanding of the world that transcends various finite or local perspectives (at least in one's background thinking), though it is totally legitimate or even expected for one to take a certain finite perspective as a working perspective depending on one's purpose and focus.

With the understanding of these two strategic methodological points of Zhuang Zi's transcendental perspectivism, one can effectively understand Zhuang Zi's substantial approaches to various issues: one might say that the former constitute the fundamental methodological rationale underlying the latter while the latter constitute implementations and illustrations of the former.

2.2

At the level of methodological perspectives among the methodological resources of classical Chinese philosophy, what I intend to highlight here as one representative sample case is Confucius' becoming-aspect-concerned methodological perspective as suggested in the *Lun-Yü* (論語) or the *Analects*. In Section 2.1, I discussed how classical Daoism more prominently maintains and develops some central methodological guiding principles of the *yin-yang* methodological model of interaction. In contrast to this, it seems that Confucius more prominently emphasizes and develops the becoming-aspect-concerned methodological perspective. I focus on the case of how Confucius approaches the issue of filial piety, as revealed in passages 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8 of the *Analects*. There are two reasons for this focus. First, the case quite typically presents Confucius' becoming-aspect-concerned methodological perspective. Second, it is a good case that is conducive to a comparative engagement treatment in view of Socrates' being-aspect-concerned perspective as suggested in the early Platonic dialogue *Euthyphro*. To understand more effectively the methodological point of Confucius' approach against a background of comparative engagement, let me start with a brief characterization of Socrates' methodological approach.

The Socrates-style being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective is the perspective dimension of Socrates' methodological approach, that is, his *elenchus* method, as suggested and illustrated in Socrates' characterization of such important things in human life as virtue, justice, and piety in earlier Plato dialogues.[18] The presentation in the *Euthyphro* of such a methodological approach is usually considered most neat, concise, and representative, especially in view of its methodological-perspective dimension and methodological-instrument dimension which jointly constitute the manifest level of the approach. The manifest level or layer of the *elenchus* approach clearly reveals itself through Socrates' remarks on adequacy conditions for understanding piety and his evaluation of Euthyphro's four definitions of piety presented in the *Euthyphro* (especially see 5a–15d). The form of the typical Socratic question 'What is the F-ness?' partially reveals this. What it is intended to capture is something universal (or the universal Form, in Platonic terms, whose linguistic expression is an abstract noun typically ending with '-ness', and thus the F-ness); it is supposed to be a single (universal) thing that is somehow shared by many things we describe as F, as indicated in the *Euthyphro* (5c–d);[19] and he supposed that F-ness can be accessed by the rational mind through inter-subjective rationality and be articulated in definite terms, as shown in the *Meno*. There, under Socrates' guidance, an illiterate slave boy inferred a complex mathematical insight through the boy's own rationality. Though there are various aspects or layers of any object, what Socrates was concerned with is

the aspect of the object that is stable and invariant (stably and invariantly existing in all F-things), unchanged, definite, and thus inter-subjectively accessible by any rational mind. It is the being-aspect of the object to which the perspective dimension of Socrates' methodological approach was intended to point. In other words, Socrates' methodological perspective was directed toward gaining access to (knowledge of) the stable, unchangeable, and definite aspect of all things. (Accordingly, the kind of knowledge that Socrates sought through his method is also considered as stable, definite, and publicly accessible without appealing to any party's unequal or privileged intelligibility but rather to inter-subjective rationality; it could be achieved via rational argument; it could be clearly and coherently expressed in terms of definition. In other words, the kind of knowledge Socrates pursued through his *elenchus* methodological approach takes certainty and exactness as its characteristic hallmarks among others.) This kind of methodological perspective might be called 'the being-aspect-concerned perspective', as already addressed in the previous discussion of the *yin-yang* methodological model.[20]

With the foregoing comparative background concerning Socrates' methodological perspective, let us move on to Confucius' methodological perspective, or the perspective dimension of Confucius' general methodological approach, as revealed and illustrated through Confucius' treatment of such important things in one's moral life as *ren* (仁 humanity) and *xiao* (孝 filial piety) in the *Analects*.[21] Interesting enough, like Socrates, Confucius also had dialogue with his interlocutors on what (filial) piety is. Let us look at how Confucius characterized filial piety as a virtue, pondering what kind of methodological perspective he adopted in comparison with Socrates' and whether those distinct things in Confucius' approach could jointly contribute to our understanding of (filial) piety with Socrates' methodological perspective.

> 2.5 Meng Yi-zi [who once studied ceremonies with Confucius but was not his disciple] asked about filial piety. Confucius said, 'Never fail to comply.'
>
> While Fan Chi [a minor disciple of Confucius] was driving, Confucius told him about his talk with Meng Yi-zi: 'Meng Sun [Meng Yi-zi] asked me about filial piety; I reply, "Never fail to comply."'
>
> Fan Chi asked, 'What does that mean?'
>
> Confucius said, 'When one's parents are alive, comply with the rules of propriety (*li*) in serving them; when they die, comply with the rules of propriety in burying them, and comply with the rules of propriety in sacrificing to them.'
>
> 2.6 Meng Wu-bo [Meng Yi-zi's son] asked about filial piety. Confucius said, 'Don't give your parents any cause for anxiety other than your illness.'
>
> 2.7 Zi-you [an advanced disciple of Confucius] asked about filial piety. Confucius said, 'Filial piety nowadays means no more than that one can support one's parents. But we support even dogs and horses. If one does not have one's feeling of reverence, where is the difference?'
>
> 2.8 Zi-xia [another advanced disciple who was known for his extensive knowledge and scholarship] asked about filial piety. Confucius said, 'What

is difficult to manage is the expression on one's face [when serving the elders]. It is hardly entitled to be taken as filial piety to merely take on the burden when there is work to be done for the elders or, when wine and food are available, let the elders enjoy them first.'

Confucius exhibited no tendency to question important words in his moral vocabulary by giving Socrates-style universal definitions or meaning formulae. He instead gave different answers to different interlocutors depending on who asked the questions, the degree of his or her preliminary understanding of filial piety, in what context the question was raised, etc. His answers were designed to give the disciple–questioner some useful guidance. Although it is unclear exactly why the cited sections were arranged in the order they were, it turns out that Confucius' four answers to the same question went further and further. In 2.5, Confucius' answer is a kind of by-default answer in his times: having filial piety is never failing to comply with those ready-made rites concerning how to treat your parents. In 2.6, Confucius addressed (at least partially) some mental layer of filial piety: not merely ceremoniously follow these rites and rules concerning how to treat one's parents, but also don't unnecessarily cause them anxiety. In 2.7 and 2.8, Confucius highlighted further gradations of complexity including expressing it in posture and facial expression. The detailed dimension of filial piety marks it as more of a gradation of virtuous performance than a simple bivalent duty. It is neither a mere ceremony nor even substantial support of one's parents: it is one's warm feeling of reverence for one's parents deep in one's heart which can, and usually does, express itself on one's face; such feelings of reverence for one's parents is not merely not to cause them anxiety but further to lift them up spiritually; it would be hard to maintain such feeling of reverence especially when one's parents have been in a difficult situation for a long time. (There is an old Chinese saying: 'There hardly remains a truly filially pious son or daughter beside the bed of his or her parent as a long-term patient.') It does not necessarily mean that the son or daughter would give up physical or financial support of his or her terminally ill parent but that it would be hard to show the feeling of reverence without impatience.

What Confucius was concerned with in the *Analects* seems to be the dynamic, ever-changing, particular or becoming aspect, dimension or layer of things under examination; the becoming aspect is intrinsically connected with various situations in which things reveal themselves. The methodological perspective that is intended to point to the becoming-aspect might be called 'the becoming-aspect-concerned perspective', as already addressed in the previous discussion. In this way, in contrast to the typical Socratic question, 'What is the F-ness (the universal that is supposed to be true of all and only F-things)?' the typical question that Confucius intended to answer seems to be 'Where is the *dao* of F-things?' or 'How does the *dao* reveal itself in a specific concrete situation?'

With the above identification and explanation of Confucius' and Socrates' seemingly competing methodological perspectives and their distinct purposes and focuses, two kinds of question can or need to be raised. One kind is partially historical in nature and can be raised to Confucius and Socrates alike: Did Confucius (or Socrates) actually render only his becoming-aspect-concerned (or being-aspect-

concerned) perspective as eligible, legitimate, and relevant to the issue of (filial) piety and thus dismiss the Socrates-style being-aspect-concerned (or Confucius-style becoming-aspect-concerned) perspective as irrelevant or inferior? Or, more generally speaking, how did Confucius (or Socrates) himself look at the relation between the Confucius-style becoming-aspect-concerned perspective and the Socrates-style being-aspect-concerned perspective, given an object under examination? What is Confucius' (or Socrates') relevant methodological guiding principle to regulate his understanding of such relations? These questions are surely relevant to a complete understanding of those ancient thinkers' thoughts and help us learn from, and critically evaluate, their treatments concerning methodological guiding principles.

Nevertheless, at this point, two notes are due. First, it is often the case that, though the perspective and instrument dimensions of a thinker's methodological approach are explicitly given, its guiding-principle dimension is not explicitly given and needs to be carefully detected between the lines of her current text and/or identified through her other texts. It is either because the current context or the surrounding environment determines that there would be no urgent or immediate requirement that a thinker explain why she takes a certain methodological perspective, instead of some other, as her current working perspective and thus explicitly present her methodological guiding principle in regulating such a selection among various eligible specific methodological perspectives; or it is because the space limit of her text does not allow the thinker to extensively explicate all the relevant underlying rationales including the methodological guiding principle that regulates why the current eligible methodological perspective, instead of some other, is chosen as the current working perspective. Actually, as I see it, besides the above more or less external reasons, there is a second, more substantial internal reason.

That is that the legitimacy and need of one's taking a certain methodological perspective as one's current working perspective in treating an object of study turn on its eligibility for treating the object of study and its relevance to one's current focus and purpose in treating the object of study, but independent of what kind of methodological guiding principle that one assumes to regulate how one looks at the relation between the methodological perspective in question and other (eligible) methodological perspectives. Consequently, on the one hand, this would allow one to legitimately take a certain methodological perspective in a relevant way to one's current purpose without the need of taking some other eligible perspectives also as one's current working perspectives or articulating one's methodological guiding principle. On the other hand, this would allow us to evaluate the legitimacy of one's taking a certain methodological perspective independently of exactly what kind of methodological guiding principles were actually associated with the application of the methodological perspective. That is, even if a thinker holds some inadequate methodological guiding principle, this fact *per se* would not automatically change the status of eligibility of an eligible methodological perspective. The reader can see that it is actually one methodological point captured by Zhuang Zi in his general methodological strategy as explained above. Furthermore, this methodological point actually renders theoretically legitimate and reflectively interesting another kind of

question that can be raised concerning Confucius' and Socrates' seemingly competing methodological perspectives.

This question is not historical but reflectively independent: *from our own point of view*, how does one look at the relation between the Confucius-style becoming-aspect-concerned methodological perspective and the Socrates-style being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective in treating a certain reflectively worthy issue (say, the issue of [filial] piety), no matter how Confucius or Socrates as historical figures looked at the relation between the two methodological perspectives on the issue? One can rephrase this seemingly specific question concerning the two figures' methodological perspectives in more general and reflective terms. Can the Confucius-style becoming-aspect-concerned methodological perspective and the Socrates-style being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective themselves be compatible with or even complementary to each other? If possible, under what conditions? Can they make a joint contribution to our understanding and treatment of an object of study or a reflective issue of significance? To answer those questions, one needs the guidance of adequate methodological guiding principles. Some methodological guiding principles suggested in the *yin-yang* model of interaction discussed above might be applicable here. When a methodological framework is suggested in Section 3 below, some general adequacy conditions for such methodological guiding principles, as one core portion of such a framework, will be spelled out based on the previous methodological discussion. (Some of those adequacy conditions will be illustrated via the relation between Confucius' and Socrates' methodological perspectives.)

As indicated above, taking a certain methodological perspective bears on what sorts of instrument methods are to be adopted. For, generally speaking, a methodological instrument is used to implement, or provide means to realize, a certain perspective; and, in many cases, the identity of a methodological instrument is related to the identity of the methodological perspective that the instrument is employed to implement. The becoming-aspect-concerned methodological perspective does bear on some characteristic instrumental methods that have been prominently used in the reflective practice in the history of Chinese philosophy. In the next section, I focus on two representative sample cases in this regard.

2.3

As explained above, a methodological perspective presents itself as a path with a certain direction or objective, that is intended to point to some aspect, layer, or dimension of an object of study. Now, given a certain methodological perspective (or certain perspectives), a further issue is how to implement the methodological perspective, or how to arrive at the objective in the intended direction through the directional path. Different methodological perspectives might demand different types of instrumental resources to implement them. Moreover, when one makes some substantial claim in philosophical inquiry, a crucial concern is how to justify or provide reasons for it. Instrumental methodology in philosophical inquiry assumes this crucial role. Instrumental methodology in philosophical inquiry is understood in a broad sense

here: it includes a variety of arguments and inferences, together with their involved conceptual and explanatory resources, to be employed for the sake of justification and exposition in philosophical inquiry. The reason why instrumental methodology is so crucial in philosophical inquiry is quite clear and straightforward: taking nothing for granted and resisting making a claim blindly, *philosophical* inquiry intrinsically requires argumentation for the sake of justification, both in its critical examinations and in its positively establishing conclusions. In this sense and to this extent, argumentation as a primary form of instrumental methodology in philosophical inquiry occupies a crucially important status. There are two basic modes of argumentation in philosophy: one is logical argumentation, which covers both deductive and inductive arguments, while the other is what might be called 'evocative' argumentation[22] to be explained below, though sometimes only the former is highlighted and celebrated (as suggested in some terminology-using practice that simply labels the former 'argument').

In this section, I intend to address two characteristic cases concerning instrumental methods that have been prominently resorted to in classical Chinese philosophy. One is what I call 'becoming-aspect-concerned application' (or 'situation-sensitive application') of logical argumentation; the other is the case of evocative argumentation in classical Chinese philosophy.

'Becoming-aspect-concerned' contexts of logical argumentation in the Mohist and Gongsun Long's discourses

The first characteristic case concerning the 'becoming-aspect-concerned' context of logical argumentation will be explained through examining two prominent discourses of thought in classical Chinese philosophy. One is that of Mohism, a movement of thought in ancient China during the Warring States period (722–481 BCE); the other is that of the thought of Gongsun Long, a major figure of the school of Names during the same period in ancient China.

The two trade-mark basic principles for deductive reasoning, which typically and prominently manifest the being-aspect-concerned perspective, are the principle of non-contradiction and the law of identity, both of which are expected to be observed for the sake of good deductive reasoning. The principle of non-contradiction states that it is not the case that both p and not p (where p is any proposition). The law of identity states that everything is identical with itself (for everything x, $x = x$). Let me begin with an example of deductive reasoning in a kind of Aristotelian application or *standard* context:

> Pr.1   If x is y, then to do something to x is to do it to y.
> Pr.2   Robbers are people.
> Therefore, killing robbers is killing people.
> Pr. 3 It is wrong to kill people.
> Therefore, it is wrong to kill robbers.

However, in certain contexts, the Mohist disagrees with this reasoning, arguing that killing robbers is not killing people. Their reason is this. In our ordinary language use,

we often shift our attention from what is shared between the parties involved to what is distinct between them, depending on the nature of the context and the concrete situation. The Mohist distinguishes three sorts of contexts and considers the case of 'killing robbers/killing people' as one case of the second kind.[23]

1 The context involved would typically call our attention to what is shared between the parties involved: in such a context, for example, we say 'Black horses are horses' or 'Riding black horses is riding horses.' (Typically, for the purpose of riding a horse, the color of the horse does not matter.) One example given in the Mohist text is this: 'Huo is a person; to be concerned for Huo is to be concerned for persons.' In the context of the Mohist text, Huo is a slave who is too humble for one to be concerned about him except that he is a person; someone concerned about him is concerned for anyone as a person. Also note that the Mohist held the view of universal concern for all.
2 The context involved would typically call our attention to what is distinct between the parties involved. Consider three sentences in such a context. First, 'A carriage is wood; but riding a carriage is not riding wood': typically, what one is concerned with in the context of riding is whether the thing has a riding-function. Second, 'Her younger brother is a handsome man; but loving her younger brother is not loving a handsome man': typically, in this context, loving him is not loving him for his looks. Third, 'Robbers are people; abounding in robbers is not abounding in people, being without robbers is not being without people': typically, in this context, what is called attention to is something distinct concerning robbers.
3 The context involved would typically call our attention to both what is common and what is distinct between the parties involved. One might say both 'The white horse is not the horse' (in so saying, as I will explain below in view of Gongsun Long's approach, one pays attention to the distinct aspect of the white horse from the horse) and 'Riding the white horse is riding the horse' (for the sake of riding a horse, the color of the horse does not matter).

What the Mohist calls our attention to is a variety of reasoning patterns embedded in people's reasoning practice and the context in which reasoning utterances are made. One question emerges at this point: do the reasoning cases (2) and (3) violate and compromise deductive reasoning? It is noted that deductive reasoning as a logical-inference process focuses on logical necessity and logical entailment *once* the *relevant identities* of the items *under examination* are determined; so the principle of non-contradiction and the law of identity themselves both have their implicit presupposition concerning relevant identities of the items involved. The presupposition that is implicitly resorted to in the case of the principle of non-contradiction can be spelled out as follows: in regard to certain relevant identities of the items under examination, it is not the case that both p and not p. The presupposition that is implicitly resorted to in the case of the law of identity can be spelled out as follows: for everything x, in regard to the aspect of x that keeps the identity of x under examination, x is identical with itself. With the above implicit presuppositions, the two basic principles *per se*

do not deny, or block, the intellectual room in which one can explore other aspects/identities (if any) than the ones under examination.

Indeed, in many cases and contexts such as (1) above, people focus on what is common between the items involved (thus taking a being-aspect-concerned perspective); such contexts might be called 'standard' or 'being-aspect-concerned' contexts. Nevertheless, people sometimes focus on (or make a focus shift from an aforementioned 'standard' case to) what is distinct between the items involved (thus taking a becoming-aspect-concerned perspective) in some case and context such as (3) above, which might be called a 'becoming-aspect-concerned' context. It can be noted that such a shift in focus is not supposed to be made at random but has its due metaphysical foundation: an object of study really possesses its multiple aspects/layers/dimensions. For example, when saying 'robbers are people', one focuses on the aspect of robbers, A, that makes them being people; nevertheless, when saying 'killing robbers is not killing people', one's focus shifts to some other aspect of robbers, A*, which is possessed by robbers rather than by the other people and which makes robbers deserve being killed (from the Mohist point of view, and cited for the sake of argument): killing robbers for the sake of A*; that does not amount to killing people for the sake of A* because people generally speaking do not possess A*.

It is important to note that, whether one determines the identities of the items under examination in a 'being-aspect-concerned' context (thus taking a being-aspect-concerned perspective) or in a 'becoming-aspect-concerned' context (thus taking a becoming-aspect-concerned perspective), *once* the relevant identities of the items under examination are determined (either their common aspects or their distinct aspects, and either in an explicit way or in an implicit way), one needs to observe the principle of non-contradiction and the law of identity, and thus to this extent commit oneself to the being-aspect-concerned perspective, to carry out rational or consistent dialogues including explicitly conducting deductive reasoning.

Gongun Long's case well manifests two methodological points addressed here in his chapter 'Bai-Ma-Lun' ('白馬論') of the *Gong-Sun-Long-Zi* (公孫龍子). First, one is entitled to take either a being-aspect-concerned perspective or a becoming-aspect-concerned perspective to determine the identities of things under examination, even for the sake of deductive reasoning. I render crucial the following passage in Gongsun Long's 'Bai-Ma-Lun' for understanding his methodological strategy behind his several arguments for the thesis that the white horse is not the horse (*bai-ma-fei-ma* 白馬非馬):[24]

> When one seeks a horse, either a yellow horse or a black horse may meet what is sought. When one seeks a white horse, neither a yellow horse nor a black horse may meet what is sought. What makes a white horse a horse (*shi bai ma nai ma*) is the same [common] aspect [of a white horse and a horse] given that it is what is sought (*suo qiu yi ye*). If what is sought is the common aspect, the white horse would not differ from (*bu yi*) the horse [in regard to the common aspect]. If what is sought in one case [the common aspect of all the horses which is met by the yellow horse and the black horse alike] does

not differ from what is sought in the other case [the distinct aspect between the white horse and the horse which is met by neither the yellow horse nor the black horse], then why is it that the yellow or black horse does meet what is sought in one case but not in the other? It is evident that the two cases are distinct. For this reason the yellow horse and the black horse, based on what are the same in them [they are horses but not white horses], answer to what 'horse' denotes [fall into the extension of 'horse'] but not to what 'white horse' denotes [not into the extension of 'white horse']. Thus [in the way in which the yellow horse and the black horse are not the white horse in regard to their distinct aspect] indeed the white horse is not the horse.

Second, once he takes a becoming-aspect-concerned perspective to focus on a variety of distinct aspects of the white horse and the horse and thus determines their respective identities under examination, Gongsun Long conducts four major deductive arguments, each of which focuses on one distinct aspect of the white horse, for the sake of justifying the thesis that the white horse is not the horse. For example, in the passage that immediately follows the above quotation, Gongsun Long presents the following deductive argument that focuses on the distinct necessary identities of the white horse and the horse:

> Horses certainly have color, and there are thus white horses. What makes horses as the horse but not as having a certain color is being the horse [alone as its necessary identity contributor]; isn't it that being the *white* horse [my emphasis] is not [essentially] related to being the horse? Therefore being white is not being the horse. The white horse is the combination of being the horse with being white [both as its necessary identity contributors]; thus there results in the distinct identities of horses and white horses. Therefore one can say that a white horse is not a horse.

This argument can be elaborated into the following explicit deductive-argument form:

> Pr.1 [The necessary identity contributors of] A white horse includes white color [as its necessary identity contributor];
> Pr.2 A horse does not have white color [as its necessary identity contributor];
> So, being the white horse and being the horse are not essentially related to each other [that is, the white horse and the horse do not have the same necessary identity contributor];
> [Pr.3 If two things are the same, then they must have the same necessary identity contributor; that is, if they do not have the same necessary identity contributor, then they are not the same;]
> So, the white horse is not identical to (or differs from) the horse; that is, the white horse is not the horse.

Now, what methodological lessons can be drawn from the reflective practice of such classical Chinese philosophers as the Mohist thinkers and Gongsun Long in this connection and the above theoretic analysis? I think there are five. First, there are distinct types of context in which deductive reasoning can be effectively applied instead of the exclusive one in which the common aspect of the involved items is identified. Second, at the level of fulfilling the presuppositional demand of deductive reasoning for determining the identities of the items under examination, one can take either a being-aspect-concerned perspective by focusing on the common aspect of the involved item(s) or a becoming-aspect-concerned perspective by focusing on the distinct aspect of the involved item(s); to this extent or at this level, deductive reasoning is compatible with both the being-aspect-concerned perspective and the becoming-aspect-concerned perspective. Third, however, on the other hand, deductive reasoning *per se* as an instrumental method is to implement the being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective via observing the two basic principles of logic; any deductive reasoning *per se* commits its practitioner to such a being-aspect-concerned perspective via observing the principle of non-contradiction and the law of identity. Fourth, in view of the preceding methodological points, the Mohist challenge addressed at the outset of this section is rather to celebrate indiscriminately the 'standard' context of applications of deductive reasoning than its applicability in distinct linguistic contexts. Fifth, the examination and clarification of the two basic principles of deductive reasoning suggest one reason why evocative argumentation and logical argumentation cannot be completely immune from each other, a point to be addressed in the remaining section below, where I briefly examine the evocative argumentation as one typical (though surely not exclusive) kind of instrumental method that serves as a means of justification in classical Chinese philosophy.

Evocative argumentation in Chinese philosophy

It is known that any philosophical inquiry needs to base its conclusion on justification or argumentation rather than simply dogmatically taking something for granted. There are two basic modes of argumentation in philosophy, one is logical (in a narrow sense of the term 'logical') and the other evocative, though sometimes only the former is highlighted and celebrated. The two modes of argumentation are sometimes contrasted as 'logic versus rhetoric', 'inferential versus preferential', or 'probative versus prohairetic'. A logical argument is a set of statements in which one or more of the statements, the premises, purports to provide a reason or evidence for the truth of another statement, the conclusion, either in a deductive way or in an inductive way. When it does, we say that the premises entail or support the conclusion, or that the conclusion 'follows from' the premises. We traditionally divide logical arguments into deductive and inductive arguments. The term 'evocative' is used in contrast to the term 'logical' used in the narrow sense; it means producing or suggesting or triggering (generally speaking, evoking) some subsequent thought or conclusion primarily in some non-'logical' way, neither deductively nor inductively as specified above. Among a variety of evocative argumentation, what have often been addressed especially in humanities are argument by (relevant) analogy (drawing its conclusion by evoking

a similarity between some particular aspect of two things from, or on the basis of, their similarity in some other particular aspect[s] or in some other general aspect), argument by appealing to value (drawing its conclusion by appealing to one's value which is appreciated through one's life-experience and understanding of the world [and/or human society]), and argument by appealing to (credible) authority (draws its conclusion by appealing to trustworthy and knowledgeable authority on the issue under examination).

Both modes of argumentation are widely used in classical Chinese philosophy. Let us consider some examples in Confucius' *Analects* to illustrate the point. Contrary to some unjustified impressions, this classical text does not lack deductive reasoning; though some of the deductive-reasoning cases need one to carefully read between the lines, others are quite clear: for example, the reasoning given in 13.3, where Confucius' doctrine of *zheng-ming* (rectification of names) is delivered:

> Zi-lu asked, 'If the ruler of the *Wei* State puts you in charge of state administration to govern the state and the people, what would be the priority of your administration?' Confucius replied, 'It would surely be the rectification of names.' Zi-lu wondered, 'Is it so? What a pedantic way! Why is there need to bring in the rectification of names?' Confucius said, 'You, how unenlightened you are! When a *junzi* (an enlightened gentleman) is ignorant of something, he is not expected to offer any opinion on it. If names are not rectified, then what is said in speech would not be in accord with things as they are (supposed to be); if what is said in speech would not be in accord with things as they are (supposed to be), then what is [supposed] to be done by using words would not be accomplished; if what is [supposed] to be done by using words is not accomplished, then the [adequate] socially established ritual rules as manifested via ceremonies and music will not be implemented; if these [adequate] socially established ritual rules will not be implemented, then punishment will not be just; if punishment would not be just, then the people will not know where to move forward. Therefore, a *junzi* should give names only to those that surely can be adequately delivered in speech and deliver in speech only what surely can be adequately carried out in practice.'

On the other hand, the argumentation implicit in Confucius' version of the Golden Rule as delivered in 6.28 of the *Analects* illustrates both argument by analogy and argument by appealing to value. Its conclusion is that one should treat others in a certain moral way; which way? One is expected to identify the way partially based on how one would like to be treated: due to the common human-being identity among human beings that results in similarities in many relevant aspects between human moral beings, Confucius' version of the Golden Rule guides the moral agent to 'draw the analogy from oneself [the way one would desire to be treated]' to how to treat others in a moral way (that is, to evoke the similarity in regard to what would be desired and what would be rendered moral by both the moral agent and the moral recipient). Furthermore, the moral agent is not expected to start from nowhere but to be a moral agent with (a certain degree of) moral sensibility, that is, the virtue of

ren; this initial moral sensibility serves as the internal starting point of how the moral agent is to adequately draw the analogy. This moral value, according to Confucius, is commonly, more or less, shared by all human moral agents; this moral value would thus contribute to what would be rendered moral by both the moral agent and the moral recipient (the similarity in this regard). In this way, Confucius' version of the Golden Rule appeals to the moral value to justify a reasonable version of the Golden Rule. Through this example, one can see how argument by analogy and argument by appealing to value interplay in the argumentation in Confucius' version of the Golden Rule.

Indeed, when appealing to value and appealing to authority, one needs to be careful; otherwise, one might fall into fallacies. But, what is at issue is not whether people and philosophers have ever made adequate arguments by appealing to value or to authority in their reflective practice. Philosophers do it, directly or indirectly, and explicitly or implicitly, in their arguments both in the Chinese tradition and in the Western tradition. What is really philosophically interesting is how to do it in an adequate way to avoid fallacies. In this connection, unlike deductive reasoning, there is no formal rule manual available but some general guidelines. Those general guidelines, largely, present themselves as explanations of what constitute fallacies in reasoning or argumentation. One case is the fallacy of a dubious authority regarding a current situation: an argument commits this fallacy when it mistakes some person as a trustworthy and knowledgeable authority about the current situation. Another case is the fallacy of relevance: mistaking relevant dissimilarities as irrelevant – an argument (typically, an argument by analogy) commits this fallacy when it mistakes relevant differences between two (kinds of) things as irrelevant to the issue under examination. For example, to illustrate the fallacy of relevance, let us consider how Mencius criticizes an argument by analogy made by Gao Zi, his contemporary, in regard to original human (moral) nature:

> Gao Zi said, '[Original] Human [moral] nature is like the willow tree, and righteousness is like making a drinking cup. To turn human nature into humanity and righteousness is like turning the willow tree into cups.' Mencius responded, 'Could you make the cups out of the willow tree without violating its nature, or do you have to violate the nature of the willow tree before you can make the cups? If you have to violate the nature of the willow tree in order to make cups, then [based on your analogy] do you have to also violate human nature in order to make it into humanity and righteousness? Your analogy would lead all people in the world to consider humanity and righteousness as the source of disaster [because they required the violation of human nature]!'
> (*Mencius* 6A:1. My modification of the translation in Chan 1963: 51.)

Mencius here criticizes Gao Zi for his inadequately paying attention only to some superficial similarity between making a cup and building character but ignoring a crucial difference between making a cup out of the willow tree (injuring the willow)

and building human moral character from original human moral nature (without involving violence and injury); in this way, Mencius actually criticizes Gao Zi for mistaking one significantly relevant dissimilarity between both as irrelevant in his argument by analogy.

The relation of the two modes of argumentation together with their respective nature and status in philosophical inquiry has been under reflective examination. We can think of a number of questions with regard to the cases cited above in traditional Chinese philosophy and through examining our own reflective practice in argumentation: When carrying out deductive (or evocative) argumentation, could one's argumentation be totally immune from evocative (or deductive) argumentation? (Think about where premises in many deductive arguments come from; also think about whether one still needs to rely on a certain standard and resort to the two basic principles of deductive reasoning mentioned above in some way when carrying out evocative argumentation.) One strategic methodological point in regard to the relation between the two modes of argumentation is that they come into 'mutually supportive overall harmonization' (Rescher 1994: 25). That is especially true in view of Chinese philosophical practice, for this orientation is kindred in spirit with the *yin-yang* way of thinking which emphasizes the complementary nature between seemingly competing approaches. As explained above, the *yin-yang* way of thinking has fundamentally influenced the orientation of mentality, including the way of carrying out reflective argumentation, of subsequent Chinese thinkers in various schools or movements. Another note is due. Difference in argumentation between the Chinese and Western philosophical traditions lies in quantity and in distinct forms, rather than in quality, in the following senses. First, it is not the case that a certain type of argumentation exists exclusively in one philosophical tradition but absolutely disappears in another tradition; the two kinds of basic argumentation exist in both the Chinese and the Western philosophical traditions. But, second, difference does exist in some interesting ways. There are two situations. (1) Either one kind of argumentation is more prominently employed in one tradition instead of another; evocative argumentation is more prominently employed in the reflective practice of classical Chinese philosophy, while logical argumentation is more prominently employed in the Western tradition. (2) A certain type of application of one argumentation is more prominently made in one tradition (or in some movements of thought in one tradition) instead of another. For example, as explained above, the Mohist thinkers and Gongsun Long in classical Chinese philosophy often carry out deductive reasoning in a 'becoming-aspect-concerned' context.

3

Based on the preceding discussions and conceptual and explanatory resources, a methodological framework can be introduced for the sake of enhancing our understanding of relevant methodological issues concerning Chinese philosophy, specifically speaking, and for the sake of cross-tradition understanding and constructive engagement in our carrying out philosophical inquiries in a global context, generally

speaking. The core portion of the methodological framework consists of the adequacy conditions for methodological guiding principles that are supposed to regulate how to look at the relation between eligible methodological perspectives and how to employ them in legitimate and constructive ways. It is noted that the term 'constructive engagement' used above means a general philosophical approach that inquires into how, via reflective criticism and self-criticism, distinct modes of thinking, methodological approaches, visions, insights, substantial points of view, or conceptual/explanatory resources from various philosophical traditions and different styles/orientations of doing philosophy in a global context, can learn from each other and make joint contribution to the common philosophical enterprise and/or series of common concerns and issues of philosophical significance.

The suggested framework is methodological in a dual sense. First, it is directly and explicitly concerned with cross-tradition understanding and constructive engagement of seemingly competing *methodological* approaches from different traditions. Second, the framework *per se* is methodological in nature: it is concerned with *how* to look at seemingly competing *methodological* approaches from different traditions. In the above second sense the suggested framework is *about philosophy methodology*; in this sense, the suggested framework is also meta-philosophical in nature.

As indicated above, the suggested methodological framework is the one concerning how to look at seemingly competing methodological approaches from distinct traditions in regard to an object of philosophical study. Given that the term 'methodological approach' means a way of responding to how to approach an object of study, the term is generic and means a number of methodological ways. As explained in Section 1.1, in the context of philosophical inquiries, generally speaking, the notion of methodological approach can, and needs to, be refined into three distinct but related notions of methodological ways for the sake of adequately characterizing three distinct but somehow related methodological ways in philosophical inquiries, that is, methodological perspective, methodological instrument, and methodological guiding principle (see Section 1.1).

One basic, minimal metaphysical presupposition of the suggested meta-philosophical methodological framework is this: given an object of study and given that the identity of the genuine aspect(s) of the object is thus determined (whether it is a naturally produced object in physical reality, or a socially constructed object in social reality, or an object of a systematic theoretic construction), there *is* the *common*, *objective* object of study, linguistically or semantically addressed in the mutual understanding and constructive engagement. This minimal metaphysical presupposition consists of three sub-presuppositions:

1 Given an object of study, the object has its *objective* character in a certain sense so that the 'anything goes' version of conceptual relativism cannot go.
2 Given an object of study, the object possesses its genuine multiple aspects, or all these aspects are genuinely possessed by the same, common object so that various agent-speakers who point to these different aspects actually talk about the same object.

3   An agent-speaker who talks about the same common object can linguistically or semantically reach the common object as a whole, whether or not she is currently able to epistemologically reach all the aspects of the object.

People have, or would have when being allowed to think for a while, their pre-theoretic understandings that (would) confirm the three claims or even consider them as platitudes. As any system has to stop somewhere, the framework to be presented here proceeds with its resorting to our reasonable pre-theoretic understandings in these three connections.[25]

For the purpose of cross-tradition understanding and constructive engagement, it is especially philosophically interesting, relevant, or even crucial to have an adequate methodological guiding principle (see Section 1.1), which the agent is expected to presuppose in evaluating the status and nature of the eligible methodological perspectives, applying her methodological perspective, and looking at the relation between her current working perspective and the other perspectives. Below, I suggest six conditions for adequate methodological guiding principles. The first four, and one of the last two depending on the situation, are expected for an adequate guiding principle. Since I assume my readers are largely English-speaking and more familiar with Western philosophy, and for the sake of the aim of this volume, I intentionally use samples in comparative engagement. Nevertheless, the conditions are intended to be general; one can apply them to the previously discussed cases to test the explanatory force of the suggested set of adequacy conditions. This set of conditions does not pretend to be exhaustive, nor exclusive, nor dogmatic; the conditions are open to critical examination for their validity and explanatory force.

(1) *The perspective-eligibility-recognizing condition*. A methodological guiding principle that is presupposed by the agent who uses some eligible methodological perspective as her current working perspective is considered to be adequate when this guiding principle renders other eligible methodological perspectives (if any) also eligible and somehow compatible with the application of the current working perspective. In contrast, it is considered inadequate in this connection if otherwise. Note that, in comparison with the subsequent adequacy conditions, this adequacy condition is the minimal condition in the sense that it is to be presupposed by the remaining sorts of adequacy conditions and that this adequacy condition should be minimally met by any adequate methodological guiding principle.

For example, consider the two sample methodological perspectives spelled out in Section 2.2 above, the Socrates-style being-aspect-concerned perspective and the Confucius-style becoming-aspect-concerned perspective. The two kinds of methodological perspectives point respectively to the two most basic modes of existence, being and becoming, of things in the world that are typically possessed simultaneously by most things in nature. Now the object of study under Socrates' and Confucius' examination is (filial) piety. If piety as the object of study genuinely possesses both its being and its becoming aspects, Socrates' being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective and Confucius' becoming-aspect-concerned methodological perspective are both eligible in regard to our reflective examination of piety. In this way, a methodological guiding

principle that renders both methodological perspectives eligible on the issue of piety would retain the perspective-eligibility-recognizing adequacy.

(2) *The agent-purpose-sensitivity condition.* A methodological guiding principle is considered to be adequate if it has its choice of a certain working perspective, among eligible methodological perspectives, sensitive to the agent's purpose and thus renders the most applicable or the most appropriate (the best relative to that purpose) the perspective that (best) serves that purpose. In contrast, it is considered inadequate in this connection if otherwise.

Consider again the two sample methodological perspectives in Section 2.2 above. Given that the two perspectives are both eligible on the issue of piety, a methodological guiding principle that sets out to decide which one among the two is to be taken by an agent as her current working perspective, or how to evaluate the validity of her working perspective, should be sensitive to the agent's purpose or her focus on which aspect of piety is to be captured in a certain context. If so, the methodological guiding principle would retain the agent-purpose-sensitivity adequacy. Otherwise, that is, when a methodological guiding principle demands or allows the agent indiscriminately to choose one *ad hoc* methodological perspective without regard to the agent's purpose and focus in a certain context, the methodological guiding principle would fail to retain this adequacy.

(3) *The equality-status-granting condition.* A methodological guiding principle is considered to be adequate if it renders all the eligible methodological perspectives (perspective simplexes)[26] equal: being equally necessary for the sake of a complete account of an object of study and being equally local from the global point of view that transcends any local methodological perspectives; thus none of them is *absolutely* superior (or inferior) to the others in the above senses. In contrast, it is considered inadequate in this connection if otherwise.

Consider again the two sample methodological perspectives in Section 2.2 above, and assume that both are eligible on the issue of piety. When one resorts to a certain methodological guiding principle to guide one's evaluation of the status of the Socrates-style being-aspect-concerned perspective and renders it indiscriminately and absolutely superior to the Confucius-style becoming-aspect-concerned perspective (or vice versa), the methodological guiding principle thus fails to retain the equality-status-granting adequacy concerning these two methodological perspectives on the issue of piety. In contrast, if a methodological guiding principle renders one of the two perspectives better than the other or more suitable only in view of a certain context and in regard to a certain aspect of piety to which the perspective in question points but without viewing it absolutely superior to the other, this methodological guiding principle would thus meet the equality-status-granting adequacy condition concerning these two methodological perspectives on the issue of piety

(4) *The new-eligible-perspective-possibility-recognizing condition.* A methodological guiding principle is considered to be adequate if it takes an open-minded attitude toward the possibility of new eligible perspectives that are to point to some genuine aspect of the object of study but have yet to be realized by the agent because of

the 'unknown-identity' status of that aspect. A methodological guiding principle is considered inadequate in this connection if otherwise.

For example, consider again the two sample methodological perspectives in Section 2.2 above, and assume that both are eligible perspectives on the issue of piety. If, besides the two perspectives, a methodological guiding principle takes its open-minded attitude toward the possibility of new (yet-to-be-recognized) aspects of piety and thus the possibility of new eligible methodological perspectives that are to point to and explain them, then the methodological guiding principle would retain its new-eligible-perspective-possibility-recognizing adequacy. In contrast, any methodological guiding principle that renders exclusive and exhaustive the current working perspective (or the current stock of methodological perspectives that are so far epistemologically available), the guiding principle is thus inadequate because it fails to meet the condition of the new-eligible-perspective-possibility-recognizing adequacy.

(5) *The complementarity-seeking condition.* Given that multiple, seemingly competing eligible methodological perspectives concerning an object of study turn out to be complementary (in the sense that each of them points to one aspect of the object and is indispensable for a complete understanding of the object), a methodological guiding principle is considered to be adequate if it captures the complementary character of the involved aspects of the object and thus seeks the complementary connection and harmonious balance between those perspectives for the sake of enhancing the complementary unity of those eligible perspectives. In contrast, it is considered inadequate in this connection if otherwise.

Consider again the two sample methodological perspectives in Section 2.2 above. Suppose that piety as the object of study genuinely possesses both its being and becoming aspects and that both aspects are interdependent, interpenetrating, interactive, and complementary in regard to the constitution of piety. Then the Socrates-style being-aspect-concerned perspective and the Confucius-style becoming-aspect-concerned perspective are complementary instead of being incompatible or opposed to each other on the issue of piety. In this way, a methodological guiding principle that renders the two methodological perspectives complementary, seeks their complementary connection, and promotes their joint contribution to a complete understanding of piety thus meets the complementarity-seeking condition. If otherwise, a methodological guiding principle would be inadequate in this connection on the issue.

(6) *The sublation-seeking condition.* Given that multiple seemingly competing eligible methodological perspectives are genuinely competing to the extent that they point respectively to the genuinely competing or contradictory aspects or dimensions of the current status quo state of an object of study (or of some future stage of its due development) or the genuinely competing aspects of distinct objects of study,[27] such a methodological guiding principle would be considered adequate: when there is a genuine need, this guiding principle deals with those eligible but genuinely competing perspectives by capturing the contradictory character of the object(s) and seeking a due solution through a Hegelian synthetic balance in the newly formed object of study

via sublation that keeps what are reasonable from both while disregarding what are not in the original object(s) of study. In contrast, it is considered inadequate in this connection if otherwise.

For example, it is to be decided whether to take the profit-seeking-only perspective or the welfare-seeking-only perspective to build up one social-economic community. Sometimes the profit-seeking-only layer and the welfare-seeking-only layer of the status quo state of the social-economic community become genuinely contradictory. Then, when a methodological guiding principle seeks a synthetic balance via sublation to bring about a new approach that keeps what are reasonable in the two perspectives while disregarding what are not, the methodological guiding principle would be considered to be adequate because it meets the sublation-seeking condition in this due situation (so that the status quo state of the social-economic community can be adequately reformed under its guidance). Another example concerning competing aspects of distinct objects of study is this: given that two ideological systems as two objects of study are incompatible in regard to some of their aspects that are thus related to two genuinely completing perspectives, and when there is a genuine need of having them somehow compatible, an adequate methodological guiding principle seeks a synthetic balance via sublation in a newly formed ideological system (as a newly formed object of study) that somehow has the originally competing perspective become compatible.

Note that the minimal 'perspective-eligibility-recognizing condition' is presupposed by the remaining kinds of adequacy conditions. Also note that which one, between the last two kinds of conditions, needs to be maintained would depend on the nature of the object of study, the character of the involved perspectives, and the purpose that a certain methodological guiding principle serves.

* * *

It is hoped that this methodological introduction is helpful to readers who are interested in the philosophical values and contributions of Chinese philosophy and useful to the professionals who are concerned with various relevant methodological issues concerning studies of Chinese philosophy.

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are based on materials that originally appeared in Mou 2001a. Partial contents of Sections 1.2 and 1.3 originally appeared in Mou 2002 and Section 2 of Mou 2006b. Partial materials in the case analyses in Sections 2.1 and 2.3 originally appeared in Mou 2001c and 2001a respectively; partial materials in the case analysis in Section 2.3 originally appeared in Mou 2006a and 2007. Some parts of Section 3 are based on materials that originally appeared in Mou 2008. My thanks to the publishers and editors for permission to reuse the materials here.

NOTES

As an introduction to the methodological dimension of this volume, this chapter presents the editor's view on the issue, rather than a survey of others' views. Nevertheless, for the reader's information, I provide a selective list of relevant works in the Bibliography at the end of this essay. A significant portion of this chapter consists of further development and refinement of some of my previous ideas concerning philosophical methodology, especially in view of Chinese and comparative philosophy that appeared in the publications as listed in the Acknowledgments. The English translations of the citations from the Chinese texts in this chapter are mine unless indicated otherwise.

1. See the relevant discussion in Chapter 1, below.
2. This includes a philosopher's attitude toward her own claims. Though she can very firmly maintain her current position (not blindly but on the basis of argumentation, understood broadly), a philosopher is expected to be open-minded and have it subject to criticism and thus possible improvement or change, instead of rendering it absolutely immune from criticism.
3. For my full vision of this analysis of the structure of philosophical methodology, see Mou 2001a.
4. The two methodological emphases might be obvious to some, though not so obvious to others. Nevertheless, how to explain and elaborate the obvious is another matter. The power of philosophy, in many cases, lies in elaborating and/or justifying what seems obvious both for the interpretative elaboration's own sake and for the sake of the need of those who have yet to agree.
5. Here I use the term 'interpretation' in a narrow or straightforward sense as specified here (in terms of elaborating and understanding) rather than in a broad or implicit sense in which all the three orientations discussed here could be somehow identified as 'interpretation-concerned'.
6. Then, can these implications be said to belong to the thinker's ideas in the text (and thus fall into what the thinker truly means/meant or what the thinker's ideas truly has/had)? In an important sense, the answer would be yes; for these implications are truly implied by the ideas delivered by the thinker, although one can surely say that these implications were not actually expressed by the thinker, and one thus might say that they are not what the thinker actually (or truly?) means/meant. (At this point, one can see that such expressions as 'what a certain thinker truly means/meant' or 'what she truly has/had' tend to be ambiguous and vague and thus deserve a clarification, especially when one intends to make claims about what a thinker truly means/meant or what her ideas truly has/had.)
7. From the point of view of comparative engagement, those conceptual and explanatory resources used are thus tacitly and implicitly, but constructively, in comparison and contrast to those original resources by means of which the insight or vision was somehow delivered, insofar as such comparison of the two distinct sorts of resources is not expressly and directly conducted. The term 'constructively' here means that such a tacit comparative approach intrinsically involves how the interpreter of the thinker's ideas could learn from another tradition or account regarding resources to enhance the interpreter's understanding of the thinker's ideas; therefore, some constructive philosophical engagement between distinct resources respectively from different traditions or accounts is tacitly involved in this orientation and its corresponding methodological approach.
8. It is another matter when a thinker intentionally uses seemingly paradoxical remarks to make some points. However, such occasions imply neither that the ideas delivered by these remarks *per se* are actually incoherent nor that the points in question could not be delivered effectively in clearer terms without paradoxical appearance.

9. The 'blurring' assimilation might result from 'over'use of external resources when interpreting one or both parties under comparative examination, especially when the external resources used to characterize one party come from the other party. But, for the purpose of interpretation, the resulting assimilation is not necessarily inappropriate and might illuminate the essential connection and common points between the assimilated ideas at the fundamental level so as to enhance our understanding of those ideas.

10. The identities of common concerns of philosophical significance need to be understood through *reflective interpretation* and/or looked at from a *broad philosophical vantage point*. First, we need not only to look merely at what ancient thinkers' texts directly/literally said but also to involve reflective elaboration on the implications for our understanding of the thinkers' ideas and their philosophical significance. Second, many issues that were traditionally identified as 'unique' in different traditions have turned out to be distinct aspects, layers or dimensions of some more general issues of philosophy, especially when they are examined from a broader philosophical vantage point. This is what I mean by 'common concerns' here and in subsequent chapters.

11. The *Yi-Jing* text in the classical sense means the *Zhou-Yi* text. The methodological insights of the *yin-yang* way of thinking as revealed in the *Yi-Jing* text in the classical sense are not exactly the same as those views presented in the commentaries on the *Zhou-Yi* text, i.e., the *Yi-Zhuan* (the *Zhou-Yi* and the *Yi-Zhuan* combined as the *Yi-Jing* text in its broad sense); those views, to a large extent, are subsequent Confucian interpretative elaborations of the *Zhou-Yi* text.

12. When using the term '*yin-yang*' to label the metaphysical and methodological vision under discussion, I do not depend on how those subsequent Confucian commentators/interpreters used the terms '*yin*', '*yang*', or '*yin-yang*' in the *Ten Wings*. Rather, I turn on these basic textual facts: first, the *Yi-Jing* text comprises the hexagram text, which consists of the *yin-yao* '– –' or the *yang-yao* 'ó ' and their explanatory text (the *gua-ci* and the *yao-ci*); second, what *yin-yao* and *yang-yao*, when standing alone, denote are respectively those that the terms '*yin*' and '*yang*' are *used*, rather than *mentioned*, by us to denote.

13. With the original, broad sense of 'being', the metaphysics, as the reflective study of existence, is rightly called by Aristotle 'the study of being' when the term 'being' is used in the above broad sense. Nevertheless, for the reason to be mentioned, the term 'being' is also used in a narrow and specific sense, especially when it is used in contrast to the meaning of the term 'becoming' which denotes the unstable, irregular, indefinite, transient, particular, or changing aspect of existing things. The term 'being' is then used as a blanket term to denote the stable, regular, definite, permanent, universal, or unchanging aspect or layer of existing things. A prominent example of using the term 'being' in this sense is Parmenides' way, though he assigned much inflated import to the term 'being' in his philosophy. In the history of Western philosophy, the two characteristic uses of 'being' are somehow closely connected with each other in some or even many philosophers' minds: because the stable, regular, definite, permanent, unchanging aspect of an object is considered as the defining or crucial aspect of the object and is supposed to give the essence of the object, the metaphysical study of being as existence is considered as essentially the study of being as the stable, regular, definite, permanent, and unchanging in existence. Note that indicating this historical background for identifying or relating the two usages of 'being' in the above way does not imply that using the term 'being' in its specific sense here means the endorsement of such an identification.

14. For my detailed discussion of this, see Mou 2001c.

15. See Hegel 1807.

16. For my detailed explanation of this point, see Mou 2000.

17. In contrast to some interpretations that take this passage as one crucial piece of textual evidence for Zhuang Zi's alleged radical 'anything goes' relativism or a relativistic perspectivism, it is arguably right to say that Zhuang Zi's point here is essentially a kind of objective perspectivism or a version of transcendental perspectivism. For, instead of 'any perspective goes', Zhuang Zi bases relevance and eligibility of a perspective (given an object of study or under examination) on whether it points to some aspect that is genuinely or objectively possessed by the object under examination. Note that what 'objective' or 'objectively' means here is not exclusively associated with what exists completely independently of mind but can cover inter-subjective conceptual or mental objects whose existence and identity, once given, is not (or no longer) purely subjective or completely mind-dependent. The

notion of the objective (or objective objects) understood in this sense is compatible both with what is dynamically generated in the natural world and with the objects that are constructed or projected by mind and then (once given) are somehow accessible by the fellow human agent (either through *da-yan* 大言 or by means of *xiao-yan* 小言); for both kinds of objects, once given, genuinely possess their own aspects whose identities cannot be randomly, wildly, or purely subjectively specified by agents when they allegedly talk about the given objects.

18. For Socrates' '*elenchus*' method (*elenkhos* in Greek literally means 'refutation'), especially see *Laches*, *Euthyphro*, Book I of the *Republic*, the first part of *Meno*, *Protagoras*, and *Gorgias*.

19. In 5c–d, Socrates puts forward the question 'What is piety?' and sets up three conditions or requirements to be met: (i) some feature that is the same in every pious action; (ii) this feature will not be shared by any impious action; (iii) it will be that feature (or the lack of it) that makes an action pious (or impious).

20. Socrates' being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective has strongly influenced the development of mainstream Western philosophy in the analytic tradition; it actually constitutes one origin of the perspective dimension of the analytic methodological approach as a whole. It is arguably right to identify the (or one) analytic perspective in terms of the being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective.

21. For the source materials that present good illustrations of Confucius' methodological perspective, especially see Confucius' characterizations of *xiao* (filial piety) in the *Analects* 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8, to be cited below, and of *ren* (humanity) in the *Analects* 4.3, 6.28, 12.1, 12.22, and 13.19.

22. I borrow the label 'evocative' from Rescher 1994.

23. See A.C. Graham's discussion of the three kinds of contexts in Graham 1989: 137–70. The citations of the Mohist sample inferences below are from Graham 1989, which is more accessible to the reader.

24. For my detailed discussion of Gongsun Long's 'White-Horse-Not-Horse' argument in terms of a double-reference account, see Mou 2007. What I present here is a further methodological elaboration of Gongsun Long's argument.

25. But it is both philosophically interesting and significant to raise and explore the three corresponding reflectively worthy issues for the sake of establishing a due metaphysical/semantic foundation for the suggested methodological framework: (1) how it is possible for us to have the common *objective* object of study without running into radical relativism; (2) how it is possible for us to have the common object of study that genuinely possesses its multiple aspects; (3) how it is possible for the agent-speaker to linguistically reach the object as a whole, whether or not she is currently able to epistemologically reach all the aspects of the object. I explore these issues elsewhere.

26. Clearly, what is talked about here is not a methodological-perspective complex that can be a combination of multiple methodological-perspective simplexes.

27. The latter situation (i.e., 'the genuinely competing aspects of distinct objects of study') is intended to cover such a case: given an object of study (at a lower level), there are two or more ideological systems as distinct objects of study (at a higher level), which either result from some theoretic constructions or are products of pre-theoretic ideological developments in different traditions in treating the foregoing object of study (at a lower level).

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Zhuang-Zi 《莊子》.

I

IDENTITY OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Chapter 1
THE EMERGENCE OF THE HISTORY OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Antonio S. Cua

This essay is an inquiry into the constructive challenge of Western philosophy to the development of the history of Chinese philosophy. The discussion focuses on the methodological aspects of three major works that appeared between 1919 and 1982. These works are remarkable, not only for illustrating the different Western philosophical assumptions and backgrounds of the writers, but also for their importance in Chinese philosophical education and discourse. As a preliminary, in Section 1, I consider the idea of Chinese philosophy and samples of the critical-historical spirit of ancient Chinese thought. In Section 2, I turn to the three major works on the history of Chinese philosophy, that is, works of Hu Shih (Hu, Shi 胡適), Fung Yu-lan (Feng, You-lan 馮友蘭), and Lao Sze-kwang (Lao, Si-kuang 勞思光), and conclude with some remarks on the contributions of a few recent works to the study of the history of Chinese philosophy.

1 Preliminary Considerations

1.1 The idea of Chinese philosophy

It is common today for a teacher or scholar in Chinese philosophy to encounter the query 'What is Chinese philosophy?' Sometimes this query is a disguise for expressing doubt as to whether there could even be such a thing as Chinese philosophy. There is a terse answer to the question: 'Since "philosophy" is a Western term, Chinese philosophy is an invention of Western-trained Chinese scholars.' This answer, however, is not helpful. A better answer would be a reminder that, from ancient times to the present, ethics is a recognized branch of Western philosophical inquiry. And ethics has its counterpart in ancient Chinese thought. Both Socrates and Confucius (孔子) were preoccupied with basic questions of normative ethics, questions about the manner of life that best befits humanity, about the ideals of human excellence and well-being. These questions were brilliantly pursued by Plato and Aristotle. We find

comparable achievements in the works of Mencius (孟子) and Xun Zi (Hsün Tzu 荀子). Xun Zi's writings, moreover, reveal significant interest in and insights to some basic issues in moral epistemology, e.g., the problems of ethical language and justification as a form of argumentative discourse.[1]

Of course, the word 'philosophy' has no equivalent in Chinese before translations of Western philosophical works in the nineteenth century. Yan Fu (嚴復 1823–1921) was the first, in 1898, to translate into Chinese Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*.[2] Later Yan Fu translated some works of John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and Montesquieu. In the early 1960s, Wing-tsit Chan (陳榮捷) wrote:

> At the turn of the century, ideas of Schopenhauer, Kant, Nietzsche, Rousseau, Tolstoy, and Kropotkin were imported. After the intellectual renaissance of 1917, the movement advanced at a rapid pace. In the following decade, important works of Descartes, Spinoza, Hume, James, Bergson, and Marx, and others became available in Chinese. Dewey, Russell, and Dreisch came to China to lecture, and special numbers of journals were devoted to Nietzsche and Bergson … Almost every trend of thought had its exponent. James, Bergson, Euken, Whitehead, Hocking, Schiller, T.H. Green, Carnap, and C.I. Lewis had their own following. For a time it seemed Chinese thought was to be completely Westernized.[3]

In Taiwan and Hong Kong today, we also find followers of Kant, Husserl, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Maritain, Gilson, Quine, Pepper, Gadamer, Derrida, and different philosophical schools of thought. If one visits any Taiwan or Hong Kong university today, one is likely to find a department of philosophy with a wide offering of standard subjects and also courses such as Chinese philosophy, Indian philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, and comparative philosophy. In the People's Republic of China, there are still followers of Marx and Lenin, as well as specialists in logic, philosophy of science, and aesthetics.[4]

The translation of Western philosophical concepts and doctrines provides an impetus to the development of Chinese philosophical discourse. In perusing a Chinese dictionary of philosophy, first published in l925 (*Zhe-Xue-Ci-Dian*[5]), we find a few Chinese translations of philosophical subjects and terms, e.g., 'ethics', 'logic', 'ontology', 'essence', 'accident', 'substance', 'attributes', and 'reason'. These terms still have currency today. In fact 'logic' appears as a transliteration that becomes part of Modern Chinese. It is instructive to note how some translations of standard Western philosophical terms represent an effort of Chinese and Japanese scholars to find functional equivalents in Chinese. Consider the word 'philosophy'. An ingenious Japanese scholar's translation of 'philosophy' as *zhe-xue* is a good example. Nishi Amane, in his *Hyakuichi shimron* (*Bai-Yi-Xin-Lun*) (1874), appeared to be the first scholar to use *zhe-xue* (哲學) as a translation for the Greek *philosophia* and 'philosophy'. For justification of this translation of 'philosophy' as *zhe-xue*, Nishi Amane appealed to Zhou Dun-yi's notion of *xi-xian-xue* or *xi-zhe-xue*, that is, 'to aspire to the learning of a worthy person' or 'to aspire to the learning of an intelligent, knowledgeable person'. This is an interpretive

translation, for Nishi explicitly appealed to a brief remark of Zhou Dun-yi (周敦頤 Zhou Lian-xi, 1017–73) in *Tong-Shu* (Chapter 10): 'The sage aspires to become Heaven, the worthy aspires to become a sage, and the gentleman (*jun-zi* 君子) aspires to become a worthy.' Zhou's remark was interpreted as 'to aspire and pursue, through learning, in order to acquire the wisdom of the worthy and the intelligent, knowledgeable person'.[6]

In Chinese the first character, or graph, *zhe* (哲) means wisdom. An alternative term for wisdom is *zhi* (知), often used interchangeably with its homophone, meaning 'knowledge' and/or 'capacity to acquire knowledge'.[7] Given the primarily practical orientation of such knowledge, ancient Chinese thinkers were, for the most part, preoccupied with ethical questions about right conduct and the best conception of human life. The good human life is commonly envisaged by the Confucians as a life of *ren*, an affectionate concern for the well-being of one's fellows in a community, society, or state governed by a wise and virtuous ruler.[8] *Xue* (學) is learning. 'Philosophy' translated as *zhe-xue* means in Chinese 'learning to become a wise and knowledgeable person'. As learning and practice can be a delightful experience, the student may come to love the subject.

Interpreting philosophy as the love of wisdom reflects the Confucian concern with the practice or application of learning. Confucius once remarked: 'Is it not a delight to apply one's learning at an appropriate time?'[9] For the Confucian, learning is important because of its relevance to resolving problems of human life. It is the acquisition of practical and not theoretical knowledge. This translation of 'philosophy' as *zhe-xue* seems to be a very good attempt to find a functional equivalent in Chinese language prior to the careful study of Western philosophy. Indeed, the translation of 'philosophy' from the Greek, on one interpretation, is closer to the ancient Chinese conception. John Passmore remarks: 'The Greek word *sophia* is ordinarily translated into English as "wisdom," and the compound *philosophia*, from which "philosophy" derives, is translated as "the love of wisdom". But *sophia* has a much wider range of application than the modern English "wisdom." Wherever intelligence can be exercised – in practical affairs, in the mechanical arts, in business – there is room for *sophia*.' Passmore goes on to discuss different conceptions of philosophy – a topic familiar to philosophy majors today.[10] The Chinese translation, though an interpretive adaptation, at least captures part of the meaning of *philosophia*, and *zhe-xue* is now a standard Chinese term for philosophy.

However, if one thinks of philosophy as the construction of grand systems of thought as exemplified in Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Kant, or Hegel, the idea of Chinese philosophy may be found problematic. Arguably the works of Zhu Xi (朱熹) may be considered an embodiment of a grand system. Setting aside this essentially contestable issue and focusing on ethics as a basic or even *the* basic subject of philosophical inquiry, the history of Chinese thought is replete with examples. Since translation is an interpretive task, the Chinese translation of 'ethics' as *lun-li-xue* (倫理學) perhaps illustrates best the concern of the Confucian tradition. Read independently of its being a translated term, *lun-li-xue* may be explained as an inquiry concerning the rationales for human relationships – one principal concern of Confucian ethics. Those who are impressed with the recent Western

emphasis on personal relationships will find an ancient Confucian precursor for their ethical and/or political theory.[11]

Since a translation is an interpretive adaptation of an idea in a foreign language, it should be no surprise to a Western philosophy student or scholar that existing translations of some Chinese texts prove difficult. For many Western philosophers, Wing-tsit Chan's *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* is not a very helpful introduction. While it is an impressive contribution to Sinological scholarship, Chan's choices of English words to translate key Chinese concepts are not always transparent to Western philosophers, in spite of Chan's painstaking effort to explain them. For example, when *li* (理), *yi-li* (義理), and *tian-li* (天理) are rendered as 'principle', 'moral principle', and 'principle of nature', one can be puzzled about what these English terms mean. In the absence of an explanation of the uses of *li*, the translation of *li* as 'principle' unavoidably leads to such misleading questions as: What are the principles of Chinese or Confucian ethics? If such principles exist, do they serve as premises for the derivation of moral rules? Are Confucian principles universal or relative? The selected texts do not provide clear answers to the question of how one goes about formulating the so-called principles?[12]

Moreover, though perhaps unavoidable, use of such labels as 'idealistic', 'naturalistic', 'rationalistic' for certain tendencies of Chinese thought may be misleading in implying that these tendencies are the Chinese counterparts of those in Western philosophy.[13] Unless they are carefully defined, even in Western philosophy today, such labels are useful largely as convenient pedagogical and/or mnemonic devices. I must note that, to a certain degree, a philosophical bilingual would face similar difficulties in reading Chan's book, while admiring his marvelous achievement.

1.2 Ancient history of Chinese thought

While the idea of the history of Chinese philosophy is a Western importation, the importance of critical exposition of prevailing 'winds of doctrine' is recognized in some works in ancient Chinese thought. Somewhat reminiscent of Book Alpha of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Chapter 33 of the *Zhuang-Zi* gives a critical account of Zhuang Zi's contemporaries or predecessors.[14] While acknowledging that there are many thoughtful persons in the world concerned with *dao* (Way), the writer asks: 'Where do we find what the ancients called "the arts of *dao* (*tao-shu*)," the arts for pursuing *dao* [or the ideal of the good human life]? I say that *dao* pervades everything that exists in the universe.' In this essay we find an extant critical statement of Mo Zi (墨子), Shen Dao (到), and Hui Shi (惠施), a famous proponent of such logical paradoxes as: 'I set off for Yüeh today and came there yesterday'; 'The southern region has no limit and yet has a limit'; and 'Fire is not hot.' This chapter in the *Zhuang-Zi* praises Lao Zi (老子) and Zhuang Zhou (i.e., Zhuang Zi 莊子), showing the author's ethical commitment. Notably, Zhuang Zi has a holistic moral vision of the unity of humankind and other things in the universe: 'Heaven and earth were born at the same time as I was, and the ten thousand things are one with me.'[15] In Chapter 2, Zhuang Zi offers a brilliant critique of the Mohists and the Confucians. Among other things, Zhuang Zi maintains

that there are no fixed meanings of words nor neutral, external standards for deciding the correctness or incorrectness, the truth or falsity of their claims. The best course is to transcend the dispute and maintain clarity of mind (*ming*). Says Zhuang Zi: 'The torch of chaos and doubt – this is what the sage steers by. So he does not use things but relegates all to the constant. This is what it means to use clarity.'[16]

In the same holistic spirit, but appreciative of the value of argumentative discourse, Xun Zi gives an insightful critique of influential thinkers in his time. Also, echoing Zhuang Zi, Xun Zi acknowledges the merits of the doctrines of various Confucian and non-Confucian thinkers, for their doctrines were plausible; that is, they had good reasons for espousing their doctrines. Regrettably, they grasp only 'one corner' of *dao* and mistake it to be characteristic of the whole. For example, Mo Zi exaggerated the importance of benefit, or utility, without appreciating the beauty of form or cultural refinement in human life. Zhuang Zi was too preoccupied with the thought of Heaven and paid hardly any attention to the needs of humanity. Says Xun Zi: '*Dao* embodies the constant, yet exhausts all changes. One corner is insufficient to characterize it.'[17]

These thinkers were victims of *bi* (obscuration, blindness); that is, their minds were so dominated by one persistent idea of d*ao* that, as a consequence, they failed to take account of other equally important aspects of *dao*. Like Zhuang Zi, Xun Zi emphasizes clarity of mind. But for Xun Zi, clarity of mind is a mental state free from cognitive blindness or obsession with doctrines, a preparation for the acquisition of knowledge and sagely wisdom, and not a characteristic of sagely attainment. It is noteworthy that, apart from being the defender of the Confucian tradition against external challenges, Xun Zi is also an internal critic of the Confucian thought and practice of his time. He reminds the learned Confucians that they must not confuse different sorts of Confucians (*Ru* 儒): the great and sagacious, the refined, and the vulgar.[18] The value and integrity of Confucian teachings should not be perfunctorily identified with those in common practice.

In this connection, let us note the ancient Confucian doctrine of rectifying names or terms (*zheng-ming* 正名) as a method for dealing with internal and external critiques of Confucian thought. Part of the purport of this classical doctrine of rectifying the uses of names or terms is to insure that names and titles are assumed by persons who carry out their tasks in accord with the responsibility implicit in those names and titles. Hu Shih aptly states that for Confucius, rectification of names is not a task for the grammarian or lexicographer, for it is a primarily an ethical task of intellectual reorganization.

> Its object is, first, to make the names stand for what they ought to stand for, and then to so reorganize the social and political relations and institutions as to make them what their names indicate they ought to be. The rectification of names thus consists in making real relationships and duties and institutions conform as far as possible to the *ideal* meanings, which, however obscured and neglected they may now become, can still be re-discovered and re-established by proper study and, literally 'judicious' use of the names.[19]

Influenced especially by later Mohist logic, Xun Zi expands the scope of the doctrine of rectifying names to embrace more extensive linguistic, conceptual, and pragmatic concerns.[20] The Confucian task of intellectual reorganization may also be ascribed to the concern of Zhu Xi (1130–1200) with the idea of Confucian tradition (*dao-tong*) as a way of meeting the internal and external challenges of non-Confucian thought, such as Buddhism and Daoism.[21]

In the twentieth century the challenge for rewriting the history of Chinese thought comes from Western philosophy. Some Western-trained philosophy scholars of Han learning or Chinese studies must have experienced what Alasdair MacIntyre calls an 'epistemological crisis', that is, the realization that the development of Chinese thought had for some time been stagnant. To these thinkers, issues in discourse must have appeared sterile as they could no longer be resolved through the employment of current internal standards of reasoned discourse. MacIntyre insightfully remarks: 'The solution to a genuine epistemological crisis requires the invention or discovery of new concepts and the framing of some new type or types of theory.'[22]

In the older spirit of the Confucian doctrine of rectifying names, the epistemological crisis is a crisis of 'intellectual reorganization'. The challenge of Western philosophy involves nothing less than a wholesale reconsideration of the philosophical significance of the history of Chinese thought. The task involves the adaptation of alien Western philosophical concepts and/or doctrines in interpreting the significance of classical texts. In Ronald Dworkin's felicitous term, the task is one of 'constructive interpretation'. The aim of constructive interpretation, as a species of the enterprise of creative interpretation, is to present, in the best light, a coherent explanatory account of an object or an existing practice, and more significantly a sound or adequate justification of the practice.[23] The key issues involved in constructive interpretation remain a continuing concern of Chinese philosophers today. Below I focus on some of these issues as presented in three outstanding works – by Hu Shih (Hu Shi), Fung Yu-lan (Feng You-lan), and Lao Sze-kwang (Lao Si-guang) – on the history of Chinese philosophy.

2 History of Chinese philosophy

2.1 *Hu Shih (Hu, Shi* 胡適*, 1891–1962)*

It is a plausible presumption that an author of a history of Chinese philosophy must have extensive training in Western philosophy and some familiarity with works on the history of Western philosophy. Indeed, the subject of the history of Chinese philosophy is a philosophical transformation of the history of Chinese thought. To the best of my knowledge, the pioneering work is Hu Shih's *An Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy,* Part I (in Chinese), published in 1919, two years after the submission of his brilliant doctoral dissertation to Columbia University. (Earlier I cited this work in connection with the Confucian doctrine of rectifying names.) Hu did not complete his three-part project on the history of Chinese philosophy. The second and third parts were intended to be accounts of 'medieval' and contemporary Chinese philosophy. While Hu's work pretends to be no more than an outline, in some respects it is still a useful work of reference. One finds insightful discussion of the evolution of

the Confucian concept of *li* or rules of proper conduct as well as logical-conceptual issues involved in interpreting, say, Xun Zi's conception of empirical knowledge.[24]

The Foreword by Cai Yuan-pei (蔡元培)'s (dated August 3, 1918) singles out four special qualities of Hu's book: (1) the use of the methods of evidence; (2) the skill in distinguishing the 'pure' elements of philosophical thought from those of mythological and political history of the Chinese people; (3) the ability to render impartial evaluation of the merits and demerits of different philosophies; and finally (4) the systematic character of the work. Cai reminds the reader that Hu is among the very few scholars trained in Western philosophy who also has a mastery of Han learning.[25]

Hu's long introductory chapter explains his aims and methodology. At the outset, Hu points out that there is no fixed definition of 'philosophy'. However, Hu proposes a broad conception: any kind of study and research that deals with the most important and fundamental questions may be called 'philosophy'; for example, the question concerning the goodness or badness of human conduct. Hu delineates six different sorts of philosophical inquiry, familiar to students of Western philosophy: cosmology, epistemology, ethics, philosophy of education, political philosophy, and philosophy of religion. Says Hu, 'These kinds of inquiry, from the ancient times to the present, have passed through many philosophers' investigations. Continually, since the inception of the formulation of a question, different interpretations and methods of solution have been proposed and contested in argumentation. Sometimes, one question, after a few thousand years, still has received no definitive method of resolution.'[26] Hu cites the example of the ancient Chinese dispute on human nature (*xing*) in the doctrines of Gao Zi (告子), Mencius, and Xun Zi, and in subsequent views in the history of Chinese thought.

Hu focuses on three objectives of a history of philosophy: (1) understanding changes or transformations of a particular school of thought; (2) the reasons and causes for such transformations; and (3) objective, critical evaluation. Hu pays a great deal of attention to the method for evaluating sources, modeled after the Western method of writing history. Perhaps, as Lao Sze-kwang later complains, he spends too much time with the problem of distinguishing genuine materials from forgeries. Hu briefly discusses five kinds of evidence: historical events, linguistic usages of the time, literary styles, the coherent or systematic character of thought, and secondary, collaborative evidence. In the final section of the Introduction, Hu stresses a deeper level of the method of *guan-tong* (貫通), the orderly, sequential presentation of the development of a school of thought. In the bibliographical notes of the introductory chapter, Hu lists mostly Western sources, such as *A History of Western Philosophy* by the German Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915), translated into English by J.H. Tufts and published in 1893. This sketch of Hu's concerns is familiar to teachers of Western philosophy. Noteworthy is Hu's use of the notions of syllogism, proposition, and judgment in his discussion of the later Mohist logic.

In 1919, just eight years after the founding of the Republic of China, a Chinese scholar or university student of Han learning would have found Hu's book to be important as it presents a new point of view on the history of Chinese thought. A fellow Chinese with a graduate education in Western philosophy would find Hu's

History an inspiring and enlightening work of Chinese scholarship in the 1920s. Philosophers interested in the informal, pragmatic, logical aspect of ancient Chinese thought will find another pioneering study in Hu's *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China*. Influenced by Dewey's 'experimental logic', Hu critically expounds the logical aspects of the *Analects of Confucius*, Mo Zi and his school, and Xun Zi's works. The impressive attempt at a comprehensive, reconstructive study of the later Mohists' fragmentary, discursive texts appears almost half a century after Hu's doctoral dissertation.[27]

This work on logical method also expresses Hu's attitude toward the history of Chinese thought, his solution, so to speak, to the 'epistemological crisis.' Hu writes: 'How can we [Chinese] best assimilate modern civilization in such a manner as to make it congenial and congruous and continuous with the civilization of our own making?' The more specific problem is to find 'a congenial stock with which we may organically link with the thought-systems of modern Europe and America, so that we may further build up our own science and philosophy on the new foundation of an internal assimilation of the old and the new'. Critical of Song–Ming Confucianism, or what is commonly known in the West as Neo-Confucianism, as represented by major works of Zhu Xi and Wang Yang-ming (王陽明), Hu considers that these thinkers 'rejuvenated the long-dead Confucianism by reading into it two logical methods which never belonged to it', i.e., 'the theory of investigating into the reason in everything for the purpose of extending one's knowledge to the utmost, which is the method of the Song School; and the theory of intuitive knowledge, which is the method of the School of Wang Yang-ming'. While appreciative of Wang's merits, Hu expresses his judgment that the method is 'wholly incompatible with the method of science'. As to the Song method of the investigation of things, it is a fruitless method in three different ways: '(1) by the lack of an experimental procedure, (2) by its failure to recognize the active and directing role played by the mind in the investigation of things, and (3) most unfortunate of all, by its construction of "thing" to mean "affairs".' Hu has no doubt that the future of Chinese philosophy depends on 'emancipation from the moralistic and rationalistic fetters of Confucianism'.[28]

Hu's view raises important issues concerning his reading of Song–Ming Confucianism. One wonders, however, whether he has neglected a principal concern with ethical methodology in the works of Cheng Yi (程頤) and Zhu Xi, and Wang Yang-ming. Significantly, their different conceptions of ethical methodology deploy the Confucian classic, the *Great Learning* (*Da-Xue*), which emphasizes self-cultivation as the root or basis for the attainment of the Confucian ideal of human excellence. This emphasis on self-cultivation crucially involves not only the development of moral character, but also empirical inquiry; for example, Zhu Xi's interpretation of 'investigation of things' as an activity of exhausting the *li* (rationales) for the existence of things and our conception of what things ought-to-be. More important, without a constructive, philosophical interpretation of Song–Ming Confucianism, it seems arbitrary to counsel Chinese thinkers to 'build up our own science and philosophy on the new foundation of an internal assimilation of the old and the new'.

2.2 Fung Yu-lan (Feng, You-lan 馮友蘭*, 1895–1990)*

The first volume of Fung's *History of Chinese Philosophy* (in Chinese) was published in 1931 and the second volume in 1934. Derk Bodde's English translation is an outstanding achievement, particularly in introducing Fung's work to English-speaking philosophers. The coverage of the first volume, from the beginnings to about 100 BCE, is more extensive than Hu Shih's *Outline*. All major thinkers and schools discussed by Hu reappear in Fung's first volume. Since both Hu and Fung obtained their doctoral degrees in philosophy from Columbia University, it is not surprising that they shared similar judgments of the philosophical significance of the literature of ancient Chinese thought. However, the difference in time makes a noticeable difference in influence. Hu was influenced largely by John Dewey in the 1910s, while Fung was influenced by William P. Montague in the 1920s. However, as I later note, Fung was appreciative also of William James's and other philosophers' insights.

In the Introduction, reminiscent of but more explicit than Hu Shih's, Fung points out that originally "philosophy" is a Western term. According to Fung, one main task of the history of Chinese philosophy consists in selecting works that are amenable to philosophical treatment. The pursuit of this task presupposes that one has some understanding of the term 'Western Philosophy'. Fung remarks: 'In the West, the use of "philosophy" has a long history. Different philosophers have their own definitions. However, for purposes of convenience, let us attend to its content. If we know the content of philosophy, we can know what sort of thing philosophy is.'[29]

Again, much in the spirit of Hu Shih, Fung proceeds to mention the threefold Greek division of philosophy into physics, ethics, and logic – alternatively, 'A Theory of World', 'A Theory of Life', and 'A Theory of Knowledge'. Fung maintains that philosophy is a product of reason: '[Thus,] if philosophers want to establish the reasoned foundation of their theses, they must provide arguments, proofs or demonstrations. This is the purport of Xun Zi's saying, "they [the thinkers criticized] have reasons for supporting their views and thus their words appear plausible,"[30] and Mencius' saying, "Do I love to argue? I have no other alternative" (*Mencius*: 3B.9[31]).'[32]

Possibly addressing the audience of Western-trained Chinese thinkers who have no special interest in the philosophical study of Chinese thought or those skeptical of the intelligibility of talk about Chinese philosophy, Fung remarks: 'There are three questions that most often occur to all persons interested in the history of Chinese thought. First, what is the nature of Chinese philosophy, and what contribution has it to make to the world? Secondly, is it true, as is often said, that Chinese philosophy lacks system? And thirdly, is it true that there is no such thing as growth in Chinese philosophy?'[33] Regarding the first question, Fung points out that we do find ethical and metaphysical concerns, but very little attention to logic or methodology and epistemology. For the most part Chinese philosophers do not think that knowledge has intrinsic value. Even in the case of knowledge of the practical sort, Chinese philosophers would stress their application to actual conduct rather than approve of empty discourse. Lack of Chinese philosophers' contribution to epistemology can be explained partly by the widely shared ideal of 'inner sageliness and outer kingliness'

(*nei-sheng wai-wang* 內聖外王) and partly by their lack of a clear demarcation of 'the distinction between the individual and the universe', alternatively put, the lack of the Western conception of the 'ego'. As to methodology, what the Chinese thinkers have emphasized, given their ideal of 'inner sageliness and outer kingliness', are methods of self-cultivation. In this regard, China has 'a great contribution to offer'.

The foregoing contains a partial answer to the second question, 'Is it true, as is often said, that Chinese philosophy lacks system?' Fung maintains that we must distinguish 'formal' (*xing-shi* 形式) from 'real' systems (*shi-zhi-xi-tong* 實質系統):

> It may be admitted that Chinese philosophy lacks formal system; but if one were to say that it therefore lacks any real system, meaning that there is no organic unity of ideas to be found in Chinese philosophy, it would be equivalent to saying that Chinese philosophy is not philosophy, and that China has no philosophy. The earlier Greek philosophy also lacked formal system. Thus Socrates wrote no books himself, Plato used the dialogue form in his writings, and it was not until Aristotle that a clear and ordered exposition was given on every problem. Hence if we judge from the point of view of formal system, Aristotle's philosophy is comparatively systematic, yet insofar as the actual content of the philosophy is concerned, Plato's philosophy is equally systematic … although Chinese philosophy, formally speaking, is less systematic than that of the West, in its actual content it has as much system as does Western philosophy. This being so, the important duty of the historian of philosophy is to find within a philosophy that lacks *formal* system, its underlying *real* system.[34]

Perhaps Fung's distinction of formal and real systems is more plausibly rendered as a distinction between explicit, or articulate, and implicit, or inchoate, systems of philosophy. The idea of a formal system of philosophy sometimes has as its paradigm a logical, deductive, or quasi-deductive system as exemplified in Spinoza and Kant. Fung's use of 'organic unity' suggests his adoption of the Hegelian terminology – an apt adaptation consistent with the holistic vision of *dao* in Zhuang Zi and Xun Zi, noted above in Section 1.2.

If one accepts Fung's thesis that Chinese thought has 'real' systems though it lacks 'formal' systems, this thesis must be qualified by saying that so-called 'real' systems are products of philosophical reconstruction or constructive interpretation. In this task, one must preserve the holistic spirit of Chinese philosophy. In the untranslated section entitled 'The Unity of Philosophy', Fung cites Confucius' remark: 'There is one thread that runs through my teachings.'[35] More informative is Fung's citation of Xun Zi's critique of different influential thinkers that their minds have been 'obscured' (*bi*), because they were so preoccupied with one thing and neglected the importance of other things. (Xun Zi's comments on Mo Zi and Zhuang Zi were given above in Section 1.2.) Notably, Fung also reminds his reader of William James's view in *A Pluralistic Universe*: 'If one aspect of the universe attracts the special attention of a philosopher, he would hold to it as if it were characteristic of the whole.'[36]

We find a similar view in a succinct remark of Wittgenstein, reminiscent of Xun Zi's view of philosophers as victims of *bi* (obscuration/blindness) or aspect-obsession: 'A main cause of philosophical disease – a one-sided diet: one nourishes one's thinking with only one kind of example.'[37] This sort of preoccupation easily leads to overlooking other kinds of examples that may be even more important in formulating an adequate view of things. Like ordinary persons, great thinkers of the East or the West have a proclivity to exaggerate the significance of their insights as embodying 'the whole truth and nothing but the truth'. They tend to regard their partial views as representing the whole, presuming that they have the best understanding of the subject matter under inquiry. In the spirit of Zhuang Zi, they are given to overstate the scope of their insights, 'forgetful' (*wang*) of the limits of the exercise of our intellectual capacity.[38]

Let us turn to the third question. Is it true that there is no such thing as progressive growth in Chinese philosophy? Fung answers: 'The problems and scope of Chinese philosophy from the Han dynasty onward are not so numerous and comprehensive as those of the philosophy that preceded it, and yet the later philosophy is certainly more clearly expounded than the earlier one.'[39] (This judgment seems implicit in Hu Shih's critique of Song–Ming Confucianism.) Invoking Aristotle's distinction between potentiality and actuality, Fung maintains, in this introduction to the first volume, that 'movement from such potentiality to actuality constitutes progress'.

However, as is evident in Fung's division of the history of Chinese philosophy into two periods, progress does not mean advancement or development of new philosophical perspectives in the modern Western sense. The two periods are the Period of the Philosophers (*zi-xue shi-dai* 子學時代), from Confucius (551–479 BC) to Huai-nan Zi (淮南子 died 122 BC), and the Period of Classical Learning (*jing-xue shi-dai* 經學時代), from Dong Zhong-shu (董仲舒 ca 179–104 BC) to Kang You-wei (康有為 1858–1927). The Period of the Philosophers is characterized by 'the simultaneous flourishing of many schools'. This explains the scope of Fung's first volume, covering 'only some four hundred odd years'. For any philosophy student today, this is the most exciting period of Chinese thought. Perhaps for this reason, since the 1960s, many philosophical scholars and historians of Chinese thought devote their time and energy to the ancient literature. This is a period where many original thinkers confronted each other in a free arena of argumentative discourse.

The Period of Classical Learning, on the other hand, is for the most part a period of Confucian classicism or 'scholasticism'. According to Fung, if one follows the usual division of Western philosophy into ancient, medieval, and modern, 'it may be said that China has actually had only an ancient and a medieval philosophy but still lacks a modern philosophy'. In 1934 he wrote: 'China, until very recent times, regardless of how we view it, has remained essentially medieval, with the result that in many respects it has failed to keep pace with the West. A modern age, indeed, has been lacking in Chinese history, and philosophy is but one particular aspect of this general situation.'[40] Fung's view of the problem of Chinese philosophy raises the important issue of 'the development of Chinese philosophy' – alternatively, the evolution of the history of Chinese thought into a history of philosophy.

For Fung, philosophy must be distinguished from philosophers. A philosopher's philosophy reflects his character (*ren-ge* 人格), that is, an individual temperament and experience. Following James, Fung distinguishes between tender-minded and tough-minded philosophers.

> The tender-minded philosophers, because of tenderness of mind, cannot bear to sum up things, events, or states of affairs as the sphere of things that have no value whatever. Thus, their philosophies are idealistic, religious, free-willist, and monistic. The tough-minded philosophers, on the other hand, will have no qualms in ruthlessly summing up things, events, or states of affairs as the sphere of things that have no value whatever. Thus, their philosophies are materialistic, irreligious, fatalistic, and pluralistic.[41]

Fung also cites Harold Hoffding's reminder, much in James's spirit, of the importance of 'personal equation'. Common to philosophical problems (e.g., problems of knowledge, existence, estimation or worth, and consciousness) is

> that they lie on the borders of our knowledge, where exact methods can no longer help us; hence it is impossible but that the personality of the inquirer should determine the course of his thought, although he himself may be unaware of the fact. … We must also take account, especially with regard to the problem of the estimation of worth, historical circumstances, and intellectual movements in other spheres.[42]

Therefore, when we take a person's philosophy as a subject of historical inquiry, we must pay attention to the circumstances and trends of events, as well as the different aspects of the intellectual situation, of the time. Fung informs the reader that Mencius has similar emphasis: 'When one reads the poems and writings of the ancients, can it be right not to know something about them as men? Hence one tries to understand the age in which they lived.'[43] Says Fung:

> Although their motivation lies in their interest in the aspect of self-cultivation, the Song Confucians are specially attentive to *qi-xiang* (氣象), the prevailing spirit and atmosphere of the ancient sages. Thus the researcher of the history of philosophy must also have the same attitude toward a man's philosophy, that is, attentive to his *qi-xiang*.[44]

Fung also discusses the relation between history and the history of philosophy. Just as the circumstances, events, and intellectual situation of the time influences a philosopher's thought, the philosopher can also influence his age and its different aspects of thought. Alternatively put: 'history can influence philosophy, philosophy can also influence history.'[45] Next Fung takes up the problems of writing history. Among his contemporaries, a common saying is that in writing history, one must inquire into the antecedents and consequents of events. However, because of the surfeit of relevant

data, it is impossible to have a complete or exhaustive narrative. Inevitably, selective decision is involved in studying the documents that constitute both the primary and secondary sources. It is doubtful that a sincere and dedicated historian, in relying on his selective materials, can write a completely 'faithful' (*xin* 信) or reliable history.

There are three major difficulties.[46] In clarifying the first difficulty, Fung cites a couple of passages from classical texts. In the Great Appendix of the *Yi-Jing*, we find a saying attributed to Confucius: 'Just as writing is a poor vehicle of speech, speech is a poor vehicle of thought.'[47] In the same spirit, Zhuang Zi says: 'When men of old died, they took with them the things that cannot be transmitted. So what you are reading there must be nothing but the chaff and dregs of the men of old.'[48] Fung, therefore, contends that the researchers of history can rely only on these 'dregs' which they cannot completely comprehend.

The second difficulty is this. Even for a dedicated and profoundly reflective scholar who understands the writers' intention, ancient texts are not completely credible. Mencius remarks: 'In the *Wu-Qing* chapter [of the *Book of History*] I accept only two or three strips.'[49] The historian can employ the scientific method to weigh the reliability of sources and engage in the task of analysis. Then the work of synthesis follows, tying the materials together through the exercise of imagination. Presumably, Fung has this point in mind. In order to establish the continuity of texts, the historian may need to envisage appropriate hypotheses and supply the lacuna, especially those of the ancient texts, as well as to engage in constructive interpretation of the central concepts of a philosopher's thought. All these tasks require the exercise of imagination. Historical claims, like Kant's 'maxims', inevitably embody 'subjective principles of volition' rather than 'objective principles'.[50] Consequently, we have no assurance that the historians' claims about his subject matter completely accord with the requirements of objective history. Moreover, unlike scientists who can set up experiments to test the adequacy of hypotheses, the historian cannot set up analogous experiments for testing historical hypotheses. This is the third difficulty.

At the time Fung published his work, in the early 1930s, Chinese philosophy and its history must have been an established subject of study. His lengthy Introduction could have in mind a particular audience of philosophy students and perhaps skeptics. At that time Fung's work was the first full-scale effort at presenting a history of Chinese philosophy. Derk Bodde's translation is the only one available in English. Before he died in 1990, at the age of ninety-five, Fung completed a comprehensive, seven-volume, new history of Chinese philosophy. It was written from a single-minded Marxist point of view. His earlier work presented here, though more limited in scope, is informed by a liberty of spirit absent in much of Chinese Marxist histories of Chinese philosophy, and is thus open to greater independent, constructive, philosophical interpretation of Chinese thought.[51]

2.3 *Lao Sze-kwang (Lao, Si-guang* 勞思光, *1927–)*

The third and final volume of Lao's *History of Chinese Philosophy* (in Chinese) was completed and published in 1982. As compared to Fung's history, it has a narrower

scope. The final chapter deals with Dai Zhen (戴震 1723–77). As any recent 'Western-trained' Chinese philosopher would expect, Lao must provide some justification for his renewed attempt to write a history of Chinese philosophy, given the widespread familiarity with Fung Yu-lan's work. As compared to Fung's, Lao's is a more philosophically sophisticated work, addressed to an audience familiar with works of Western philosophy published since 1930s. Since the Second World War, many Chinese studied philosophy in the United States and Europe. Given their background in Chinese philosophy education, writings in Chinese on Western philosophy and Chinese philosophy are a familiar phenomenon. For philosophers and scholars in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and in the Chinese diaspora, Chinese philosophy is a subject worthy of serious scholarly and/or philosophical pursuit. Except for an encounter with Western skeptics ignorant of the extensive works in Chinese philosophy since 1960s, a Chinese philosopher or historian of philosophy is no longer beset with the question about the existence of Chinese philosophy. Of course, what is presupposed is a contemporary Chinese philosophy audience. This is Lao's implicit audience in his long Preface in the first volume and his Postscript in the third volume.

In his Preface, Lao points out that the course 'History of Chinese Philosophy' had been an established offering in Chinese universities prior to Hu Shih's lectures (at the University of Peking in late 1910s). Until the time he completed his first volume in 1967, Lao claims that on the history of Chinese philosophy there has been no 'acceptable' work that conforms to 'proper [Western] standards'. Lao assumes that there are general standards of competence for Western philosophical writings. He remarks that there are philosophy text books in Chinese, arbitrarily and conveniently composed by instructors for lecture purposes; but with the exception of Fung Yu-lan's *History of Chinese Philosophy*, there are no competently written works on the history of Chinese philosophy. Hu Shih's incomplete *Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy* is said to be a subject of ridicule, presumably by Lao's audience of colleagues and graduate students in Chinese universities. For Lao, the defect of Hu's *Outline* lies not in its incompleteness, but in its lack of 'philosophical' elements. To Lao a history of philosophy must be a 'philosophy' and a 'history'. The historian of philosophy must not only present a narrative account of actual thought and related events but also have an 'explanatory theory'. The former is the task of historians, and the latter requires 'theoretical foundation and analytical method'. If these two requirements are not satisfied, what is written can be considered only 'history' and not 'history of philosophy'. While Hu's history is a pioneering work, 'strictly speaking, it can only be viewed as an unsuccessful experiment'. Hu spends too much time on questions of the dating and authenticity of texts. Although these questions may be considered a part of the of historian of philosophy's task, they are not the most important. Moreover, Hu Shih's use of *chang-shi* (常識 common sense or common knowledge) as a basis of explanation is problematic. Says Lao, 'In any case, using *chang-shi* to interpret philosophy cannot make any contact with the real questions [of philosophy].'[52]

As regards Fung's *History*, it is definitely superior to Hu's. According to Lao, while Fung's is a history of philosophy, it is not a successful piece of work, for Fung shows little depth in his knowledge of Western philosophical literature. Fung's use

of 'concepts and theories is limited to Early Plato's theory and New Realism'. Fung hardly shows a firm grasp of Western philosophical theories. Moreover, lacking understanding of the special characteristics of Chinese philosophy, Fung could handle simple theories, but

> as soon as he confronts Song–Ming *li-xue* [理學 Neo-Confucianism], he displays his weaknesses. From the very beginning, he could not deal with the concept of moral subjectivity. Though it may seem improbable, he was unaware of his deficient understanding [of the concept of] subjectivity itself. Consequently, he could only give an account, in a forced manner, of the Confucian doctrine of perfect virtue (*cheng-de-zhi-xue* 成德之學) as a mere metaphysical theory and failed to understand its essential aspects.'[53]

Lao goes on to claim that there is a 'great distance' between Fung's later *Xin-Li-Xue* (新理學 *A New Doctrine of Li*) and Song–Ming *li-xue* (理學 study of *li* or principle/rationale), as Fung's work is informed only by Plato's early works and New Realism.

Lao expounds at greater length his own conception of the history of philosophy, stressing the importance of methodology. Four methods of inquiry are discussed: systematic, developmental, analytical, and inquiry into fundamental questions of philosophical thought. The systematic method must also pay attention to the original contexts of theoretical thought. However, because of the writer's own philosophical interest, frequently he or she is liable to focus on philosophical questions and neglect the actual contexts of discourse. While the method of *systematic* inquiry has its pitfalls, from the holistic point of view it has merits when it is employed with care. The *developmental* method raises complex questions. If the use of the method of systematic inquiry tends to err easily on the subjective side, the use of developmental method often results in a partial grasp of segments of actuality with no appreciation of the holistic character (*quan-ti* 全體) of theories. As a result, what we get is a narrative of fragments. (Recall Xun Zi's doctrine of *bi* or aspect-obsession.) For Lao, from the philosophical point of view, this is a serious defect, because it is contrary to the basic objectives of philosophy. On the *analytical* method of inquiry, Lao stresses the importance of 'philosophical analysis', which gives rise to syntactical and semantic analyses. Particularly worthy of attention and also influential is the emergence of the theory of 'meaning criteria' and use of this kind of theory in the critique of traditional philosophy. While it is not expected of a historian of philosophy, training in the skills of philosophical analysis can be useful in carrying out the tasks. Nevertheless, philosophical analysis cannot be a substitute for the historian's task of synthesis, for it can deal only with existing materials, but cannot propose new materials, in particular, an overall judgment of the history of philosophy as a whole. In sum, the three conditions for a history of philosophy are truth, systematicity, and unity. The first requires that the narrative be faithful to the actual texts and circumstances; the second, the systematic exposition of theory; and the third, the unifying character of the judgment of the whole history of philosophy.

How is it possible for a historian to satisfy these requirements? Lao proposes his fourth method, embracing the other three methods. Lao says that for some time he has devoted much thought and energy to this question and arrived at the conclusion that, comparatively speaking, the fourth method is a good method. There are three steps in this method of *inquiry into fundamental questions of philosophy*. The first step consists in having a good understanding of the foundation of Chinese thought. Every individual thinker or school has, as a basis, an *ideal theory* for resolving certain fundamental problems. Although explanation is central to this task, one must also deal with the question of textual analysis. As regards the second step, after having a handle on fundamental questions, we can then proceed to an explication of the relevant theory. In the process, secondary questions may emerge. Each of these questions has its own answer, forming a section of the theory. Finally, organize all the levels of the theory, thus completing the task of explicating an individual theory. In doing so, we adequately satisfy the first two conditions, i.e. 'truth', and 'systematicity'.

The last step, corresponding to the third requirement of unity, lies in coherently organizing the materials into a series of the fundamental questions of different historical periods before rendering a holistic judgment on a theoretical basis. However, one must acknowledge certain 'presuppositions' (*she-zhun* 設準), reflecting the writer's 'own knowledge and experience as well as his philosophic wisdom'. Finally, the method of inquiring into fundamental questions must be consonant with the writer's presuppositions.

In the concluding section of 'Prefatory Remarks', Lao takes up some distinctive problems of the history of Chinese philosophy. The first problem, as Hu and Fung have noted, lies in managing the extant ancient textual materials. As an excuse for not engaging in argumentation, many pre-Qin thinkers were fond of appealing to the past.[54] Also problematical is the tendency of some post-Qin and post-Han writers to forge documents. Secondly, hitherto Chinese philosophy has paid no attention to analysis. It has no logic nor epistemology. Says Lao, 'We must admit that what China lacks is analytical skills. Naturally, we have to adopt most of these skills derived from Western achievements.' Thirdly, the fundamental questions of Chinese philosophy differ from those of Western philosophy. In the course of exposition, it is inevitable that the writer will employ his theoretical presuppositions, hoping to encompass both Chinese and Western philosophy. In a somewhat modest tone, Lao reminds his reader that his *History of Chinese Philosophy* is but one attempt to use the method of probing fundamental philosophical questions. When the draft for the whole project is completed, he expresses the hope that others may write a more successful history of Chinese philosophy. (The third and final volume of his *History* was published in 1982.)

Lao's critique of the works of Hu and Fung on the history of Chinese philosophy is hardly fair-minded. Lao's *work* is a philosophical, analytic reconstruction of the history of Chinese thought. It is distinguished by its conceptual analysis, emphasis on arguments, and reasoned justification of interpretation, and a much greater command of Western philosophy and recent Confucianism that flourished in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Lao's critique of Hu Shih and Fung Yu-lan, however, makes no allowance for

the nature of a particular audience.[55] Lao seems to regard his as a universal audience, a presumption of most Western philosophers since Plato. Like many philosophers of our age, with a penchant for objectivity or 'the view from nowhere', Lao is a child of those Western philosophers beset by the fear of relativism and subjectivism. He does not seem to be worried with the problems recently presented by Richard Rorty, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Derrida and his fellow deconstructionists. Indeed, the late distinguished philosophical Sinologist Angus Graham, in his book on ancient Chinese philosophy, proposed a novel deconstructionist interpretation of Lao Zi.[56] Incidentally, Graham's philosophical history of ancient Chinese thought is based largely on his philological research in classical Chinese and the works of Benjamin Whorf and Gilbert Ryle. Notably absent are insights, say, derived from the works of Wittgenstein or J.L. Austin.

Were Hu Shih alive today, he would have pragmatically responded to Lao's or Graham's work by appealing to the middle and later works of Dewey such as *Experience and Nature* (1925, 2nd edn 1929), *Art as Experience* (1934), and *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), or perhaps to the more recent methodological pragmatism of Nicholas Rescher.[57] Perhaps out of courtesy, Lao acknowledges Hu's *Outline* as a pioneering work, but he pays no attention to Hu's introductory chapter, especially those sections devoted to articulating his conception of the subject. While there is a terminological difference, would Lao disagree with Hu's three objectives: understanding the changes or transformation of a particular school of thought, the reasons and causes for such a transformation, and objective, critical evaluation? As to Lao's complaint that Hu's is not a 'philosophical' book, presumably because Hu spent too much time on textual analysis, it must be noted that at the time Hu wrote his book in 1918, ancient Chinese texts, as Lao is well aware, were in a state of confusion. Hu has a pragmatic rather than an analytic conception of philosophical scholarship. While textual scholarship has no essential connection with philosophy, it is still important for a philosophical historian to use the state of the art as a springboard for determining the development of a school of thought. Textual scholarship was more advanced at the time Lao wrote his first volume. However, there is still much uncertainty about the background, current circumstances, climates of opinion, and contexts of discourse.[58]

Instead of making a sweeping rejection of Hu's book as non-philosophical, Lao should have examined Hu's objectives and shown the ways in which Hu failed to accomplish them. We must agree that Hu's methodological remarks in his *Development* are, in the light of Fung's or Lao's or any later writer's philosophical training and commitments, much too biased toward Dewey's instrumentalism. For instance, Hu's unqualified condemnation of Song–Ming Confucianism was based on an implausible assumption that Zhu Xi and Wang Yang-ming were concerned with the application of inductive, deductive, or intuitive scientific methods to human affairs. Even a cursory reading of some of the Zhu's and Wang's works would lead to an appreciation of the different ways they tried to preserve what they considered as the 'Confucian tradition' and their concern with ways in which the Confucian tradition was misinterpreted, abused, and misused, particularly in the hands of irresponsible scholars and/or officials. As I have shown elsewhere, a living tradition, as distinct from traditionalism or blind

adherence to tradition, is amenable to quite different constructions, especially with regard to its concrete, temporal significance.[59] In passing, a contemporary Confucian appreciative of the insights of Zhu Xi and Wang Yang-ming might even welcome Dewey's version of pragmatism, as a supplement to explicating the nature of Confucian ethics, since it provides a fairly effective way of clarifying its practical orientation. Let me explain.

Two salient features of Confucian ethics are the primacy of practice and the legitimate use of plausible presumption. The former admits of a pragmatic interpretation, because of the Confucian preoccupation with problematic situations and their ethical solutions. Although Confucians do not explicitly reject the doctrine of 'fixed' or absolute ends, their emphasis on *yi* (義 rightness) suggests that ethically acceptable conduct in problematic situations must in some way be based on reasoned judgment appropriate to the case at hand. In Xun Zi's words, in coping with changing and exigent situations of human life, one must employ *yi*, or one's sense of rightness (*yi-yi-bian-ying* 以義變應). Redolent of Dewey's conception of deliberation in *Human Conduct*, Xun Zi insists on clarity of mind as a prerequisite to wise and informed deliberation (*zhi-lü* 知慮), in dealing with the problematic situations of human life.[60] Xun Zi would have agreed with Dewey that, in the final analysis, the really important matter pertains to the resolution of problematic situations through the use of means derived from past experience. A propensity to rely on common knowledge of the day without regard to the relevance of past experiences or the wisdom of tradition is a ubiquitous human affliction. An appeal to the wisdom of the past should not be rejected outright, because it is an appeal to the past deemed as a repository of insights or plausible presumptions. Xun Zi would also urge that just as we must employ the wisdom of the past to deal with the perplexities of the present (*yi-gu-zhi-jin* 以古知今), we must employ our knowledge of the present to evaluate any claims based on our knowledge of the past and/or past experience (*yi-jin-zhi-gu* 以今知古).[61] Moreover, the Confucian insistence on the unity of moral knowledge and action, thought, and words and actions have affinity with Dewey's thesis on the intrinsic connection between theory and practice.[62]

Lao's critique of Fung's *History* is especially revealing of his own conceptions of philosophy and the history of philosophy. Lao is not satisfied with Fung's limited knowledge and use of Western philosophy. Lao cites Fung's inability to appreciate the character of Song–Ming Confucianism, for he has no conception of 'moral metaphysics'. Lao has a more extensive knowledge of Western philosophy. But his appeal to 'moral metaphysics' is an anachronism, for it is a Chinese–English term coined by Mou Zong-san (牟宗三) in the 1960s, then a senior colleague of Lao's at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Mou, an encyclopedic and original Chinese philosopher, expounds his thesis against the background of Kant's conception of a 'metaphysics of morals'. For a student of Western philosophy with no knowledge of Chinese philosophy, 'moral metaphysics' is an unfamiliar term. As far as I know, it is a technical term used by Mou Zong-san to distinguish his Confucian metaphysical theory of morals from Kant's metaphysics of morals. The term 'moral metaphysics' is valuable in suggesting an important enterprise for Chinese moral philosophy.

According to Mou, Kant has only a metaphysics of morals but no moral metaphysics. Kant's conception is no more than a 'metaphysical exposition of morals' or a 'metaphysical deduction of morals'. Metaphysics of morals takes morality as its subject matter. It borrows from the fruits of metaphysical inquiry in order to discover and establish the fundamental principles of morality. Moral metaphysics (inclusive of ontology and cosmology) considers metaphysics as its subject matter and approaches it through human moral nature. In other words, for Mou, moral practice, in the sense of authentic attainment of Confucian sagehood, is the basis for conferring metaphysical significance on all things.[63]

Whether Mou is right about Kant or about mainline Confucianism, the distinction between moral metaphysics and metaphysics of morals is a useful approach for studying Song–Ming Confucianism. This distinction raises an important question on the interpretation of Chinese Confucian ethics as normative ethics, metaethics, or metaphysical ethics. I wonder whether Lao's use of Mou's interpretive thesis and such terms as *zhu-ti* (主體 subjectivity) in criticizing Fung's work is an example of the fallacious use of an 'appeal to authority'. If we deem moral theory as a relatively autonomous discipline, we can appropriate Mou's distinction for delineating an important aspect of philosophical inquiry without depreciating Fung's history.

Underlying Lao's dissatisfactions with Hu's and Fung's works is the extent to which his philosophical presuppositions are informed by a greater knowledge of recent Western and Chinese philosophy. It is unsurprising that Hu's and Fung's presuppositions were informed by philosophical movements that prevailed in their own times. Philosophical presuppositions in a history of Chinese or of Western philosophy reflect the influence of current philosophical concerns as evident in Western, as well as Chinese graduate philosophy education. Hu was influenced by John Dewey, but perhaps was not sensitive to the Hegelian elements in Dewey's philosophy. Fung was influenced by his studies of early Plato, James, and Neo-Realism. How could Hu and Fung be faulted for not knowing analytic philosophy or Mou Zong-san? Fung seemed to be familiar with some works of the Vienna Circle. Fung said of his *Xin-Li-Xue*, one target of Lao's critique: 'The work of New *Li-Xue* is to *re-establish* metaphysics by going through the empiricism of the Vienna Circle.'[64] He could not be expected to know Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

Nevertheless, Lao's efforts at writing a philosophical history of Chinese thought merit approval, for a mastery of the literature of the history of Chinese thought and of analytical method is an enormous undertaking. Most Chinese and Western scholars of Chinese thought are specialists in a historical period or in specific works of individual thinkers. Many of them do not have extensive philosophical training. Lao's emphasis on philosophical and argumentative analysis, as contrasted with Hu's on textual analysis, is a valuable contribution. From the standpoint of philosophical analysis, Lao's history is superior to Fung's. For a philosophical reader of Chinese classics, Lao's *History* provides an excellent guide to the rich repertoire of resources for philosophical thought, while he or she may demur on Lao's rash judgment on the worth of the works of Hu and Fung. Setting aside questions of textual fidelity and the acceptability of his philosophical interpretations, Lao has performed a great service in providing a most

useful resource for the development of the history of Chinese philosophy. Regrettably, Lao did not have a Derk Bodde for a translation into English of his *History*. While Lao's requirements for writing a history of Chinese philosophy may appear too exacting, a Western-trained Chinese philosopher or a Sinicized Western philosopher would find Lao's *History* an invaluable guide to research.

While textual scholarship is an important enterprise, philosophical interpretation of Chinese thought has an integrity of its own, independently of their contribution to questions concerning textual scholarship. Apart from philosophical interpretation, there are also legitimate philological, intellectual, religious, and political interpretations. Admittedly, the history of Chinese thought maybe interpreted in these different, and possibly complementary ways. Especially illuminating is a commingling of philosophical and historical studies of ideas, as in Lovejoy's *Great Chain of Being*. However, absent the knowledge of and sensitivity to philosophical problems and issues, a confusion of these interpretative approaches will impede not only efforts at any wholesale philosophical transformation of the history of Chinese thought, but also the development of Chinese philosophy.[65]

While Lao's requirements for writing the history of Chinese philosophy may appear too exacting, he is right that a historian of Chinese philosophy must to some extent be a philosopher. Ideally, an understanding of basic philosophical questions in different branches of philosophy is a prerequisite to any serious philosophical inquiry into the thought of a historical period or of a major philosopher. A coherent statement of presuppositions in writing a history of philosophy, as Lao rightly insists, would provide the reader with a unifying perspective on the writer's philosophical convictions. Nevertheless, in the Postscript to the third volume, Lao expresses his belief that Chinese philosophy has 'universal significance' if we distinguish between 'open and closed concepts' of philosophy. The terminology is reminiscent of Karl Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies*. In a later, English, article, Lao explains that an 'open concept' of philosophy would 'enable people of different philosophical traditions to communicate with each other'. On this conception, philosophy is a reflective enterprise. Understanding Chinese philosophy rests on appreciating its primary, 'orientative' character, that is, that Chinese philosophy 'intends to effect some change in the self or in the world'. Alternative terms are 'self-transformation' and 'transformation of the world'. Such a philosophy would give a statement of purpose, justification, and pragmatic maxims. Lao cites Zhuang Zi and Mencius as examples. It is noteworthy that Lao shows concern with intercultural communication. Presumably he would also agree that this concern must be followed with an endeavor to provide some guidelines for resolving problems of intercultural conflict.[66]

The foregoing account of the works of Hu Shih, Fung Yu-lan, and Lao Sze-kwang presents illustrative samples of the positive influence of Western philosophy in the development of the history of Chinese philosophy. It would be remiss of me not to mention the massive work by Archbishop Luo Guang (羅光), *History of Chinese Philosophical Thought*. The seventh, and presumably the final, volume published in 1986 deals with the period since the founding of the Republic of China in 1911. Separate chapters are devoted to major, non-historical, philosophical works of Hu

Shih and Fung Yu-lan as well as important contributions from the recent past, e.g., works of Xiong Shi-li (熊十力), Tang Jun-yi (唐君毅), Thomé H. Fang (方東美 Fang Dong-mei), and Luo Guang's own philosophy of life. Today, philosophical writings in Chinese are quite extensive, covering topics in Western philosophy, Chinese philosophy, Indian, Buddhist, and comparative East–West philosophy. Philosophy journals in Taiwanese, for example, are pretty much modeled after those in English. Unfortunately, except for some works of Thomé H. Fang, many original works, by such influential philosophers as Mou Zong-san and Tang Jun-yi, are not available in English.[67] Worthy of note is Fang's attempt in English to portray the holistic spirit of the history of Chinese philosophy. In *Chinese Philosophy: Its Spirit and its Development*, Fang discusses the unitary spirit of Chinese philosophy by focusing on three ostensibly common features among primordial Confucianism, primordial Daoism, and Mahayana Buddhism, namely: (1) the doctrine of pervasive unity; (2) the doctrine of *dao*; and (3) the exaltation of the individual, along with an emphasis on a conception of the human individual 'in terms of observed actualities and idealized possibilities'. This large book complements his earlier English work on the Chinese philosophy of comprehensive harmony.[68] Perhaps when translations of the principal writings of other major contemporary Chinese thinkers are available in English there will be a beginning of a creative and fruitful Chinese–Western philosophical dialogue on the history of philosophy, or East–West philosophy.

Apart from the importance of Chinese–Western philosophical dialogue, the study of Chinese philosophy should interest anyone concerned with exploring the possibility of discovering fresh resources for dealing with philosophical questions, especially those of moral philosophy. Knowledge of Classical and Neo-Confucianism and Classical Daoism is especially germane to the pursuit of normative ethics, metaethics, and philosophy of morals. The questions of other branches of philosophy may also receive some light from the study of Chinese classics. I also hope that the past 100 years of endeavor by Chinese philosophical scholars may pave the way toward developing Chinese philosophy as a component of a world-philosophical inquiry. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, this should be an exciting prospect for young philosophers trained in both Chinese and Western philosophy.

Notes

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1. See Cua, A.S. (1985), *Ethical Argumentation: A Study of Hsün Tzu's Moral Epistemology*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press; Cua, A.S. (1998), *Moral Vision and Tradition: Essays in Chinese Ethics*, Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, Essay 11.
2. For an informative study, see Schwartz, Benjamin (1964), *In Search of Power: Yen Fu and the West*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

3. Chan, Wing-tsit (trans.) (1963), *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 743.

4. For a survey of Chinese philosophy in post-Mao China, see Lin, Tong-qi (2003), 'Recent Trends in Post-Mao China', in A.S. Cua (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, New York and London: Routledge. This work also includes entries on other recent trends in Chinese philosophy.

5. *Zhe-Xue-Ci-Dian* (哲學詞典 *Dictionary of Philosophy*) (1976), Taipei: Commercial Press, 4th edn. While the publisher did not give any date of publication, the first Preface by Cai Yuan-pei, an eminent philosopher of education and promoter of Western philosophy, was dated 1925. The second Preface in my 1976 edition is dated 1927.

6. My former graduate student Kazuaki Ohashi informed me that Nishi Amane, in his 1874 *Hyakuichi shimron* (*Bai-Yi-Xin-Lun*) appeared to be the first scholar to use 哲學 (*zhe-xue*) as a translation for the Greek *philosophia* and 'philosophy.' For detailed discussion, See Zhong Shao-hua (1992), 'Qing-Mo-Zhong-Guo-Ren-Dui-Yi-De-Zhui-Qiu', *Newsletter of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy*, 2.2, Taipei: Academia Sinica, esp. 162–7. I owe this reference and a copy of this article to Professor Nicolas Standaert of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. See Zhong, 163. (For a translation of Zhou's remark, see Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 471.) As for the currency of *zhe-xue* in Chinese education, Lao Sze-kwang remarks: 'Although it is impossible to identify who first introduced this Japanese translation of "philosophy" into China, it is quite certain that when the Capital University in Peking, in the first decade of the twentieth century, did adopt this term *che-hsüeh* (*zhe-xue*) as a title for courses, this should indicate the official acceptance of this translation': Lao, Sze-kwang (1989), 'On Understanding Chinese Philosophy: An Inquiry and a Proposal', in Robert E. Allinson (ed.) (1989), *Understanding Chinese Thought: The Philosophical Roots*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 291, n1.

7. In the *Analects*, *zhi* in the verbal form is sometimes used to mean 'to realize'. Such a use, however, reflects the retrospective sense of knowledge, i.e. knowledge derived from realizing the import of learning. Such knowledge, however, also involves use of *zhi* in the sense of acquiring information. There are also uses of *zhi* in the senses of acknowledgement, understanding or appreciation, and knowing-how. For the informational sense, see e.g. 2.11, 2.23, 5.9, 7.31; for the sense of understanding and appreciation, see 2.4, 4.14, 11.12; for knowing-how, 12.22. No doubt, these sample uses of *zhi* are subject to interpretation. For the distinction between prospective and retrospective senses of knowledge, see Cua, A.S. (1992), *The Unity of Knowledge and Actions: A Study in Wang Yang-ming's Moral Psychology*, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, Chap. 1; and (1993) 'The Possibility of Ethical Knowledge: Reflections on a Theme in the *Hsün Tzu*', in Hans Lenk and Gregor Paul (eds) (1993), *Epistemological Issues in Ancient Chinese Philosophy*, Albany: State University of New York Press. Cf., Ames, Roger T. (1988), 'Confucius and the Ontology of Knowing', in Eliot Deutsch and Gerald James Larson (eds), *Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

8. Cua, A.S. (1978), *Dimensions of Moral Creativity: Paradigms, Principles, and Ideals*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, Chap. 4.

9. Lau, D.C. (1979), *Confucius: The Analects* (*Lun Yü*), Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1:1.

10. Passmore, John (1967), 'Philosophy', in Paul Edward (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 6, New York: Macmillan & Free Press.

11. For more discussion, see Cua, A.S. (1998), 'Chinese Confucian Philosophy', in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, London: Routledge, vol. 1, 536–49.

12. For two specialized discussions of the concept *li* (reason/principle), see my *Ethical Argumentation: A Study of Hsün Tzu's Moral Epistemology*, 20–9; and *The Unity of Knowledge and Action: A Study in Wang Yang-ming's Moral Psychology*, 26–50. A more general discussion is given in my (1997) 'Reason and Principle in Chinese Philosophy: An Interpretation of *Li*', in Eliot Deutsch and Ron Bontekoe (eds), *A Companion to World Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwell. For a conceptual history of *li* in Neo-Confucianism, see Chan, W.T. (1964), 'The Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept *Li* as Principle', *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, NS, 4.2, 123–49; and Liu, Hsiu-hsien, '*Li* (Principle, Reason)' in the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*.

13. This remark also applies to the standard Marxist texts' classification of Chinese philosophy into 'materialism' and 'idealism'. See e.g., Ren, Jiyu (任繼愈) (editor-in-chief) (1979), *Zhong-Guo-Zhe-Xue-Shi* (中國哲學史) (*History of Chinese Philosophy*), Beijing: Renmin.

14. For a brief informative account of later works, inclusive of classification of ancient schools of thought, see Mei, Y. P. (1964), 'Ancient Chinese Philosophy According to the *Chuang Tzu*, Chapter 33, The World of Thought, with an English Translation of the Chapter', *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, NS, 4.2. A good interpretive study in the intellectual history in the Ming Dynasty is Huang Zong-xi's *Ming Ru xue'an*. For a selected translation, see Ching, Julia and Fang, Chaoying (1987), *The Records of Ming Scholars*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. See also Watson, Burton (trans.) (1968), *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, New York: Columbia University Press, Chap. 33.

15. Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 43.

16. Ibid., 42. Zhuang Zi's skepticism of the existence of neutral standards for evaluating philosophical, ethical claims has some affinity with MacIntyre's thesis that there are no tradition-independent standards of rationality. However, unlike MacIntyre, who endorses a sort of rationalistic version of Thomism, Zhuang Zi would not endorse any particular system of thought. See MacIntyre, Alasdair (1988), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

17. Li, Di-sheng (李滌生) (1979), *Xun-Zi-Ji-Shi* (荀子集釋 *Collected Explanations of the Xun-Zi*) Taipei: Xue-Sheng Press, 478 (hereafter, *Xun-Zi*). Cf. Watson, Burton (trans.) (1963), *Hsün Tzu: Basic Writings*, New York: Columbia University Press, 125. For other critical remarks, see *Xun-Zi*, Books 8 and 17; Knoblock, John (1989, 1994), *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, volumes: 1 and 3, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

18. *Xun-Zi*, Book 8.

19. Hu, Shih (1963), *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China*, New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 26. (This is a reprint of the 1922 Shanghai edition.) Note that this doctrine of rectifying names may be plausibly viewed as an intellectual formulation of Confucius' recurrent emphasis on the unity of words and action. For more discussion, see my *Dimensions of Moral Creativity*, Chap. 5.

20. See Cua, *Ethical Argumentation*, Chaps. 3–4.

21. See my (1992) 'The Idea of Confucian Tradition', *Review of Metaphysics* 45. A revised, expanded version is given in Essay 12 of my *Moral Vision and Tradition*.

22. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 362.

23. Dworkin, Ronald (1986), *Law's Empire*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 52.

24. See my (1989) 'The Concept of *Li* in Confucian Moral Theory', in Robert Allinson (ed.), *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press. For more discussion, see 'The Ethical and the Religious Dimensions of *Li*', forthcoming in *Review of Metaphysics*. For Xun Zi's conception of knowledge, see my *Ethical Argumentation*, Chap. 2, and 'The Possibility of Ethical Knowledge: Reflections on a Theme in the Xunzi'.

25. Hu's work is a notable achievement, especially when we compare the philosophical quality of his work with most works of late Qing promoters and writers on Western philosophy. For an informative survey, see Zhong's article cited in note 6.

26. Hu, Shih (胡適) (1919), *Zhong-Guo-Zhe-Xue-Shi-Da-Gang* (中國哲學史大綱 *An Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy*), Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1–2. Please note that, except for occasional translations of the Chinese texts of Hu Shih, Fung Yu-lan, and Lao Sze-kwang, I have freely presented their views as I understand them. As indicated earlier, translation is in part an interpretive adaptation.

27. Graham, A. C. (1978), *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science*, Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.

28. Hu, Shih (1922), *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China*, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 7–9. For my view on some of these issues concerning Wang Yang-ming and Confucian tradition, see my *The Unity of Knowledge and Action* and *Moral Vision and Tradition*, Essays 9 and 11.

29. Fung, Yu-lan (馮友蘭) (1975), *Zhong-Guo-Zhe-Xue-Shi* (中國哲學史 *History of Chinese Philosophy*), Hong Kong: Tai-Ping-Yang, 1. Unless indicated otherwise, the following exposition is an interpretive reading from the Chinese text of 1–27; the Preface is dated 1962. Bodde's introductory chapter is a selected translation of Fung's Introduction to the Chinese edition. See Fung, Yu-lan (1952), *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, 2 vols, translated by Derk Bodde with Introduction, Notes, Bibliography and Index, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Shortly before his death in 1990, Fung completed a seven-volume comprehensive history of Chinese philosophy from the Marxist point of view. For a discussion of some salient features of this work, see Standaert, Nicolas (1995), 'The Discovery of the

Center Through the Periphery: A Preliminary Study of Fung Youlan's *History of Chinese Philosophy* (New Version)', *Philosophy East and West* 45.4: 569–90; and Standaert, Nicolas and Geivers, Bie, 'Fung Yu-lan: Works on the History of Chinese Philosophy' in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*.

30. This saying appears frequently in Xun Zi's essay 'Fei-Shi-Er-Zi' ('Against Twelve Thinkers'); see *Xun-Zi*, Book 6, 93–7.

31. Lau, D.C. (trans.) (1970), *Mencius*, Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 3B.9. Lau's translation is amended to reflect Fung's different punctuation of the Chinese text.

32. Fung, *Zhong-Guo-Zhe-Xue-Shi*, 6–7.

33. Fung, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, 1.

34. Ibid., 4.

35. *Analects*, 4:15.

36. Fung seems to have this passage in mind: 'No philosophy can ever be anything but a summary sketch, a picture of the world in abridgement, a foreshortened bird's-eye view of the perspective of events. And the first thing to notice is this, that the only material we have at our disposal for making a picture of the whole world is supplied by the various portions of that world we have already had experience. We can invent new forms of conception, applicable to the whole exclusively, and not suggested originally by parts. All philosophers, accordingly, have conceived of the whole world after the analogy of some particular feature of it has particularly captivated their attention' (James, William (1971), *Essays in Radical Empiricism and A Pluralistic Universe*, New York: Dutton, 125–6). Recall Francis Bacon's remark: 'The dispositions for philosophy and the sciences is this: that some are more vigorous and active in observing differences of things, others in observing their resemblances. … [Each carries the liability of] catching either at nice distinctions or shadows of resemblance' [Bacon, Francis (1856), *Novum Organum*, Aphorism 55, in the *Works of Francis Bacon*, vol. 3, Philadelphia, 349.]

37. Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1958), *Philosophical Investigation*, trans. by G.E.M. Anscombe, 3rd edn, New York: Macmillan, 595.

38. This seems to be the purport of Zhuang Zi's notion of 'equalizing all things' (*qi-wu*) in his critique of the disputes between the Confucians and the Mohists. See Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, Chap. 2. For the notion of 'forgetting' (*wang*), see my (1977) 'Forgetting Morality: Reflections on a Theme in *Chuang Tzu*', *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 4.4; or *Moral Vision and Tradition*, Essay 3.

39. Fung, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. I, 5; *Zhong-Guo-Zhe-Xue-Shi*, 22–5.

40. Ibid., vol. 2, 1–5.

41. Fung mistakenly refers to James's *A Pluralistic Universe* (*Zhongguo zhexue shi*), 15. His remark is almost a verbatim report of James's two-column table for contrasting tender-minded and tough-minded philosophers in James, William (1955), *Pragmatism and Four Essays from* The Meaning of Truth, Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, Lecture 1, 22.

42. Ibid., 15. Note that I have replaced Fung's paraphrase with the clearer English translation he cites. See Harold Hoffding (1924), *History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. B. E. Meyer, New York: Humanities Press, xvi.

43. Ibid. Translation adopted from Lau, D.C. (trans.) (1970), *Mencius*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 5B:8.

44. Fung ibid., 15–16.

45. Fung ibid., 16.

46. Fung ibid., 19–21. Below is a concise paraphrase of Fung's discussion of the difficulties of fidelity to history.

47. My translation. Cf. Legge, James (trans.), *I Ching: Book of Changes*, ed. with an Introduction and Study Guide by Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai (1964), New York: University Books: 376–7.

48. Translation adopted from Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 153. In the Ming dynasty, Wang Yang-ming is quite explicit about this aspect of teaching. Says Wang, 'Sages and worthies wrote about them very much like a portrait painter painting the true likeness and transmitting the spirit. He shows only an outline of the appearance to serve as a basis for people to seek and find the true personality. Among one's spirit, feelings, expressions, and behavior, there is that which cannot be transmitted. Later writers have imitated and copied what the sages have drawn.' (This is an amended translation based on Wang Yang-ming, *Instructions for Practical Living and*

Other Neo-Confucian Writings, trans. with Notes by Wing-tsit Chan (1963), New York: Columbia University Press, Section 20.)

49. Lau, *Mencius*: 7B:3.

50. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck (1959), Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 17n.

51. Some Marxist histories of Chinese philosophy are valuable in presenting extensive expositions and selections from the original sources. See, for example, Hou, Wai-lu 侯外廬 (editor-in-chief) (1959), *Zhong-Guo-Si-Xiang-Tong-Shi* (中國思想通史 *Comprehensive History of Chinese Thought*), 5 vols, Beijing: Renmin; and Ren, Ji-yu Ren, Jiyu 任繼愈 (editor-in-chief) (1979), *Zhong-Guo-Zhe-Xue-Shi* (中國哲學史 *History of Chinese Philosophy*), 4 vols, Beijing: Renmin. For accounts of Fung's philosophy, see Lujun Yin, 'Fung Yu-lan', in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*. For Fung's histories of Chinese philosophy, see Standaert's paper cited in note 29.

52. Lao, Sze-kwang 勞思光 (1984), *Xin-Bian-Zhong-Guo-Zhe-Xue-Shi* (中國哲學史新編 *A New Account of History of Chinese Philosophy*), vol. I, Taipei: Sanmin, (1st edn, 1982), 1–2.

53. Ibid., vol. I.3.

54. The illegitimate use of the 'appeal to the ancients' has often been unjustly ascribed to all Chinese thinkers of the classical period. A careful examination of the works of Xun Zi demonstrates the reasonableness of this appeal. See my (1985) 'Ethical Uses of History in Early Confucianism: The Case of Hsün Tzu', *Philosophy East and West* 35.2, 133–56. For a pinyin version, see the essay of the same title in Kline, T.C. and Philip Ivanhoe (eds) (2000), *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

55. For the distinction between a universal audience and a particular audience, see Perelman, Chaim and Anna Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 31–5.

56. Graham, A.C. (1989), *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*, LaSalle, IL: Open Court.

57. Rescher, Nicholas (1977), *Methodological Pragmatism*, New York: New York University Press.

58. On textual uncertainty, recently Knoblock, an excellent translator and scholar of Xun Zi's works, remarked: 'Until we can establish a firm chronology of debates, determine with assurance the relative dates of texts, resolve problems of the authenticity of some texts, and explore the broader range of Chinese thinking, leaving behind the theological and imperial imperatives of orthodox *Ru* (*Ju*, 'Confucian') thinkers, we shall not succeed in beginning the task of 'reconstructing' Chinese philosophy, however consistent and coherent the game we play.' One might not agree with Knoblock's attitude toward 'reconstruction' if that term put within quotation marks is meant to express a negative attitude toward philosophical reconstruction. The remark seems a good reminder of the utility of textual scholarship to the philosophical enterprise. See Knoblock, John (1988, 1995), *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, vol. 1, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, xi.

59. For further discussion, see my 'The Idea of Confucian Tradition' or *Moral Vision and Tradition*, Essay 12.

60. See my 'The Possibility of Ethical Knowledge: Reflections on a Theme in the *Hsün Tzu*'.

61. These are the elucidative and evaluative functions of the appeal to established historical knowledge in argumentative discourse. For further discussion, see my 'Ethical Uses of History in Early Confucianism: The Case of Hsün Tzu'.

62. See my *The Unity of Knowledge and Action*.

63. For a different view of Confucian ethics, see my 'Reflections on Moral Theory and Understanding Moral Tradition', in Gerald James Larson and Eliot Deutsch (eds) (1988), *Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; and my (1999) 'Problems of Chinese Moral Philosophy: A Personal Journey', Keynote Address, International Society for Chinese Philosophy, Taipei, July 26, 1999, forthcoming in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*.

64. Quoted in Wang, Shou-chang (1994), 'Fung Youlan and the Vienna Circle (A Synopsis)', *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 21.3–4, 265.

65. Admittedly, the linguistic, religious, social anthropological, political, and other approaches may furnish valuable perspectives for the philosophical interpretation of Chinese thought. A singular

example is the concept of *li* (rites) in Confucian ethics. See, for example, Fingerette, Herbert (1972), *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred*, New York: Harper and Row; Cua, A.S. (1979), 'Dimensions of *Li* (Propriety): Reflections on an Aspect of Hsün Tzu's Ethics', *Philosophy East and West* 29.4; and my (1983) '*Li* and Moral Justification: A Study in the *Li Chi*', *Philosophy East and West* 33.1.

66. Lao, 'Understanding Chinese Philosophy', 265–91. For an attempt to state a set of Confucian principles as ground rules for adjudicating intercultural ethical conflict, see my 'Reasonable Challenges and Preconditions of Adjudication', in Eliot Deutsch (ed.) (1991), *Culture and Modernity: East–West Philosophical Perspectives*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press; expanded in Essay 14 of my *Moral Vision and Tradition*. Before concluding, I must draw attention to Lao Sze-kuang's ongoing Internet project *Lexicon of Confucianism* (in Chinese). The project is divided into texts, commentaries, personalities, and concepts. I have looked up some entries on fundamental concepts of Confucianism, such as *dao/tao*, *ren/jen* (humanity, benevolence), *yi/i* (rightness, righteousness), and *li/li* (rites). All are quite informative, particularly as a guide to the conceptual history of these notions. Doctrines pertaining to such problems as *xing/hsing* (human nature) provide an excellent guide to the issues and the historical, philosophical scholarship.

67. Tang's English papers entitled *Essays on Chinese Philosophy and Culture* were published as vol. 19 of the *Collected Works of T'ang Ch'ün-I* (1987), Taipei: Student Book Co., Ltd.

68. Fang, Thomé H. (1980), *The Chinese View of Life: The Philosophy of Comprehensive Harmony*, Taipei: Linking.

II

CLASSICAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY (I): PRE-HAN PERIOD

Chapter 2
THE *YI-JING* AND *YIN*-YANG WAY OF THINKING
Chung-ying Cheng

1 Introduction

When one reads the history of Chinese philosophy, inevitably one will ask when and how Chinese philosophy originated. The answer is that Chinese philosophy as deep thinking on the nature of the world and the nature of human self can be said to have begun with the formation of the text of *Yi-Jing* (易經 *The Book of Change*) at the beginning of the Zhou dynasty in the early twelfth century BCE.[1] Hence the *Yi-Jing* was first known as the *Zhou-Yi* (周), which suggests the method by which changes were known in the Zhou time. The name also suggests that it deals with all changes (易*yi*) in the world, thus covering both natural changes and changes introduced by human action. Prior to the *Zhou-Yi* it is believed that there was *Yin-Yi* in the Yin period (ca 1600 BCE) and *Xia-Yi* in the *Xia* period (ca 2000 BCE).

To say that the beginning of the formation of the *Zhou-Yi* is the beginning of Chinese philosophy is an important proposition in light of the contemporary findings on matters related to the history of the text known as the *Zhou-Yi*, and also in light of the influence of the *Zhou-Yi* on the development of Chinese philosophy. It is through the disclosure of philosophical insights embodied in the texts of the *Zhou-Yi* that the book was transformed from a text of divination into a text of philosophical wisdom, which can be variously described as the philosophy of the *yi* or the onto-cosmology of *yi* or the *ben-ti* (本體) -ontology of the *yi* (易的本體有論).[2] This transformation is essential for understanding how the *Zhou-Yi* could be regarded as the forming of a system of ideas or views about the world and ourselves as human beings. We need to first explain how the *Zhou-Yi* can be said to contain philosophical insights in the sense of presupposition and pre-understanding.

In order to understand the *Yi-Jing* as essentially a book of philosophical wisdom which was developed and used as a book of divination we need to know what it concerns and how it is to be understood as a book of primordial philosophy. In simple terms, this text concerns the genesis of the onto-cosmological world (nature) in terms

of the movement and rest of *yin* and *yang* forces at the most basic level. The idea is that the world is composed of activities of *yin* and *yang* forces which systematically form world-situations in which we find ourselves. This understanding has the potentiality for explaining all things in their formation and transformation. It is also congenial with regard to incorporating human beings as part and parcel of the onto-cosmological process of reality–realization. This has the benign consequence to the effect human being could actively change the world. This understanding also forms the core of thinking in the formation of the image-forms (trigrams/hexagrams *guas* 卦) and *yaos* (爻 six lines which structure each *gua*) in the *Yi-Jing* text. One may indeed regard the *guas* as symbols for situation-making configuration of living forces (*vis viva*) of change (namely, the *qi* 氣) and the *yaos* as symbols of the living forces of *yin* （陰） and *yang* (陽) natures.[3] Normally a broken line signifies the living force of *yin* and a solid line signifies the living force of *yang*.

As we shall see, the capacity to change naturally causes us to regard our *yin* and *yang* experiences of nature as revealing the creative forces of *yin* and *yang* in natural reality. At the same time, the terms *yin* and *yang* still retain their phenomenological meanings in terms of our experiences of light and dark, motion and rest, hardness and softness. Not only can *yin-yang* be regarded as living forces of nature, they can be also treated as qualities of things that may be experienced and described also as a matter of *yin* and *yang* forces, namely as creative forces of the *qi*. It is interesting to note that the original texts of the *Zhou-Yi* did not mention *qi*, and it is not until the writing of the *Yi-Zhuan* (易傳) commentaries of the *Yi* text that the term *qi* was used. But this is not to say that experiences and understanding of *qi* as a living force may not begin with the observation and experiences of the *yin-yang* forces in process of change in reality (nature).

Even though the original *Yi* text rarely mentioned *yin* and *yang*, we must assume that they are taken for granted insofar as our experiences of nature and ourselves are concerned. Yet a distinction between experience of *yin* and experience of *yang* has to be made. This no doubt gives rise to the statement in the *Xi-Ci* (繫辭): 'Alternation of the *yin* and *yang* (*yi-yin-yi-yang-zhi-wei-dao* 一陰一陽之謂道) is called the *dao* (道).'[4] Hence we normally assume that we know what the *yin-yang* model of thinking stands for. But in actuality we may not really know what *yin* and *yang* are or how these two words are used in the *Yi* text. In asserting that 'the alternation of one *yin* and one *yang* is to be called the *dao*', we must notice the use of the term '*zhi-wei*' (之謂 'is to be called') as distinct from the term '*wei-zhi*' (謂之 'is called'). The former indicates a real definition which consists in an insight into the nature of things which leads to the definition of a thing in light of that insight whereas the latter indicates a conventional definition which consists in identifying a use of descriptive language by convention. In light of this distinction one can see that what is referred to as '*yi-yin-yi-yang-zhi-wei-dao*' is a reflection of insight into the reality of change by the author of the *Xi-Ci*. Along the same line we may also identify the similarly insightful real definitions in various sections of the *Xi-Ci*. We have the following assertions:

To be abundant is to be called great deed; to renew oneself is to be called

sagely virtue. To be creative of creativity is called the change. To form an image is to be called Power (乾). To follow is to be called Receptance (坤). To explore into the numbers is to know the future and is to be called divination. To comprehend changes is to be called an event. In the exchanges of yin and yang there is unpredictability and this is to be called the divine.' (*Xi-Ci-Shang* 5)

To contrast, we see how the author of the *Xi-Ci* illustrates the use of *wei-zhi*: 'The benevolent man (仁者) sees it and calls it benevolence, the wise man (智者) sees it and calls it wisdom' (*Xi-Ci-Shang* 5).

Thus the closing of the gate we call it *kun* (坤), the opening of the gate we call it *qian* (乾). One closing and one opening we call it change (變 *bian*). Going and coming without limit we call it going through (通 *tong*). To present we call it the form-image (象 *xiang*). To form we call it vessel (器 *qi* i.e. come to have a function to be used). To manufacture and make use of we call it to follow (法 *fa*, a norm or a model). To be constantly and generally used in and by people we call it the divine.

(*Xi-Ci-Shang* 11)

One can see the distinction between what is characterized as *wei-zhi* and what is characterized as *zhi-wei* in the following way: the assertions in terms of the former reflect a deeper cosmological experience whereas the latter is intended to describe what has been conventionally identified in the use of the language by people. Hence I suggest the distinction between them reflects a movement of understanding from common experience to insightful experience in the formation of a cosmological ontology or onto-cosmology of reality as experienced by the early *Yi*-thinkers.

In connection with this understanding we have to come to face the question of how the *yin-yang* way/model of thinking is epistemologically justified and the question of how this model leads to a philosophy of onto-cosmology of change embedded in a system of image-forms (*guas*) in the *Yi-Jing*. I first describe how the *yin-yang* way of thinking is conceived and formulated. Then I introduce three principles as the foundation on which our experiences of *yin* and *yang* become consolidated in a system of onto-cosmology. Then I introduce some methodological principles of understanding and interpretation which would unify the division of the *xiang-shu* (象數) and *yi-li* (義理) schools for an integrative approach to this philosophy of change in the *Yi-Jing*. I note the stages in which this transformation took place.

2 *Yin-Yang* Way: Model of Onto-Cosmic Thinking

To understand the world we need to observe the world. To understand the human self we need to reflect on the human self. It is from this point of view that the beginning of the *Yi-Jing* has to be traced to the process of observation and reflection as revealed in the formation of the *gua* system. The world on which human observation focuses

presents itself as a world of changes. It is a world of things in change and a world of change in which things emerge. When a person observes the world thoroughly and without missing any form of change, he is said to be engaged in 'a comprehensive observation' (觀 *guan*) of the world as described in the *Yi-Zhuan* for the *Zhou-Yi*. This effort to make comprehensive observation leads to the following results:

(1) One observes that changes in the world always take the form of one *yin* and one *yang* in a relation of reciprocity and resonance. This experience comes from observation of the brightness of light together with the darkness or shade which forms the background of the light. Hence the word *yang* originally means the bright side of a hill facing south whereas *yin* means the shaded side facing north. It is then generalized to mean a contrasting correlation between the light and the dark. The phenomenological observation also indicates that whenever there is *yang* there is *yin* and where there is *yin* there is *yang*. Besides, we could experience the *yang* as the visible and the *yin* as the invisible or the *yang* as the formed and the *yin* as the unformed. Hence what is *yin* could be experienced as what is given as the invisible, pre-existing background of a thing, whereas what is *yang* is hence experienced as what is given as the visible thrust of the formation of a thing. In this sense *yin* and *yang* are to be understood phenomenologically in a dynamic context of alternation or correlation. The alternation of one *yin* and one *yang* as a process of *dao* no doubt contributes to our understanding of the *dao* as both the source-origin and the creative process of the *yin* and *yang*. For it implies that *yin* and *yang* are to emerge as a related pair of forces and states of becoming through the agency of the *dao*. Earlier Lao Zi (老子) in the *Dao-De-Jing* (道德經) suggested that 'the *Dao* generates one, one generates two and the two generate three. The three generate all things. All things bear the *yin* and hold the *yang*, and reach harmony by dynamically mixing [the *yin* and the *yang*]'.[5] Lao Zi may have come to the notion of *dao* through reflecting on the origin of all things. One may also come to see the *dao* through a process of becoming by way of *yin* and *yang* alternation. It is in the *Xi-Ci* that one finds that the becoming of the *yin* and the *yang* is defined as the *dao*.[6]

Another effect of this is that many other qualities of things could be intuitively and generally identified as *yin* and *yang* as extended qualities of the one or the other. Even things and life-forms could, by intuitive association and experience, be identified or classified as *yin* and *yang* in action. Thus the qualities of motion (動 *dong*) and rest (靜 *jing*) could be said to be matter of *yang* and *yin* as motion is more a thrust of force, like a ray of light, whereas rest appears to be the background for a motion which remains less noticeable. Similarly, we can see hardness (剛 *gang*) and softness (柔 *rou*) as more or less a matter of *yin* and *yang* because hardness in the sense of larger resistance and/or thrust of force is more *yang* than *yin*, whereas softness with smaller resistance and tolerance is more *yin* than *yang*. When an object is dominated more by the *yang* qualities it is a *yang* thing, whereas when an object is dominated more by the *yin* qualities it is a *yin* matter. In light of these extended considerations the whole world of things and changes can be regarded as having evolved from forces of *yin* and *yang*. It is in reference to this *yin-yang* analysis that Chinese medical art has been able to develop

a system of diagnosis, medication and medical care based on the *yin-yang* relationships of interaction, reinforcement, overcoming, submission, balance and harmonization.

Epistemologically, we must also observe that *yin* and *yang* forces could be experienced as a matter of degrees of contrast and therefore as a relation rather than as a quality. In other words, under certain circumstances the *yin* quality is only relatively *yin* in contrast with a *yang* quality whereas it is identified as a *yang* quality in contrast with a *yin* quality like in the case of hardness and softness. This relativity of *yin-yang* distinction must be justified in a context or situation where degrees of *yin* and *yang* could be experienced and identified. This is not to say that *yin* and *yang* do not have objective reference in the context of an onto-cosmology founded and supported by comprehensive experience of things in the world. This means that we must be reminded of contexts of identification of the *yin* and the *yang*. We must distinguish between our judgments of *yin* and *yang* based on our limited experience and special ends from our understanding of *yin* and *yang* as cosmic forces and states of becoming.

(2) By observation and experience we can see that *yin* and *yang* are related in many intimate, reciprocal and interactive ways: *yang* can be said to bring out *yin*, just as *yin* can be said to bring out *yang*. In effect this interaction suggests that *yin* and *yang* must arise at the same time from a primordial source of activity and creativity which is known as *tai-ji* (太極 the great ultimate). Since *tai-ji* like the *yang* force may need a background support, analogical thinking may lead to the understanding of absence of *tai-ji* as basis of *tai-ji*. This leads to the notion of *wu-ji* (無極 the non-ultimate) which cannot be positively identified as such but which can be said to give rise to the sustainable matrix of the creativity and action of the *tai-ji*. [7]

The relationship between *yin* and *yang* can be also seen as mutually supporting, transforming, balancing, enhancing and furthering of the new. In a deeper and extended sense one can see that *yin* and *yang* stands in a relation of the indeterminate and the determining whereby the *yang* may be said to arise from the *yin* just as motion starts from rest and vice versa. This mutual origination which leads to both the determining and the indeterminate is called the *dao*. This leads to the formulation of an onto-cosmology of be-ing from non-be-ing which exhibits the principle of unlimited creativity of the *dao* in generating the world by way of the generation of *yin-yang* forces or *qi* (氣). In other words, as *yin-yang* becomes a growing complex system, diversity of things would arise by way of the generative functioning of the *yin-yang* forces of creativity based on both the creativity of the *tai-ji* and the creativity of the *wu-ji*. Diversity and complexity still retain the positive relationship of enhancing, supporting, and complementing the *yin-yang* forces on the one hand, and on the other there is always a negative relationship of opposition, resistance, tension and balance in the *yin-yang*. These two kinds of tendencies will further function as agencies of formation and transformation of things toward the new. In this sense the *yin-yang* relationship is creative and productive: it is creative because it leads to new possibilities of realization and it is productive because it is generative of new things. It is in light of these generative and productive changes that the change is called *yi* in the broad sense of creative change, which incorporates all kinds of changes including no

change, simple change, differential change, integrative change, all to be explained by way of interchange and exchange of the *yin* and *yang* forces.

(3) With this generative and creative relationship of *yin* and *yang* in view, the reality of the world is seen as a matter of renewing and refreshing, creating and recreating all the time. It is said that 'to produce the productive is called the *yi*'. This is the most important principle for the formulation of the ontology and cosmology of the *yin* and *yang* forces after the principle of the alternation of the *yin* and *yang*. We may note that both the principle of alternation (co-creativity) and the principle of productivity (or creativity) have two aspects: the phenomenological aspect and the onto-cosmological aspect. The phenomenological aspect refers to our experience and observation of the phenomena of the *yin-yang* as human experiences of reality, whereas the onto-cosmological aspect refers to the objective reality of the world which we must acknowledge because our observation and ourselves as human beings are part and parcel of the world. The union of ontology and cosmology in onto-cosmology of the *tai-ji* and *wu-ji* or of the *yin* and *yang* is a matter of internal linking of the *yin-yang* from the *tai-ji* and the *tai-ji* from the *wu-ji*.

We may now summarize what has been developed in the above: As *yin-yang* forces are revealed in *yin-yang* experiences by us, *yin-yang* indicates both objective moving powers and the human experiences of the objective at the same time. The term *yin-yang* has two further connotations: *yin-yang* as qualities of things or simply as types of thing. The world is both differentiated and integrated by an open and comprehensive system and an ongoing process of the *yin-yang* forces as experienced by the human person. In like manner *tai-ji* and *wu-ji* are equally established as powers of creativity and co-creativity as well as principles of *yin-yang* interchanges and exchanges as rooted in the *tai-ji* and *wu-ji*. When we come to the symbolic texts of the *Yi-Jing*, one will note that the threefold meanings of *yin-yang* as experiences, as creative forces of nature and qualities of things are all to be symbolized by the *yao* lines of the *gua*s in the *Yi-Jing*. We must distinguish all these types and levels of the meanings and reference of the term *yin-yang* as applied to the texts of the *Yi-Jing*. We finally come to see the *yao* lines as providing a symbolism of the *yin-yang* forces, qualities, aspects and human beings and their experiences.

3 Three Principles of the Onto-Epistemology of the *Yi*

The foregoing has given a description of the formulation of the onto-cosmology of change in terms of *yin-yang* experiences and *yin-yang* forces. Now we come to three fundamental principles of onto-epistemology for the onto-cosmology of *yin-yang* thinking. The three epistemological principles for experiencing the *yin-yang* dynamics are the principle of comprehensive observation (*guan*), the principle of reflective response (感 *gan*), and the principle of the integration of the two, all of which are explicitly suggested in the *Yi-Jing* text itself, unlike the implicit embodiment of onto-cosmology of change in that text.

The first principle is directed to the outer world whereas the second is directed to the inner feelings of the human person; the third principle brings the two together so

that we have a view on how the world and human beings are to be related in a creative process of interaction.

It is clear that one needs to open one's eyes and mind to see and feel the world as comprehensively and as objectively as possible. To engage in comprehensive observation is to let things and events present themselves so that *guan-zhe* (觀者 the observer) notices the particularities of things as outstanding and unique and yet embedded in a process of change and transformation. It is to see all things as related or interrelated (relations as part of observable reality) and as forming a totality and a whole. Hence it is said that Fu Xi (伏羲) in antiquity had watched forms in the sky and norms on earth. He even observed the polished exterior of birds and beasts and how they relate to the environment. He would also take things near and far in order to be comprehensive in scope so that he could devise a system of eight forms. With this system of eight forms (八卦 *ba-gua*) understood in relation to each other he was able to understand the power and potential of the creative and the illuminative as these forms become a reflection of not only the changing events and situations of nature but vectors and tendencies of living forces in nature. Although terms like *qi*, *yin*, and *yang* have not been used in the *Zhou-Yi* texts of judgments, their emergence and presence in the *Yi-Zhuan* says a great deal about the underlying and hidden cosmological feelings and ontological experience in the symbolization and judgmental thinking of the early *Yi* diviners.

The reason why a *Yi* thinker needs to be creative and illuminative is that he could apply what he understands without too much risk. In the *guan* hexagram observation is conceived as an enlarging and therefore an open process from which *yin* and *yang* may be observed. It is a process of moving from a smaller scope of observation to a larger scope of observation, from observing what happens in one's own life to what happens in the life of man in general. As I have discussed in my essay on *Guan*,[8] *guan* forms the foundation for understanding the whole system of changes in nature and it also provides an orientation from which one may determine and come to know a system of positions in which the observer is located. Not only does the world come to be known as a system of changes, we come to see also how the world changes and how things change in the world. *Guan* is comprehensive and non-reductive and therefore preserves the natural scene of reality from a truly macro-phenomenal point of view. Hence the Tuan commentary on the *guan* hexagram remarks: 'One comes to have a great view of things from above, and things will become compliant and penetrating. This is also to see the world (under heaven) from the centrality which is a measure of correctness.' It is in this central position that Heaven is said to make no difference to the four seasons and the sage is able to offer his teachings with the whole world come to be in unison.[9]

On the principle of reflective resonance and response it is to be noted that this principle requests an understanding of our inner feelings. This is due to our self-introspection. But the principle would require that this self-introspection should be conscientiously made and the inner activities of one's mind and heart could be made to bear on one's intention and goal. Apparently, this principle is deeply seated in the *Yi-Jing* because the *Yi-Jing* itself speaks of resonance (應 *gan*) and response (应 *ying*). In

the *Xi-Ci* it is said that the millefoil for divination is such that it is without thoughts and without actions and hence remains unmoved. But it is through feeling (*gan*) that it comes to comprehend the causes of things in the world.[10] It is clear that for the authors of the *Xi-Ci gan* could be an avenue not only for superficial perception but for penetrative understanding. It is in this sense of feeling that we can speak of the supreme experience and understanding of the reality (the *dao)* and its principles (理 *li*) as the moving of the invisible spirit-vitality (神 *shen*) of *qi*. It is important to note that this feeling is not confined to the ordinary feelings of our sensations and emotions but something to do with one's deep perception and insight into reality.

In order to have this deep perception and insight into reality which we may call 'spiritual feelings' (神感 *shen-gan*) one must further reflect on what one ordinarily feels in heart and mind so that one can feel deeper and become enlightened on what is inside of oneself that forms a response to that which would become disclosed or unveiled in light of the feeling. This explains how one could 'know the reasons/causes for the dark and the bright', 'know the reasons for death and life and the transformations of things and floating spirits'.[11]

The basic principle of this feeling is always one of *yin-yang* correspondence and resonance. Hence the feeling must be seen as a response to a reality which causes the feeling and yet at the same time reveals itself as the cause so that the feeling would recognize it as such. But again this recognition is not simply a matter of identifying an object but a way of acknowledging a common source to which the resonance and response can be attributed and in terms of which conflict will be resolved and a harmony formed. In this sense this resonance is creative for both heart and mind transformation and transformation of natural course of events through action of the human person motivated by his or her feelings. Perhaps a few simple examples will illustrate. In a storm or war one experiences the feeling of fear. Over a case of child abuse one experiences the feeling of anger. In serving one's parents one experiences a feeling of joy. All these feelings may come naturally and, on reflection, they reveal a deeper relation of oneself to others and the world and one also sees how the world should or should not be acted on. One also comes to see and reject as inappropriate certain ways of approaching others and the world as one comes to see and approve the appropriate ways of approaching others and the world. Further reflection may lead to a fundamental insight into the natural law of storms, the value of non-violence, the love that obtains in humanity.

All in all, the principle of feeling is a dynamic and dialectic one which calls on us to search for a deeper self and a deeper reality of the world, and to quest for a reconciliation and consonance between the subject and the object through mutual transformation and interaction.[12]

In the *Yi* text there is the *Xian* (咸) hexagram which depicts a situation of dynamic feeling on one's body. It is to be noted that the word *xian* (咸) means feeling (*gan*). Etymologically the two words are related in that the word *xian* may originally have the feeling *gan* as its core meaning. It may be considered the short form for the word *gan* or the original form of *gan* since *gan* has added the radical heart to the word *xian* to become *gan*. But in light of my explanation of the *gan-ying* (應应) relationship

as dynamic accord between the subject and object I have come to the following explanation of the relationship between the two words: The word *xian* already means uniformity and accord, and it is the uniformity and accord exhibited by an army in keeping guard. In order to stress the deeper sense of feeling toward its cause in resonance and accord, this word was borrowed to indicate how the mind could feel a sense of unison and accord with its object and cause of feeling. The *Xian gua* is actually used to illustrate this situation of concrete sensation of feeling in such a way that this initial of feeling of closeness could advance to a more intimate relationship with the object and cause of the feeling. Eventually the subject and the object could become united into oneness.[13]

Given the above analysis, it is natural that we should come to see how these two principles should unite to form a whole picture of our understanding of the world of change. The observation principle is outer-directed as observation is outer-directed, and yet it requires the inner feelings of the human person to be open, and objective, and centrally placed. On the other hand, the feeling principle is inner-directed as feeling is inner-directed, and yet it requires the outer observation of the human person to be aware of what is being disclosed and revealed so that a deeper truth and reality could be identified and felt. The use of the two principles together has to be complementary and beneficial to each other and this would be beneficial to the development and transformation of the human person in his mind and heart interaction. This enhances a deeper understanding/definition, and identification of the human person in an onto-cosmic context as both the scope of the observation and the depth of feeling must reveal and disclose the larger reality of the cosmos and the deeper source of reality in which the outer and the inner are to be found. The openness of the process of observation and reflection also assumes that nothing is to be left out and the genuine sense of change will be preserved, so that a more comprehensive observation and a more extensive reflection will take place. This no doubt would lead to the formation of the system of forms which are historically formed in a process of the organization and reconciliation of many factors of experience by such an ideal person whom one might call the sage or the sage-king. It is in this process of synthetic collation that one sees the preservation of the fundamental experiences of the *yin-yang* and the extended qualities of *gang-rou* and *dong-jing*, whereas the three pairs could further lead to more complex notions of *yin-yang* in concrete things and concrete situations such as Heaven and Earth, male and female, the individual and society, power and virtue, creativity and receptivity, being and non-being.

In the interests of methodology we may call the combinatory use of the observation and feelings 'the principle of comprehensive integration' (*tong*). This principle is inherent in our experience of reality as an open, ongoing, dynamic process of change, for there is nothing to be unnecessarily excluded insofar as we see the *yin-yang* of the experience in totality. Yet the world as the process of change will constantly bring up now things that are open to our observation and reflection; hence in order to preserve the original sense of reality in totality and oneness when we are confronted with simple phenomena, we need to integrate all our relevant experiences on *yin-yang* into a comprehensive unity. To integrate is not to reduce experiences of differences

to homogeneity, but to establish a framework of open unity with maximum diversity of experiences interrelated into a wholeness. Both Daoist and Confucian have seen the necessity and meaningfulness for this effort toward comprehensive integration. In the *Dao-De-Jing* Lao Zi speaks of the oneness of Heaven, the oneness of Earth, etc., yet everything will remain unshackled by the *dao* because *dao* does not dominate or possess. Similarly, for Confucianism the ideal value is harmony–harmonization. One needs to harmonize all differences into a unity in which everything will have a proper place and a better opportunity for self-realization and self-transformation. Hence he speaks of a moral person as 'achieving harmony and yet preserving differences'. It is in this sense that the principle of comprehensive integration is also a principle of universal harmonization. It is principle of co-creativity for the formation of a large world.

We may further note that the principle of observation leads to the discovery of multitude of differences in the world. This may be regarded as a disclosure of the functional differentiation of the reality as we observe in the world. On the other hand, the principle of feeling leads to reconciliation and harmonization of the differences and hence a principle of onto-cosmological integration. The possibility of comprehensive integration is a methodological principle inherent in both processes of comprehensive observation and profound feeling, as both are founded and premissed on the onto-cosmological integration of our understanding rooted in our deep feelings of ourselves with regard to the world. The deeper feelings of humanity must find their response and resonance in the unity of and the affinity with the world. This is generally referred as the union of heaven and man at one (天人合一 *tian-ren-he-yi*), but more specifically it is better spelled out as 'the union of heaven and man in their creative powers' (天人合傳 *tian-ren-he-de*) as indicated in the *Wen-Yan* （文言传 commentary of the hexagram *Qian*). For the latter suggests that it is because of presence of creative powers (such as comprehensive observation and deep feelings) in humans that they can reach for a union with the primordial creativity of Heaven and Earth. Thus, one must not see the principle of comprehensive integration as a matter simply of onto-cosmological integration but a matter of extensive differentiation which embodies the functional differentiation as a natural creative process.

With this understanding, finally, we come to see how the onto-epistemological principle of comprehensive integration becomes methodologically a principle of interpretation and understanding with regard to the multitude of beings in the world as well as with regard to the multitude of assertions in a textual discourse. To see the world in this way is to interpret by means of concepts or use of language against a background of established observations and feelings. Hence we can see how an onto-epistemological principle from the *Yi-Jing* makes possible our conceptual integration and discursive understanding of the world and our human selves.

4 *Yi* as the School of *Yin-Yang* and *Yi* as the Onto-Cosmology of Change

In his *Tian-Xia* chapter（莊子天下篇）, Zhuang-Zi summarizes the general features of the ancient canonical texts in the following way: 'The Poetry is to speak of the

human aspirations, the History is to speak of affairs and events, the Rites are to speak of human conduct, the Music is to speak of harmony, the Changes (*yi*) are to speak of the *yin* and *yang* exchanges, and the Spring-Autumn is to speak of the proper titles and ranks (名份 *ming-fen*).' The *Yi* here clearly refers to the tradition of understanding nature and human events in terms of the exchange of *yin* and *yang* forces. Specifically it refers to the *Yi* as a text just like other texts of the humanistic tradition from the past.

With this understanding of the *Yi* as a text of *yin-yang* discourse, traditional explanation of the meaning of *yi* begins with focusing on the formation of the character *yi* in the Chinese in reference to understanding of the *yin* and *yang* forces. But the word *yi* written 易 is nowhere explained in the original texts of the *Yi* known as the *Yi-Jing*. What the term *yi* originally is intended to mean and refer to and how it became the name for a conceptual system of judgments of divination become the fundamental questions. The *Shou-Wen-Jie-Zi* (說文解字) of Xu Shen (許慎) ca 58–147 AD, in the early Han Dynasty, explains the word *yi* as designating lizard with its head and four legs. This idea may come from interpreting the shape of the word engraved on bronze in the early Zhou time. It is apparent that this word is used to designate the book of *Yi-Jing* or the system of divinations after ideas of the *Yi-Zhuan* were first inspired by Confucius (551–479 BCE) in the later part of his life, for it is in the *Yi-Zhuan* that the word *yi* is used to identify generally the system of divinatory judgments and the practice of divination. In fact, it is used to refer to four aspects of the practice of divination for the purpose of understanding and predicting the future. Hence it is said in the *Xi-Ci* :

> The *Yi* has four ways of the sage: for those who wish to speak would appeal to the judgments, for those who favor action would appeal to changes; for those who wish to manufacture would take *xiang* (象 forms of the *yi* phenomenon) seriously, those who wish to do divination take the divination seriously.'
>
> (*Shang*-10)

> In actuality, the use of the term *yi* is even broader in scope than this passage suggested, because it is used to refer to the activities of heaven and earth and for that matter, the powers (and virtues) of heaven and earth in formation and transformation of things in the cosmos. Hence it is said that 'To generate that which generates is called the *yi*.'
>
> (*Shang*-5)

The *Shuo-Wen* （說文）also indicates that the word *yi* is formed from the two words 'sun' and 'moon' and thus represents the *yin* (shine) and *yang* (shade) of nature. But in all oracle bone inscriptions of the word *yi* (易), the lower part of the word does not suggest a moon shape. Hence the meaning of the word 易 cannot be said to derive from the composition of the words standing for sun and moon. We need to find another explanation.

After considering all aspects of the formation of the word *yi*, I find that the best explanation is to be found in *yi* as indicating and representing the appearance of the sun and clouding of the sun by floating clouds. The second part of the word therefore

could be easily identified as the vital force *qi*. Hence the word *yi* is a term to indicate free changes of *qi* and can be said to be the way of opening and closing, dark and bright, motion and rest, firm and soft. As *qi* is one of the ancient terms appearing in the oracle bones, to use *qi* to explain the *yi* is more reasonable and is more in conformance with actuality and experience than the static combination of sun and moon.

As we take the shining and shading experience as the primitive experience of change, we can see that change consists in the shining becoming the shading of the light or the shading becoming the shining of the light. But we also see that shining and shading may coexist for a period of time before there is complete shading or complete shining as clouds may move one way or another. We also come to see that this kind of change occurs naturally and constitutes a natural course of events in the world. We further notice that changes of this sort take place against a background sky and space which may contain other things but which may appear not changing against the moving clouds and the events of shining and shading. But this is not to say that they may not change from one state to another. What we come to see for the moment is that there is change marked by shining which we may call the *yang* (literally, sunshine on the hill) and there is also the change marked by shading which we may call the *yin* (literally, shadows over the hill). We notice that it is by removing the cloud over the sun that we come to have the shading and it is by moving the cloud over the sun that we come to have the shading. The results of shining and shading, which are respectively brightness and shade, can be also called *yang* and *yin*. We can see that it is the relative constancy of no change that marks out relative changes of *yin* and *yang* and their manifestation against the background of no change. With all these in view, it is no surprise that *yi* or change is eventually given three meanings by Zheng Xuan (鄭玄 127–200CE). He says: 'There is one name of *yi* which contains three meanings: first, simple change (簡易 *jianyi*); second, changing into something else (變易 *bianyi*); third, non-change (不易 *buyi*).'[14]

We can see that all the three aspects of change actually come from the *Xi-Ci* of the *Yi-Zhuan* as inspired by Confucius. In the *Xi-Ci* it is said: 'The *qian* leads the great creation, the *kun* completes the creation of things. *Qian* leads by the simple quality of changing (yi), the *kun* is capable of completing by simply following.'[15] There is a unity of the initial change and the completing action, which is intended by the term *yi-jian* (易簡), literally, the completed action of change. Hence it is said to be the condition and cause for obtaining the order (*li*) of the world in which everything will be well positioned and related. In this sense it is evident that the term *yi-jian* which literally refers to bamboo pieces for recording and writing indicates an easier and more simple way of recording and writing than earlier forms of recording such as using knots of strings. *Jian* (簡) could therefore suggest the beginning of writing and the invention of symbols for indicating not just objects but the concepts of our minds as well. But the point of using *yi-jian* or *jian-yi* to refer to the principle of change is that it indicates evolution to a more advanced stage of development of culture and knowledge through the inventive power of the human mind. To be simple and easy (as the term *jian-yi* suggests semantically) is to go beyond a given form of experience to a higher form of experience which integrates the earlier forms in a new form of experience with greater scope and greater

unity and hence greater simplicity. This new form of experience requires intelligent use of the mind for organization, interrelation and comprehensive integration. In this sense the idea of *yi-jian* or *jian-yi* is one of rational ordering and ontological rooting.

Concerning the *bian-yi*, the notion of qualitative and quantitative change is conveyed; it is change which pervades all the changes of the world which give rise to the order of things. It is indicated in the emergence of natural phenomena of the sun and moon, the wind and rain, the hill and the river, the thunder and lake, and the hot and cold in the four seasons. It also is evidenced in the emergence of the male and the female as the two genders of certain living species. In the words of the *Xi-Ci* and the *Shuo-Gua* (說卦傳), we can see qualitative change as the emergence of *yin* and *yang* as two alternating and interacting forces and forms of things that we can experience. As I have discussed earlier, *yin* and *yang* refer to the bright and the shaded aspects of the reality we experience and hence our experiences of such. From the root meanings of *yin* and *yang* we come to see how *yin* and *yang*, on the one hand, are to be identified as qualities of things which emerge or occur as a result of change and our experiences of them and, on the other hand, the natural objects and events which we can identify in nature such as the sun and the moon, heaven and earth, hill and lake, wind and thunder, water and fire. It is obvious that this extended notion of *yin* and *yang* has to retain the basic pattern of the nature of *yin* and *yang* as qualities of things and as forces of change. In these senses the qualities of softness and firmness and moving and rest are introduced as extensions and exemplifications of *yin* and *yang*. These new qualities can be further combined and synthesized into ideas of powers which exhibit these qualities with special functions of production, preservation, transformation and realization. In this fashion, we must note that the content of *yin* and *yang* as two primary onto-cosmic categories of reality, become extremely rich and complex. This has the consequence of making it difficult to identify the exact reference of *yin* and *yang* in many concrete things and situations, even though the basic meanings of *yin* and *yang* have continued to be phenomenonogically and intuitively fundamental and constant because our basic experience of the *yin* and *yang* remain the same.

It is in light of this combination and synthesis that *qian* and *kun* were introduced as the primary powers of the production and transformation of things in the world. Hence in the *Xi-Ci* it is said: 'The *qian* is such that when it is at rest, it is concentrated, and when it is moving it goes straight, hence it eminently produces things. The *kun* is such that when it is at rest, it is closed and when it is moving it is open, hence it vastly produces things.'[16] That there are motion and rest is a matter of experience and observation. Motion and rest pertain to the nature of *qian* and *kun* and can be identified as belonging to the distinction between *yang* and *yin*. As *qian* and *kun* may be said to be moving and at rest, one can infer that there are *yin* and *yang* in *yin* and *yang* and consequently *yin* and *yang* form an embedded order of levels or hierarchies. *Qian* and *kun* would allow such a hierarchical order of *yin-yang* to be formed. As noted, an extended notion of the *yin* and the *yang* is firmness (*gang*) and softness (*rou*). It is said in the *Xi-Ci Shang*-1 that 'when the *gang* and *rou* mutually interact, we have the changes.' Even though *gang* and *rou* may refer to solid and broken lines of a *gua* (trigrams or hexagrams), the rudimentary meanings of firmness and softness are still

derived from our experiences of things in nature and natural events. Then the question arises as to whether *gang* and *rou* may be referred to as correlates of *yin* and *yang*. The answer is positive as we see how the *Shuo-Gua* refers to the '*yin* and *yang* as the way of establishing the way of heaven' and to the '*gang* and *rou* as the way of establishing the way of earth'. Hence we can see *gang* and *rou* as *yang* and *yin* on Earth.

It is by similar analogy that the *Shuo-Gua* refers to '*ren* (仁 benevolence) and *yi* (義 righteousness) as establishing the way of man'. As Heaven, Earth and man form a parallel processes of the cosmic world, they share a common pattern of polarities of the *yin* and *yang* relationships which resonate with one another. But one must see *yin* and *yang* as capable of being realized in many different characters, in different situations, and on different levels of things. Hence *yin* and *yang* may refer to the most basic features of all the extended *yin* and *yang* qualities, and hence refer to the specific features of things in their concrete relationships. One can then see how *ren* is like *yang* in its enlightening and productive powers and how *yi* is like *yin* in its disciplining and distributing powers. Hence *ren* is comparable to *yang* as *yi* is comparable to *yin*. One may even extend the *yin* and *yang* paradigm to description of the contrast between the *xiao-ran* (小人 the small man) and the *jun-zi* (君子 the superior or moral man). In doing so, we have advanced from a description of nature in *yin* and *yang* to a description of the qualities, including moral qualities, of human persons in *yin* and *yang*. We may argue that our experience of *yin* and *yang* as an open process of distinction-making and contrast-making allows such a development. One needs to make the development clear by recognizing the importance of the powers of metaphorical extension and functional analogy in our experiences of *yin* and *yang*.

In light of the above analysis we may represent *yin* and *yang* relationships in these three principles:

1 *Yin* and *yang* as two basic onto-cosmological categories of reality (being and becoming) give rise to further *yin* and *yang* in a hierarchical differentiation and branching which may be unlimited. One can speak of a *yin*-series of qualities and a *yang*-series of qualities in our experience of the world.
2 *Yin* and *yang* will have to be realized and recognized in different qualities to be described in such terms as movement and rest, firmness and softness, progression and retrogression, and so on.
3 Concrete things can be said to be formed from different combinations of qualities from the *yin*-series and the *yang*-series.

It is in light of these three principles we can speak of *yin* and *yang* as pervasive and basic categories of identification and description and therefore in considering natural events and human affairs as related and even correlated experiences of the same basic qualities and powers of nature and humanity. These three principles also show the complexity of the thoughts and discourses of *yin* and *yang* in ordinary language and in the system of forms of trigrams and hexagrams which introduces a logical order in such a thought and speech.

In light of the *Xi-Ci* and *Shuo-Gua* the following characteristics of the relations of the *yin* and the *yang* may be presented, namely:

- mutual dependence in a relation of initiation and completion;
- differentiation of their relations into two different functions which can be described as opposition and yet complementation;
- rooted in the basic unity between the two and sharing common source from which the two arises.

These three characteristics make *yin* and *yang* a dynamic unity of a process of origination, differentiation, sustenance, complementation and completion. But one must also note that any result of completion is also the beginning or origination of a new process. It is in this sense that we must speak of the *creative and co-creative creativity* of the *yin* and *yang*.

- One must also see the *yin* and *yang* process as an open process and a process which could be embedded and related in other processes as time goes. The openness and complexity of this process make the changes in *yin* and *yang* essentially unpredictable as suggested in *Xi-Ci Shang*-5. In such a case we can speak of the subtleties of the divine (*shen*). The *shen* is conceived of as the supreme form of creative and co-creative change which innovates, renovates, and transforms and which can be experienced but is not be describable in common language.

In the divinatory process there are four words which have been chosen to describe the process to be divined from a situation: *yuan* (元 origination); *heng* (亨 prosperity); *li* (利 benefiting); and *zhen* (貞 sustaining, hence stability and firmness).[17] One may see that my analysis of *yin* and *yang* has included the four stages of an ideal change and has articulated the nature of prosperity and benefitting and even being sustainable in terms of real functions of change, namely *yuan* as origination, *heng* as complementation or integration, *li* as achievement, and *zhen* as completion. After the completion of *zhen*, origination would start a new process. In reality new processes constantly emerge and old processes constantly fade. Processes interweave and interact and lead to more branching and/or merging of processes. This is how the change as *bian-yi* works. In light of the fading of the old and the rise of the new we may consider *li* as a turning point toward difficulty, conflict or simply weakness. There are a few hexagrams just indicating and identifying the overt presence of such a turning. It is because of such a turning that we need to sustain and persevere to the final stage of completion, described as *zhen*. With that said, we may now regard the process of change as a dialectical one consisting of five stages of becoming, namely: origination, integration, achievement, differentiation, and completion by sustaining toward a larger integration after a new origination. This is referred to as 'arising from sustaining' (貞下起元 *zhen-xia-qi-yuan*).

Finally, we come to see the relevance of non-change: In the *Xi-Ci*, we can see at least four forms of constancy. First, we have the constancy of the *dao* which consists

in the interchange and exchange of *yin* and *yan*. Then we have the constancy of the continuous productivity of change, referred to as the creativity and co-creativity of creativity (生生 *sheng-sheng*) in the *Xi-Ci Shang-5*. There is also the constancy or non-change of the *tai-ji*, which is the source of all changes. When the *Xi-Ci* says that the *yi* has *tai-ji* and *tai-ji* produces two norms (*yin* and *yang*), and two norms produces four forms (*yin* and *yang* of the *yin* and the *yang*) and four forms produces the eight images (the *yin* and *yang* of the *yin* and the *yang* of the *yin* and *yang*), the *tai-ji* remains an undefined concept, but in the context it clearly refers to a source of production of change. Whether *tai-ji* is the *dao* remains unclear until Zhu Xi came to assert that *tai-ji* is the principle (*li*) of the *dao* which is the alternation of *yin* and *yang*.[18] Clearly, as *li*, *tai-ji* must remain constantly *tai-ji* even though it has to give rise to the two forces of *yin* and *yang*. In this sense *tai-ji* is not unlike the unmoved mover in Aristotle's metaphysics. But as *tai-ji* is also *dao* in the sense that it is constantly self-realizing and realizing that which is indeterminate of the *wu-ji*, so we must see the *tai-ji* as both moving and not moving, and therefore not at all like the unmoved mover in Aristotle. It is indeterminate and indeterminable by all changes and yet it embodies all changes as its body whereas it has the root in the infinite potentiality for giving rise to the creative changes of all things. It is not just the unmoved mover but a moving force, moving together with all things.[19]

There is also the non-change of the orientation of Heaven and Earth, or other relationships, which gives rise to the structure and space framework and the order of relationships in the world. It is the constancy of well-positioning (定位 *ding-wei*) of Heaven and Earth and everything else between Heaven and Earth.[20] In addition, there is the constancy of values in the world of humanity. The ideal values from virtues like *ren* and *yi* suggest that they are the norms which must hold up and be conformed to and as such they are also the objects for us to emulate and embody in our minds and actions. It is clear that it is Confucius who has capitalized on and elaborated these latter two forms of constancy. It is also to be recognized that for Confucianism, as for Daoism, the constancy of *dao* is the basis for all other constancies as it is also the basis for the changes in the world. It is to be noted that with the contrast between change and constancy we also see the possibility of extension of the *yin* and *yang* notion to this contrast. We can come to see that change as a whole is *yang* and constancy as a whole is *yin*. This leads to the contrast between *wu* (无) and *you* (無) in the mode of *yin* and *yang* as first initiated by the Daoist Lao Zi.

For Lao Zi, *wu* (non-being) is more fundamental than *you* (being), which arises by creative action of the supreme *yang* or *qian*. It is in the Daoism of Lao Zi that we see *yin* as *wu* aquiring a fundamental onto-cosmological significance. On the other hand, the Confucian thinkers take the *yang* and *you* so seriously that they regard the *tai-ji* and then the *qian-yuan* (乾元) as the source of all things without, however, asking how *tai-ji* arises. This problem remains unanswered until Zhou Dun-yi who in his essay 'Tai-Ji-Tu-Shuo' (太極図説 'Tai-Ji Diagram Discourse') asserts that 'the ultimateless (*wu-ji*) and then the great ultimate (*tai-ji*)'. This assertion no doubt carries the implication that the *wu-ji*, which can be read as the ultimate *wu* and hence the supreme *yin*, is more primary. On the other hand, Zhu Xi interprets the *wu-ji* as an

aspect of *tai-ji*, namely, the infinite aspect of the *tai-ji*. However we can suggest the following way of reconciliation: *you* and *wu* as *yin* and *yang* mutually give rise to and condition each other and thus form a unity which is both *wu* and *you*, and hence can be said to be both *wu-ji* and *tai-ji*. We may indeed regard this as the fundamental onto-cosmological principle of being from non-being. We may call it *the principle of the creativity of co-creativity*. It is in this understanding that both Daoism and Confucianism could find their unison and yet they could differ by developing and focusing different aspects of the same ultimate reality of being-becoming-non-being.

At this point I introduce the notion of *yao*, which is translated as line of change. But as the word indicates, change takes place when the *yin* and *yang* meet and cross each other, which means that change could be conceived as the interplay of two forces, the *yin* force which comes into play when the *yang* comes into play. When the shine shines, the shade shades and there is always the shade because of the shine. *Yang* and *yin*, like shine and shade, are intrinsically connected in the creativity which gives rise to the interplay marked by the initializing force of the *yang* and the receptive force of the *yin*. This source of creativity is referred to as the *tai-ji*, the ultimate source of change which unifies and provides the unifying ground and momentum of *yin* and *yang* as manifested in shine and shade. Hence the *Xi-Ci* asserts that 'The change has *tai-ji*', in the sense that *yin* and *yang* have *tai-ji* as their grounding and ultimate source. Here we can see that the term '*yi*' can refer to the whole phenomenon of change as we experience and observe, but is to be explained by a system of the initial momentum of change which is indicated by the term *yao*, the line of simple change. As indicated by the concept of *yao*, the word captures the simple meaning of change, namely the meaning of the interplay and interchange of the two forces of *yin* and *yang* from the same source, called *tai-ji*. It is understood by the Song philosophers that this idea of *tai-ji* is presupposed in the formation of the whole system of sixty-four *chong gua* (重卦 hexagrams) as standard forms or *gua* in the *Yi-Jing*.

Once change takes place, we shall have the resulting changed state from a prior state and this fact is referred to as *bian-yi* (perhaps better described as transformation). That change and transformation take place requires a background of non-change to be otherwise identified. Hence the three dimensions of change are actually one event: it is analytically three but synthetically one which is to be experienced by us as oneness as well. It must be maintained that this unity of the three meanings of change is a result of reflection on our deep experience of change and that reflection takes place when the mind has undertaken to understand the change as both a large and a small phenomenon in our experience of nature and ourselves. This recognition is important because it leads to the development of the original text of *yi* as a record of change through practical divination and also leads to a philosophy of change in the still later commentaries of the *Yi* text as inspired by Confucius.

To the three meanings of *yi* that are basically derived from the *Xi-Ci*, in a recent publication I have added two more basic component meanings, namely: *exchange* (交易 *jiao-yi*) and *harmonization* (和易 *he-yi*).[21] It is highly important to recognize the necessity and significance of this addition which is actually an act of completion, because these two aspects are actually present in the *Xi-Ci* even more implicitly than

the other three features, but unfortunately remain unnoticed. They are nevertheless essential for understanding the functions and efficacy of the *yi* as onto-cosmic change. I first introduced the idea of *jiao-yi*, which means trading or exchange, but also inter-course or interchange. In *Xia-2* of the *Xi-Ci* it is said that people gather to exchange goods and after such trading they return home. But in the *Tuan* commentary *jiao* (交) simply means linking and having exchange between two forces such as Heaven and Earth. It is maintained in the *Tuan* of the *Tai* hexagram that it is when Heaven and Earth interchange that all things in the world become interconnected, which is of course a propitious condition for producing good and for the creation of life. Similarly, ideas are found in the *Xiang* commentary (象傳) and even the line judgment of the *Da-You* (大有) hexagram. These sources show how relevant is the concept of *jiao* or *jiao-yi*. I have pointed out that *bian-yi* is more a vertical concept whereas *jiao-yi* is more a horizontal idea referring to the common behavior of making exchanges or trading. When the exchange takes place within an underlying unity, it is interchange. Hence I take *jiao-yi* as an independent aspect of the *yi* action.

As for the harmonization, it is important to see that change leads to the continual enrichment of a life of diversity in harmonization, or in a process of mutual adjustment and harmonization as this is indicated in the root idea of 'preserv[ing] and conserv[ing] the primordial harmony' (保合太和 *bao-he-tai-he*) in the *Tuan* commentary on the hexagram *Qian*. This aspect of *yi* also reflects the natural purposefulness of the cosmic change, which can be also described as the natural tendency of natural events. The *Tuan* on *Qian* says: 'The way of *Qian* changes and transforms so that all things will find their natures formed and their positions established (各正性命 *ge-zheng-xing-ming*). [Hence] to preserve and conserve the primordial harmony is conducive to fulfillment in firmness (乃利貞 *nai-li-zhen*).' This suggests that it is on the condition of the primordial harmony among all things that things will continue to prosper, and hence conforms to the idea of the creative co-creativity of the ultimate. For nature to lead to primordial harmony is a natural tendency whereas for human beings it should be a principle of moral development for individuals and communities in order that human beings are to be free from war and destruction. In this sense preservation of primordial harmony or harmonization toward the primordial harmony is a teleological requirement for the survival and flourishing of humanity.

We can also see that the primordial harmony (太和 *tai-he*) is the source and goal of the *yi*, which is further inherent in the *yin-yang* relationship and the creation of things and life. From all this discussion of harmonization as a function of the *yi*, we can legiti-mately speak of *he-yi* (*yi* as harmonization) as forming an independent characteristic of the *yi* concept. Hence we may conclude that there is *a total of five senses of yi* or that *yi* has an open structure which allows us to interpret changes in these five senses which are themselves well related and coordinated.

5 Characterization of *Yi* as Onto-Cosmology

As I have indicated above, in the *Xi-Ci* commentary of the *Yi-Zhuan* of the *Zhou-Yi* we witness the emergence of the two basic concepts that characterize the ultimate reality

that the human person has experienced. As we have seen, these two basic concepts are respectively the great ultimate (*tai-ji*) and the way (*dao*). Both are derived from our experience of the formations and transformations of things in nature that are referred as the *bian-yi* or *bian-hua* (change), but in a sense represent a general characterization of and a deeper insight into the general nature of change in terms of the *yin* and *yang*. We know that the sixty-four hexagrams are then generated from the doubling of the eight trigrams which are generated from the three times self-differentiation into the *yin* and *yang*. This process of generation is remarkable in establishing a cosmogonical picture of the rise and development of reality as a world of events and things as well as in providing a cosmographical way of thinking to be symbolized in systemic structures of trigrams and hexagrams. This process of generation we may also call the *dao*. Again, as we have seen, the sustaining source of this process of generation which provides ceaseless creative power is called the *tai-ji*. The *dao* is *tai-ji* insofar as *tai-ji* is considered a process of change, whereas the *tai-ji* is *dao* insofar as *dao* is considered a source or origin of change. We may therefore speak of two aspects of the same thing, namely the *process* aspect and the *origination* aspect of *tai-ji-dao*. Together they refer to the same thing – the totality of reality of creativity, change, and transformation, which we have referred as the ultimate creativity or the *tai-ji-dao*.

We may call this cosmogonic and cosmographic way of thinking about and describing reality and the world the 'onto-cosmology of the *tai-ji* and the *dao*'. The 'onto-' prefix suggests the meaning of the *tai-ji*, and '-cosmology' suggests the meaning of the *dao* where *tai-ji* represents the ultimate source of *yin-yang* changes and the *dao* represents the process of such changes. Since it is this theory of the *tai-ji* and the *dao* that forms the backbone and is the mainstream of metaphysical thinking in the 3,200-year history of Chinese philosophy,[22] we should regard it as the fundamental theory of reality and creativity in Chinese philosophy, which is often referred to as the *ben-ti*-ontology of the *dao* and the *tai-ji*.[23] Confucius in his old age studied and voiced his comments and reflections on the *Yi-Jing* and these led to the writing of the *Yi-Zhuan* by his followers, which has since then been regarded as one of the Confucian classics, if not the leading one. Although one may regard *Yi-Zhuan* (commentaries on the *Zhou-Yi*, written down in the fifth to third centuries BCE) as Confucius' own onto-cosmological reflections on reality and human creativity, the central ideas and views of it, as I have argued, could be still seen as basically implicit in the contexts of the original *Zhou-Yi* texts and their symbolism.[24]

This means that the onto-cosmology of the *tai-ji* and the *dao* is not just Confucian but an articulation of the ancient Chinese way of thinking, observation, and inter-pretation of reality. However, in order to distinguish it from the later *Yi-Jing*-inspired approach to reality in the Daoist school of Lao Zi (around the middle of the sixth century BCE – exact dates are uncertain) and Zhuang Zi (ca 370–300 BCE) and its elaboration of the philosophy of the *dao*, we may refer to it as the 'onto-cosmology of the *yi*', since this theory is suggested and more or less explicitly formulated in the *Yi-Zhuan*, particularly in the *Tuan* (彖傳) and *Xi-Ci* portions of the commentaries.[25] I distinguish this onto-cosmology of *yi* in the *Yi-Jing* from the onto-cosmology of the

dao in the Daoism of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. I call the former the *dao* of the *yi* (易之道 *yi-zhi-dao*) and the latter the *yi* of the *dao* (道之易 *dao-zhi-yi*).

In order to understand the 'onto-cosmology of the *yi*' as the fundamental Chinese theory of reality and creativity, we should in fact take note of the following characterization of the metaphysical way of thinking based on our experience and insights into change, which, at the same time, constitutes the substance of wisdom about reality and the life of human persons. This understanding provides an insight into the nature of reality at any given moment and in any given situation. Consequently it provides guidance on choosing appropriate action if action is called for and an inspiration for self-discipline and self-cultivation in respect of one's moral development.[26]

1 *Reality as inexhaustible origination.* We can trace the beginning of the presentation and development of the world reality to a root source. This root source, called 'the great ultimate' (*tai-ji*), is the absolute beginning of all things, but it is also the sustaining base for all things even as at present because all changes of the world are based on it and contained in it. In this sense the *tai-ji* is in fact the primordial and inexhaustible source of the creative and transformative force of all changes and is conveyed by the notion of 'creativity of creativity' or 'generation of generation' (*sheng-sheng*) in the *Xi-Ci*. In this sense, reality is not something stationary or static underneath a world of fleeting phenomena, nor a world of forms or ideas reflected in a world of imitations or veiled by a screen of illusions or delusions. Neither is it something accessible only by abstraction from human thinking or revelations of a transcendent deity, as in Christian theology. Reality is concrete, vivid, and holistic not only in the sense that all things are interrelated with a whole as originally defined by the oneness of the *tai-ji*, but in the sense that the changes and non-changes underlying the changes are organically part and parcel of the same thing, and there cannot be a strict demarcation or bifurcation between appearance and reality. In this sense changes and the constant and continuous regeneration of things in reality are what reality is made of.

Any scheme to divide or separate reality will serve only a limited purpose and will be rendered inept by the confrontation with reality. This means that all theories of reality share with reality the nature of change and must be subject to the continuous challenges of an ever-developing and becoming process of formation and transformation. Therefore we may understand the *tai-ji* as not just primary origination but constant or ceaseless origination, which explains creativity in the sense of creative change. In the spirit of Whitehead, we may say that the world is in the making and is constantly and forever in the making. It is not only that many become one by increasing the one, but also that one becomes many by increasing the many. In this sense the ultimate source of creativity is both the one and the many.

2 *Reality as polar-generative process.* When the *tai-ji* gives rise to things in the world, it does so by bringing in a whole range of polarities, the positive and the negative or the *yang* (the brightening/the moving/the firm) and the *yin* (the darkening/the restive/the soft). These polarities are sub-contraries that exist simultaneously

and are conspicuous on a specific level. They are also simultaneously contraries that are hidden on the more concrete levels of things. In this latter sense they are identifiable with the *tai-ji* because the *tai-ji* as the source of all changes is always hidden under all things. The generation of new things occurs on the basis of the coexistence and interaction between polarities.[27] Unlike Whitehead's postulation of the rise of novelty from pure ideas, novelties in this model derive from the internal dynamics of the becoming of the world, from which a division into the *yin* and the *yang* and a combination of the *yin* and the *yang* are the basic ways to give rise to new things. The novelty of things is inherent in the very source of the world itself, and it is inherent also in the creative potential of a thing that requires the interaction of forces to realize.

3 *Reality as multi-interactive harmony*. An individual thing or an individual class of things always has two sides: the *yin*, which pertains to its stationary state of existence and its receptivity to the outside world (it is its given nature), and the *yang*, which pertains to its dynamic state of developing its propensities in its inter-action with the outside world. As the *yin-yang* polarities are definitive of individual things or individual classes of things, that a thing must interact with the outside world is in the nature of the thing itself. It is in this process of interaction that a thing fulfills its potentialities of nature and runs its course of bounded existence. It is in maintaining itself as a given nature that we can speak of the 'centrality' (中 *zhong*) of a thing, and in properly taking and giving with other things we can speak of 'harmony' (*he*) between or among things.[28] There could be non-centrality and disharmony in the formation and transformation of a thing, which would be a problem and a crisis for its identity and its survival in the world of reality as a thing. Hence, there naturally arises the natural disposition of a thing to maintain its own centrality and to reach harmony with other things. But in the case of human persons these two aspects of existence must be cultivated in order to enhance and realize the fulfillment of the human propensity and creative potentiality.

It is said: 'One *yin* and one *yang* are thus called the *dao*. To follow it is goodness and to complete it is nature.' (*Xi-Ci Shang*-5). How do we understand this in reference to individual things? The *dao* is how things come into being and how they grow and develop in the process of time, whereas the process of one *yin* and one *yang* is made of the alternation, conjunction, and mutual interaction of the positive and negative forces and positive and negative activities of individual things which result in the formation and transformation of things.

4 *Reality as virtual hierarchization*. The world is made of many levels, each of which is a combination of the *yin* and the *yang* forces or activities of such in things. For the *tai-ji* and the *dao* model of cosmogony and cosmography (and hence onto-cosmology) there are genuine general features of the *yin* and the *yang*, which are understood as rest/motion, darkness/brightness, or invisibility/visibility, and softness/firmness, closedness/openness, retrospective propensity/prospective propensities, and other such properties. Although these properties are basically described in the phenomenal and experiential terms of human beings, there is no reason why they could not be described in a logical and scientific language of abstract and primary

properties. Perhaps one could identify the *yin* and the *yang* elements or processes in the genetic code and the theory of sub-elementary particles, as many people have done. Similarly, there is no reason why the values and emotions and intentions could not also be described in the language of the *yin* and the *yang*. In this light, the *yin* and the *yang* should be regarded as neutral and variant functors or operators which act to generate relationships and changes. The important point to remember is that, as there are levels of simplicity and complexity of structure and activity in a scheme of things in being and becoming, so there are levels of the *yin* and the *yang* in the world of reality.

On the highest and most general level, there is the 'great ultimate' (*tai-ji*). On the second level there are the *yin* and the *yang*. On the third level there are four forms. On the fourth level there are eight trigrams. This can go on forever and without limit. But individual things must be seen on an individual level of the *yin* and the *yang*, which represent a complex hierarchy of levels of the *yin* and the *yang* as well as a complex world of *yin/yang* interactions.

This means that the individual thing or person is only understood and acting in the context of a field and web of forces; in this context one is still capable of making a creative impact on, and a contribution to, the formation and transformation of the world. When the *Zhong-Yong* (*Doctrine of the Mean*) speaks of the human person as capable of participating in creative transformations of Heaven and Earth and forming a triad with Heaven and Earth, human creativity becomes a vehicle and a mode of cosmic creativity which has been deeply embedded in the existence of a human person because the source of human existence could be traced to this creativity of the ultimate reality.

5 *Reality as recursive (not like a circle but like a spiral) but limitless regenerativity.* Although the commentaries of the *Zhou-Yi* have not mentioned the recursive and regenerative nature of the *yi*, the presentation of nature in eight trigrams and of the world in sixty-four hexagrams in the original symbolism (in hexagrams) of 1200 BCE and appended judgments of divination clearly suggested that nature is a process of both collective and distributive balance and functions as a process of return and reversion, as suggested by the rotation of seasons and the celestial cycles. The interesting thing to note is that once we are able to represent the world in a collectively inclusive and individually exclusive enumeration of stages or facets, these stages and facets will have to recur as patterns or forms of understanding or existential characterizations on a special level. It is clear that we are able to limit our understanding and characterizations to a special level or particular domain and then work out or design some definitive categorical system of description or projection. That is why we may use the eight trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams at the same time, because they belong to different levels of relevance and meaningful description.

What is implied in this description is that reality is both limited and limitless: it is limited on a specific level of description which serves a human purpose: it is limitless because any specific level of description could only serve a purpose in a limited way as it can be transcended or abandoned for a higher or more specific

level of description. We may say that there are virtually unlimited numbers of levels of description, just as theoretically there could be an unlimited number of systems of scientific knowledge in the progression of scientific inquiry. On each level of description there is the recursion of the finite categorized reality. This is so because it is in the nature of change that the world of reality has to be regeneratively represented. This may be called regenerative recursion which is no doubt a form of cosmic creativity. It is this regenerative recursion that gives stability to the process and may be called the structure of the process.

In the *tai-ji* and the *dao* model of reality, what is shown in the symbolism of the *yi* is a regenerative recursion by reversion: namely, the stage of the *yin* has to revert to the stage of the *yang* in order to realize creative change and vice versa. It is the process of time that the *yin* and the *yang* are interacting by alternating. Because of this, one could expect that reaching the limit of the worst would mean a return to a better condition. Although in practice it is difficult to know whether one has reached the worst, or how long the getting better would take, it is nevertheless possible to conceive of reality as an alternation between more beneficial or more advantageous at one end and more detrimental and more disadvantageous at another relative to a human position on the same level as a natural process of change as in *Zhou-Yi*.

6 *Reality as organismic totality*. From the above description is it clear that the world of reality in the model of the *tai-ji* and the *dao* is totalistic in the sense that all things are included and there is nothing beyond it. It is said that 'the book of the change is extensive and all-comprehensive. It contains the Way of Heaven, the way of man and the way of earth' (*Xi-Ci Xia*-10). For the early Chinese the world of reality was confined to Heaven, Earth, and 10,000 things among which the human person stands out as the most intelligent and the one capable of forming a tri-partnership with Heaven and Earth. Everything in this reality comes from the *tai-ji* and follows or embodies the *dao*. Hence, there could not be anything outside this world of reality with the *tai-ji* and the *dao*. This implies that there is no transcendent being outside this world and in fact nothing is to be conceived beyond the world of the *tai-ji* and the *dao*.[29] When we come to Lao Zi, we find that even when the notion of emptiness or void (*wu*) is introduced, what the term *wu* stands for is part and parcel of the universe of the *dao*. The *dao* in Lao Zi is simply enriched by something call the void or non-being (*wu*). Similarly, when Zhou Dun-yi (周敦頤 1017–73) speaks of the ultimateness (*wu-ji*) giving rise to the great ultimate in his well-known essay 'Discourse on the Diagram of the Great Ultimate' (*Tai-Ji-Tus-Huo*), he is simply extending the *dao* to cover both void and non-void.

There is no break between the void and the non-void, and hence one does not have a transcendent nothingness or emptiness separable and apart from reality. In this non-transcendence we do not speak merely of immanence but also of totality as derived and sustained from a source. Immanence refers to values and powers inherent in the things themselves, but totality refers to all the interrelated parts of all things in reality based on a source of creativity. The reason why things belong or hang together is that in the ultimate reality all things are not simply contained but

rather are all interrelated or even interpenetrating. Yet it is still to be recognized that the ultimate source of creativity is in each thing and every thing and yet is at the same time not identical with each thing and every thing is an ultimate. In this sense there is immanent transcendence for each and every thing. It is in the organismic nature of the totality as immanent transcendence that not only can there not be any object 'outside', but all things exist together by way of mutual support or even mutual grounding as provided by the ultimate source of creativity. This is how the transcendent immanence of Heaven in the nature of humanity leads to an interminable exchange between, as well as a unity of, humanity and Heaven in the direction of development, elevation, enrichment, and fulfillment.

6 Integrating the *Xiang-Shu* School and the *Yi-Li* School

Since the 1970s the success of Chinese archaeological exploration has included the 1973 discovery of the Silk Manuscripts (帛書 *Bo-Shu*) of the *Yi-Jing* and the 1997 Bamboo Inscriptions Manuscripts (竹簡 *Zhu-Jian*) of the *Yi-Jing*. Since the Silk Manuscripts of the *Yi-Jing* is radically different in order of *gua*s from the received version, scholars have come to see that there is no unique or absolute ordering of the *gua*s for interpreting a system of *gua*s or for use in divination. It is obvious the *Bo-Shu* order is generated like the Diagram of Eight Palaces (八宫图 *Ba-Gong-Tu*) in the *Jing Fang* (京房), with the palaces arranged according to a formal procedure with an overall plan of positions in the sequence. On the other hand, the *gua-xu* (卦序 order of the hexagrams) in the received version does not seem to follow any formally designed plan and hence is open to explanation on grounds other than the formal one. In fact it calls for more than logical explanation in terms of opposition (反 *fan*) and reversion (覆 *fu*) and hence allows more space for historical or philosophical interpretation. The *gua-xu* of the Silk Manuscripts renews a few scholars' interest in the School of *Xiang-Shu* (象數) in the Han, because the difference between the two *gua* orders suggested a distinction of the two approaches to the meaning of the *gua* for understanding a situational reality in divination, by way of looking into the configuration of the lines of the *gua* or by way of contemplating the actual process of change in a human situation with a human purpose.

On the side of the *Bo-Shu* and Jing Fang (77–37 BCE), the reference and meaning of the *gua* is assumed to be found in the numerological relations of the lines in *gua* and the images suggested by the lines as previously assigned or associated. On the other hand, the received version could be regarded as requiring consideration of the meanings of the *gua* in reference to external events or onto-cosmic theories. But as a matter of fact, even for the received version the images and numbers could be regarded as crucial for the meaning of each *gua* and no reference need be made to what goes beyond them. This is because the *gua* is made up of lines which can be seen as occupying some significant positions which are also significantly related. This means that each *gua* is an organic unit which represents a situation and contains a message for the future in the divination. But how to identify this situation and retrieve such a message poses the fundamental question for divination. For the *Xiang-Shu* approach,

the answer is that one can find the present situation and the message for the future precisely in the images and numbers of the *gua*. This leads to a search for a system of interpreting the images of the lines and their relationships within the same *gua* and also with reference to transformations by formal variations to another *gua*.

We may speak of the following types of positioning and their transformation:

- centralizing (中 *zhong*);
- fittingness or correctness (正 *zheng*);
- succession (承 *cheng*),
- overriding (乘 *cheng*);
- matching (比 *bi*);
- and responding (应 *ying*).[30]

These may be regarded as conventions governing the interpretation of the line meaning so that one may reach an understanding of the *gua* message. But these conventions are still based on human experience of the positions and forces in the positions close and far. Then there is another set of conventions for generating related meanings of the *gua* or each line in the *gua* in terms of opposition and reversion which would shed light on the meaning of the one by the other. There are other similar operations which might be relevant: the transposition (of the *gua*) and nuclear expansion (互 *hu*). For other system-relative operations to preserve the order one can speak of the Diagram of Eight palaces and other setups such as fly-hide (飞伏 *fei-fu*), situation to respondent (世应 *shi-ying*), twenty-four seasonal times, twelve grand forms. With these mechanisms introduced one may assign any meaning to a *gua* or a line for a person to arrive at by way of these means. No doubt this appears arbitrary and contrived. But this is precisely how the *Xiang-Shu* School comes to interpret the meaning of the *gua*. Interestingly one can see the constraint on the meanings of a *gua* or a line in a *gua* as provided by the judgments of the *gua* or the line. Consequently, interpretation becomes a matter of arriving at the judgments from looking into the number relations and image relations of the *gua* or line. The ingenuity thus revealed is sometimes most surprising.

The great problem with the *Xiang-Shu* School lies in its lack of attention to the actual environmental factors and contexts of the divination. It also has trouble with using the prior meaning of a *gua* or line judgment to devise a series of moves which conform those functions. Yet it must be admitted that for the pure *Xiang-Shu* School approach one needs to know the formal structural meaning and meaning from associations with images and numbers or number operations, because the images and times revealed in the analysis of the *gua* or line could be used to devise a judgment for the *gua* and line. To compare with the primitive contexts of divination, this *Xiang-Shu* model would have to ask the interpreter to close her or his eyes and ears to outside matters and concentrate only on what has been presented in form by itself. In this spirit one could simply ask whether such a *Xiang-Shu* form would be truly relevant or illuminating. The answer is no.

The failure of the *Xiang-Shu* School is a matter of failing to meet the standards of experience and rationality as embodied in the five principles of interpretation

suggested above, but for those who believe it, it remains an ingenious skill of analysis and associative reasoning. Before the *Xiang-Shu* School was well-developed in the Han in the hands of Jing Fang, the question on how divination by the *Zhou-Yi* can be effective often arose. If we look into the logical side of the divination, we can easily see that we need to satisfy two requirements to make the divination of the future work. First, we need a cosmic map which provides a detailed guide on how things may develop and how reality may be described, against which we could identify the present situation of the diviner or the concerned party. Second, we need to find a way of identifying the present situation. This quest is not just for a method of divination but a way of reading and interpreting the result of divination, be it tortoise-bone cracks or hexagrams. In order to get a result that can provide rational warranty and credibility, the two questions have to expand into the following five questions:

1 Do I have an adequate description of the cosmic reality including all their laws of change? Attempts to answer this question may lead to scientific investigation or to an ontology of cosmic change and an epistemology of change, which can be relied on to answer questions of interpretation and application.

2 Is my method of capturing the present situation or state of becoming adequate to the goal of doing so? How do I justify my method of identifying the present situation when the problem at hand is not a matter of obvious physical signs as index or icon, but as symbols to be interpreted psychologically, historically, theologically, or philosophically? One may appeal to revelation or the workings of *shen-ming* (神明 divine spirit) as a base. But then we need to know how the *shen-ming* or spirits works in matters of divination or related activities.

3 With a text like the *Yi-Jing*, we need to read the lines and forms as produced or identified. What are the best ways of reading and interpretation? Do we limit ourselves to the intra-structures and relationships of the numbers of the lines so that I can retrieve some useful message of the situation or do I also consult the philosophy underlying the forms on a different level? In other words, could I also consult the judgments which have been made as an indication of meaning and significance or some other views in order to draw specific judgments of the given divinatory result? The parting of the ways takes place when there are those who rely more on general rational understanding and consider the meaning of judgments disagree with those who use primarily numbers and images for interpretation, sometimes even at the expense or in neglect of judgments or general understanding.

4 One needs to press for the purpose of divination for knowledge of the future and the warrant of such knowledge in correspondence to the future. This leads to a general question of the ontological status of the future and time: is the future determined and fixed for us to know, or is the future indeterminate so that my presumed knowledge and action will make a difference? Hence, we may question whether divination gives us an empirical disclosure of the future or some possibility or possibilities for the future from which to choose. For the *Xiang-Shu* School, the future is most often regarded as revealed in the numbers and images, and therefore

divination becomes a matter of divine revelation which should command belief and trust. But for the rationalist, prediction pertaining to the future is always a matter of careful assessment to be evaluated and used for its relevance, not for its certainty. It is a matter of circumstantial evidence and judgment based on consideration with the assumption of the validity of the cosmic map, the prediction method, the model of interpretation, and the evaluation of the probability and credibility in a context of history and in a context of action.

5 One has to face the problem of making decisions as to what to do, and this no doubt involves questions of value and evaluation. It involves the overall commitment of the concerned party or the diviner to a given belief system and a standard for rational justification. It also involves a philosophical understanding of moral values as to whether they are reducible to questions of utility or whether they remain independent and have a source independent of divinatory process.

Historically, it is assumed that by the time of Confucius that method of divination and the ways of interpretation were well developed and that diviners had become an official profession or appointment. But with Confucius we also come to a rational consciousness that would question the practice of divination and yet wish to separate the wisdom of the judgments of divinations from such practice. In this sense Confucius is not a skeptic but a philosophical thinker who wishes to see himself as capable of making relevant reasonable judgment of knowledge and value based on common experience. This no doubt means that by the time of Confucius common sense and knowledge of nature and human society have been greatly advanced and there is no need to resort to divination for important decisions of life and state. We may therefore see the time of Confucius as the time of *post-divinatory rational consciousness* which is both historically rooted and future-directed. What, among other things, distinguishes Confucius is his awakening and belief in innate understanding (知 *zhi*) which may result from deep and frequent reflection on oneself and wide and vast learning process. It is on this basis of this innate understanding that Confucius comes to the desire for human heartedness (仁 *ren*) and sees it as source of and arbiter for all other virtues, including rites, righteousness, integrity, and other forms of wisdom. It is in this context of understanding that Confucius comes to take a radical step in the study of change (*yi*) (which we may also call a Copernicus-like revolution): the study of change is to develop one's wisdom and prudence, as well as one's moral judgment of life situations and action based on facts and experience rather than on external *shen-ming* or the authority of the diviner. This is vastly different from seeing divination as revealing the judgments of a diviner by appeal to the power of *shen-ming*,[31] or by appeal to the validity of a divination method.

With this revolutionary understanding of divination Confucius has undertaken a strong interest in re-interpretation of the judgments of the *yi* which we may call a prudent-moral (善恶 *shan-e*) interpretation rather than a good fortune-misfortune (吉凶 *ji-xiong*) interpretation of the *yi* texts and *yi* judgments. In doing so he did not appeal to the lines of the *gua* but only to the general meaning and general judgment of the *gua* and he started to comment on many of the *yi-gua*s. Given the time framework

of his devotion to the study of *yi* in his mature years it is unlikely that he went over all the *gua* judgments and all the line judgments of each *gua*, although what have been preserved in the received version of the *Yi-Jing* and other classical texts does not cover all the *gua*s and for each commented-on *gua* not all lines.[32]

In the Silk Manuscripts one finds the records of conversations Confucius had with his disciples on the nature of divination. In the record titled *Yao* (要篇 *Essentials*) Confucius makes the following statement in answer to his disciple Zi Gong's inquiry as to whether he believes in divination: 'I have made divinations a hundred times and seventy percent are correct. Regarding my divination on the Zhu Liang-shan, I follow what most diviners would say.' He also said:

> Regarding use of the *Yi* text, I put aside the divinations. I observe what concerns virtue and righteousness (義乂 *de-yi*) in them. [There are three types of people], those who divine and reach the numbers [for interpretation], those who understand the numbers and reach for virtues, and those who abide by the virtue of humanity and act on the principle of righteousness (仁守之而乂行之 *ren-shou-zhi-er-yi-xing-zhi*). As for those who divine and yet [do] not reach for the numbers, they are called the shaman; those who use numbers and yet do not reach for virtues, they are called historians (史 *shi*). With divinations of the shaman and historians, one may wish to reach for an ideal state but have not reached them. One may like them, but one also needs to criticize them as not quite right. If posterity criticizes me, perhaps the cause will be my view on the *Yi*? I merely seek virtues in them. One may say that I and the shamans and historians share the same route but reach different goals. A superior man seeks happiness in his virtuous conduct, therefore he would not offer many sacrifices. A superior man seeks good in his practice of *ren* and *yi*, therefore he does not engage in many divinations. Did I therefore put divinations on a secondary level?[33]

What is said here is highly important for the Confucian revolution of the *Yi* divination and interpretation. In the first place, Confucius does not absolutely reject divination and he actually has engaged in undertaking divinations. But he sees divination as only a step toward reaching numbers and then reaching virtues. He still regards divination and reaching numbers as important as they are the occasions that provide an understanding of a given situation and given problem. But he would not stop at the stage of reaching conclusions on *ji-xiong* and went to seek virtues to perform. That is, he would regard the results as revealing a problem of the human individual and therefore calling for his own self-examination so that he could correct them or find a way of improving his virtues. He would follow the virtues, not the advice on fortune and misfortune.

Although Confucius did not deny the relevance of divination and divinatory interpretation for moral reflection, there is a deeper criticism of divination on the part of Confucius: namely, that they may not be always correct or accurate. For him only a large portion (70 percent) are correct. Although a large portion (70 percent) is still a large number, but there is no guarantee that they must be correct. Then he

said that in seeking virtues one may have fewer divinations. This means that there are independent ways of reflecting on one's moral conduct, which need not be a matter of divination. Divination is to identify a present and/or future state of affairs, and then make judgments as to the fortune or misfortune of what has been predicted. But we may not need divinations, because we may independently examine the present state of affairs and its tendencies, and use induction and learning from the past to know the future. Hence it is not necessary to consult divination. This is how Confucius started his Copernican revolution in the reading of the *Yi*.

Confucius says: 'If one lost one's virtues, one moves to the divine spirits; if one is remote from wisdom and strategic thinking, one would be busy with divinations' (*Yao-Pian*: 489). It is a revolution which leads to a thorough humanist and rationalist reflection on human activities and to know them from an empirical and rational point of view without any mediation from divination. With the increase in our knowledge and the ability to undertake self-determination divination can be completely dispensed with. In actuality, by the time of late Warring States Period, Xun Zi (荀子) is able to assert that one need not do any divination.

With the Confucian revolution of this new approach to the meaning of the *Yi* texts, one could still wish to know how one reads texts and interprets their judgments. In general Confucius takes self-reflection and learning as the solution to human problems, including problems on how to act under uncertain circumstances. If one learns by experience and if one thinks by reflection and self-criticism, one would find one's answer and one's way. He has suggested the combination of the two approaches of thinking and learning. 'To learn without thinking is dangerous; to think without learning is empty and fruitless' (*Analects* 2.15). A more concrete way of seeking a correct understanding of the texts, including those of the *Yi*, is provided by Mencius. In rejecting Gao Zi's approach to *bu-dong-xin* （不动心 non-moving of one's mind and heart by external things), Mencius says: 'It is fine that if one does not gain truth in one's mind, one needs not seek it in the vital forces. But it is wrong that if one does not find truth in what one speaks one will not seek in one's mind' (2A–2). He also suggests: '[Therefore], for those who interpret the Poetry, one does not detain one's understanding of what is said (辭 *ci*) from what is said in (文 *wen*); furthermore one needs not to detain what the *ci* is intended as the truth of the matter (旨 *zhi*). One uses one's understanding (意 *yi*) to trace back to one's intended point (志 *zhi*)' (5a–4). The subtle distinction made among *wen*, *ci*, *yi*, and *zhi* is highly important: they represent different levels of articulation of one's intended message. It takes a careful mind and insight to reach the true point of a text. We may still regard this as a method of interpretation, but with it one need not resort to external authority or some divine spirit for understanding the moral import of the judgments of the *Yi* texts, or even the matter of the truth of what is presented in the forms of the *guas*.

Perhaps it is with this new approach to the interpretation of the *Yi* text as started by Confucius that the hidden intelligence and presupposed understanding of change become gradually uncovered and expanded in various Confucian disciples' writings. We have no reason not to believe that the whole set of essays known as the *Yi-Zhuan* was inspired by the Confucian revolution in reading the *Yi* texts. The *Yi-Zhuan* can be

seen as reflecting the Confucian spirit of seeking to accommodate divinatory practice and yet to go beyond it in order to reach a fuller understanding of the cosmic map of reality. In order to see how human beings may learn from the cosmic map one has also to decide what is or ought to be done in light of one's moral consciousness as a human person and as a member of the human community. Both the appended essays from the *Bo-Shu* version of the *Yi-Jing* and the Bamboo Inscriptions of the *Yi-Jing* (to be referred as the Bamboo Manuscripts of the *Yi*) in 1993 have given ample testimony to the strong likelihood that it was the youngest disciple of Confucius (his grandson) Zi Si（子思）and others who actually expanded this onto-cosmic-moral consciousness for a philosophy of human person including self-examination of the self and a systematic understanding of the cosmic map for understanding the *Yi* texts and its import for moral self-cultivation and politically and morally for an institutionally virtuous rule.[34]

There is a consequence of the formation of the *Yi-Zhuan*: it has impacted on the scholars of the *Yi*, particularly those who have followed the tradition of regarding the *Yi* text as a book for divination. With the revolution in the *Yi* philosophy by Confucius and his school, the traditional scholars including perhaps the shamans' and historians' wish to vindicate their years-long divination practice and started to find a new and more sophisticated numerology and image-associative reasoning (even such as one based on parts of the *Yi-Zhuan*) in order to make divination appealing and attractive. Given the atmosphere in which *Yi* was used as a divination book and saved as a divination book from the burning in the Qin Period, those efforts turned out to be very successful. They would and should explain how the Han *Yi* became highly developed in the field of *Xiang-Shu*, despite the Confucian revolution in the *Yi*-text tradition. Although the *Han-Shu* (汉書) and *Shi-Ji* (史記) record a lineage of the inheritors of the *yi* from Zi Xia, the disciple of Confucius, the practice of *yi*, most of the inheritor and transmitters seem to be versed in numbers and images.[35] It becomes in fact a dominating feature of the New Text school (今文經學派) on Classics. Hence we have *yi* specialists like Meng Xi (孟喜), Jiao Yan-shou (焦延壽), and eventually Jing Fang who offered highly elaborate systems of interpretation in numbers and images to the total neglect of judgments and language, not to say use of one's own self-examination and learning from both past and present.

This preoccupation with the *Xiang-Shu* has continued for a long time, from perhaps of the latter half of the first century BCE to the time of Wang Bi (王弼 226–49). During this period the *Xiang-Shu*'s application of the *Yi* has degenerated into superstition in many ways and created a sense of fatalism, which is unhealthy for development of humanity and for political rule. In light of this, Wang Bi came forward to offer a new approach to the interpretation of the *Yi* as inspired by Lao Zi's *Dao-De-Jing* (道德經), which ended up in rejecting the *Xiang-Shu* school and established a long tradition for a philosophical understanding of the *Yi* text. It must be recognized, however, that the work of Wang Bi, the commentary on the *Zhou-Yi*, is in a sense a return to the Confucian tradition of seeking virtues and righteousness of the *Yi*'s judgments, but in another respect it goes beyond the Confucian tradition in promoting a Daoist understanding of the *Yi* reality which goes beyond both language and thinking. But

one must acknowledge that Wang Bi's works on the *Yi* has re-opened the way toward a new wave of *Yi-Li* (義理) understanding of the *Yi*, which one may find in the works of the Song–Ming Neo-Confucians, including Zhou Dun-yi, Chen Yi (程頤), Zhang Zai (張載), Shao Yong (邵雍), Zhu Xi (朱熹), and others.

6 Conclusion: Philosophical Reflection on the Development of the Philosophy of *Yi*

In light of my description of historical developments in the philosophy of the *Yi-Jing*, we cannot fail to note various features, problems, and issues in such developments. The most important is that the developments themselves could be regarded as dialectical ones, which is a matter of onto-cosmological or methodological renovation in human consciousness encountering a changing world. There are limits and limitations to the human consciousness which seeks a comprehensive theory for capturing the process of creative change in reality, whereas there is no limit to such creative change in reality. The core idea is to face the change and transform oneself in order to meet the changes by shaping oneself not only as an agent of change but as an entity of being with individuality and cosmic vision. Any system of the philosophy of change which prevents one from seeing the changes and responding in creative thinking would lapse in being limited and enclosed and therefore defeats the purpose of understanding the future and the totality of change by an individual human in an open manner. This has happened in the *Xiang-Shu* approach in the Han and also in some of the *Yi-Li* system in the Song and Ming periods. The limitation of a system may reflect a cultural state of a time and its political environment in that time. But changes set in so that a new scenario of problems will prompt new changes in experience and theory. With this understanding I briefly characterize the historical development of the *yi* philosophy in the following crucial stages and look to the future for new developments:

1 Formation of the *Zhou-Yi* text from early practices and reflections on divination (from Fu Xi 伏羲 to King Wen 文王 of Zhou 周), which constitutes a dialectically oriented system of symbolic understanding of changes open to integrative interpretation for the purpose of adaptation and action.
2 Discovery of humanity and radical revolution in interpretation of divination toward moral consciousness and moral transformation of man in Confucius and the early Confucian school (from Confucius to the end of the Warring States Period): effort to integrate the divination and moral cultivation into a primary philosophy of creative change.
3 Elaboration of the numerology and images of the *Yi*'s system for prediction and control (from the beginning of Han 汉 to end of Han); wide application of the system in medicine and politics, lapsing in contrived superstition.
4 Purifying the Schools of Xiang-Shu for an open and unmediated understanding of change (from Wang Bi to the end of the Tang period 唐): the rise of Neo-Daoism and Chinese Buddhism and their impact on the *Yi-Jing*'s interpretation of passivity.
5 Resurgence and Prominence of Onto-Cosmological Approach to *Yi* Philosophy in

Neo-Confucianism (from the Song 宋 period to the Ming 明 period): Philosophical Systems of *Yi-Li* formed, issues on integration and subsequent lapse into subjectivism and idealism.

6 Return to textual studies of the *Yi-Jing* through the Qing (清) period to the present day: new discoveries of the *Yi-Jing* texts and other cultural relics: unconscious searching for new ground for philosophical interpretation.

7 A new philosophy of *yi* against its historical background and its concern with the notion of an open future and creative creativity: onto-hermeneutical renovation on the neo-Confucian model in accordance with principle of comprehensive integration and comparable understanding in a global and cosmic contexts.

A new approach to the philosophy of the *Yi-Jing* must presuppose a critical understanding of such a historical development of the *Yi-Jing*. It also should come to see the limitations and dangers of exclusive *Xiang-Shu* or exclusive *yi-li* approaches. It must recognize that images, numbers, and even diagrams and charts are merely representational and symbolic tools for understanding the nature of reality and its creative changes, and this includes reflection on the human person as part of this process of the creative change of reality. No tool is perfect and no tool needs to dominate our thinking and experience on the change of reality: however, insofar as they facilitate our understanding, they are part of the system of understanding, but not the ends or goals of our understanding.

On the other hand, analytical reflection and creative interpretation based on insights into experiences of change and the truth of being and becoming should lead to a systematic formulation of our understanding of the onto-cosmic reality of nature and the human person in their mutual interaction and in their impact in transforming the human individual as a moral entity. Such a philosophical understanding is identified as both onto-cosmic and onto-ethical (hence the system could be considered onto-cosmo-ethical) which is a characteristic of Chinese philosophy in general and characteristic of both the Confucian-neo-Confucian and the Daoist-neo-Daoist philosophy in particular.

We may also hold that the philosophy of the *yi*, as outlined above, provides both a historical and genetic basis for understanding the nature of Chinese philosophy in its historical forms, but constitutes the core spirit of Chinese philosophy, which by its own nature of confronting changes in reality forms the creative force for the future development not only of Chinese philosophy but of a global philosophy of humanity because of its openness, creativity, and integrative dialectics toward harmonization.

Notes

1. It is said that it was in the twelfth century BCE, when Xichangbo (西昌伯) of Zhou was imprisoned by King Zhou (紂) of Xia (夏), that he was able to systematize the divination records by ordering them in a certain way, one which reflects and also reveals subtly the cosmic outlook underlying and required by the divination.

2. The term *ben-ti* (本體) means literally origin-body, which suggests the presentation of the ultimate source and its integrated reality from a process of development as recognized by a deep experience

of observation of and reflection on the human person. The term has been in vogue in Chinese philosophy from the time of the *yi* scholar Xun Shuang (荀爽) in the East Han period in the Early Christian era. I have argued for this point of view in Cheng 2006.

3. Living force is intended to capture the meaning of the Chinese term *qi*, which has been also translated as vital force or material force in early Chinese philosophy. See Glossary to Wing-tsit Chan's *Source Book of Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton Press, 1963. The term 'living force' (*vis viva*) has been used by Kant in his early writings on dynamics under the influences of Leibniz who learned Chinese philosophy from Jesuits of his time. Hitherto I shall refer to *yin* and *yang* as living or vital forces of the *qi* which onto-cosmologically is a substance of no substance but a power of creativity informed by its intrinsic order called the principle or orderliness (*li*).

4. See the *Xi-Ci*, *Shang*-5.

5. The *Dao-De-Jing*, Chapter 42.

6. We see here that the concept of the *dao* becomes more definitely articulated as the emergence of *yin* and *yang* rather as something indefinite and inarticulable as suggested by Lao Zi.

7. It is not the ultimate of void (*wu*), as the ultimate of void cannot have an ultimate being, which is the emergence of the ultimate (*ji*) as the starting point of becoming and transformation.

8. See my article on *guan*, 'On the Philosophical Significance of *Guan* and Onto-Hermeneutical Interpretation of the Change (*Yi*)', in Cheng 2006: 77–106.

9. See the *Tuan* statement of the twentieth *guan* hexagram in the *Yi-Jing* text.

10. See the *Xi-Ci*, *Shang*-10.

11. See the *Xi-Ci*, *Shang*-4.

12. It is perhaps because of this principle that Confucius comes to realize a depth of humanity as a matter of caring feeling for all people and all things. His teaching on *ren* (feeling of care) inspires the Zi-Si-Mencius School of Heart-Mind which defines human nature in terms of basic feelings and emotions in response to people and things in the world. See the *Guo-Dian* (郭店) Bamboo Text, 'The Nature Originates from the Mandate', and the Shanghai Museum Bamboo Text, 'On Human Nature and Human Emotions'. In both texts it is claimed that human nature results as an endowment by Heaven and human emotions come from human nature. This is precisely the position that the *Zhong-Yong* (中庸) articulates.

13. It should be noted that the point of the *gua* is not to expound on sexual love and intimacy but to reveal the deep affection and love which makes the advance toward physical intimacy possible. Hence it is said in the *Tuan* commentary of the *Xian*: 'It is in the felt accord between heaven and earth that all things arise and transform. The sage who is capable of moving the hearts of people will make the world peaceful. If we look objectively at what has been felt, one would come to see the genuine state of heaven and earth and the ten thousand of things.' Two short remarks could be made: that the sage can move the hearts of people is due to the fact that he feels the hearts of the people and he could respond in an effective and deep way to those feelings and thus to the needs and hopes of the people. Second, one needs to have not only feelings toward something but reflection on these feelings and feelings of others in order to see the genuine state of things. This means that it takes both feelings and reflection on one's own feelings and those of others in order to realize what is true of a situation. One needs to take one's feeling seriously, not lightly. One needs to be guided by an understanding of reality together with one's reflective scrutiny of one's feeling and the resultant deeper feelings.

14. Quoted from *Zheng Xuan's Zhou-Yi-Zhu* (鄭玄周易注), mentioned in *Li Ding-zuo's Zhou-Yi-Ji-Shi* (李鼎祚周易集釋).

15. See the *Xi-Ci*, *Shang*-1.

16. See the *Xi-Ci*, *Shang*-6.

17. In the English translation of Richard Wilhelm's book on the *I Ching* the four words are rendered as 'sublime', 'success', 'furthering' and 'perseverance' (see pp. 4–6). My translation of the four words has the advantage of showing the process nature of change more vividly.

18. See his *Zhou-Yi-Ben-Yi* (義易本义), in his commentary on *Shang*-11.

19. Whitehead may have this notion in his *Process and Reality*.

20. It is said in the *Xi-Ci*, *Shang*-1, that 'Heaven is noble and earth is lowly and the positions are thus determined'.

21. See the first chapter of Cheng 2006: 4–34 where I proposed a theory of five worlds in overlapping circles which incorporates all the traditional diagrams of *yi* cosmography but which characterizes the emergent unity of identity and difference of human world from objective reference to the ultimate source to natural and intentional actions of the human person, including moral action.

22. I have argued for the formation of *yi* thinking as the very beginning of Chinese philosophy. The *Yi* texts of *gua* and *yao* have been formed as early as the beginning of the twelfth century BCE, which was the time of the founding of the Zhou Dynasty (twelfth century–256 BCE) by King Wen (文王) and King Wu (武王). Hence the term *Zhou-Yi* (*Yi* of Zhou) may be said to start with the editing of the *Yi* judgments from divinations based on a symbolic system of observations of the changes of the heaven and earth. Our received standard texts of *Yi* have been dated to former Han. Contemporary excavations in China have updated our known versions of the *Yi* to the fourth century BCE (in the Zhu Tomb Bamboo Inscriptions version in 1993) and first century BCE (in Mawangdui Silk Manuscripts (马王堆帛書) version in 1976). Earlier fragments of symbols of *yi* pertaining to the Yin Dynasty in the sixteenth to the twelfth century BCE were also found in recent years. Reference to the *Xia-Yi* in the twentieth to the sixteenth century BCE has been recorded as early as Han, but relics have yet to be found. Archeological cultural remains point to the development of a sheep culture (羊文化) as early as the end of the Neolithic Period whereby the culture hero Fu Xi as the tamer of sheep is said to have designed the eight trigrams of the *Yi* based on what I have called Comprehensive Observation (*guan*).

23. I have explained the meaning of the term *ben-ti* in note 2. One may indeed define and identify the *ben-ti* of the world–reality as the *dao* or the *tai-ji* to indicate the originating power and organic unity of the *dao* or the *tai-ji* as deeply experienced by the human person.

24. I have argued for this point of view in Cheng 2006.

25. This is again an important thesis which I have suggested and defended in my interpretation of the *Yi-Zhuan*. This interpretation has two parts. First, the *Yi-Zhuan* can be regarded as faithfully reflecting the later Confucian thought on reality based on his reading and reflection on the *Yi* text. Although the recording and editing of the *Yi* thoughts of Confucius, since he came to devote himself to the study of the ancient *Yi* texts after the age of fifty, might occur as late as the time of his grandson Zi Si, it is still very close to Confucius' own lifetime. This may not have to exclude Confucius' own cosmologizing the *dao* in interaction with Daoists such as Lao Zi. But the *dao* in the *Yi-Zhuan* is worked out more as a structured process of cosmic process of creativity than in the *Dao-De-Jing*. Second, the Confucian philosophy of *yi* in the *Yi-Zhuan* is both an intuitive and a logical recognition of the philosophy of cosmogony and cosmic change underlying the symbolic configuration of the becoming of the world and time in the *Yi* text. This can be clearly seen from how the sixty-four hexagrams and eight trigrams are conceived and integrated/interrelated into a system of images and concepts which form a holistic picture or presentation/representation of the cosmic reality in constant change with observable patterns, which are open to interpretation for prediction and action. See my forthcoming books *The Primary Way: Philosophy of the Yi-Jing* and *Philosophy of Yi-Jing: Comparative Essays*.

26. See my article 'Inquiring into the Primary Model: The *Yi-Jing* and Onto-Hermeneutical Understanding', in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 30.3–4, 2003: 289–312.

27. In speaking of the *yin* and *yang* in the deployment of the *Dao* from the *tai-ji*, one may introduce the idea of *qi* (vital force) as the substance or the forces described as the *Yin* and the *Yang*. This is because the *Yin* and *Yang* are to be identified with concrete things in their subtle constitution and minute movement which we may describe as *qi*. *Qi* has to be conceived to explain the constitution and movement of all material things and hence conceived as moving forces and states of becoming which we may also describe as energies. But we need not confine *qi* to material forces alone, all inner feelings and thoughts of a human person can be *qi* too. In this sense *qi* is conceived as cross-level and cross-stage energy-force which enables the formation and transformation, the constitution and destruction of things. To know the *dao* is to know the *qi* eventually. The *tai-ji* realizes its change and differentiation and integration by way of becoming the *qi*. Hence *qi* is the constitution and actualization principle of the *tai-ji* and the *dao*.

28. We may also speak of *zhong* as centralization and *he* as harmonization, to emphasize the dynamics of the inner and outer states of a human mind. But this way of talking no doubt can be extended to all things in the world and the whole world itself. It is because a thing has to maintain itself by having a

center to balance all forces or vitalities and by trying or having to establish a harmony with external forces of the world. The same holds for the world as a whole, albeit a dynamically changing and open entity. The *Zhong-Yong* (中庸) speaks of the well-positing (位 *wei*) of Heaven and Earth and the well-nourished state (育 *yu*) of all the 10,000 things in the world.

29. Transcendence is often understood ambiguously. Strictly speaking, transcendence denotes a separable, independent and external existence relative to that which it transcends, whereas immanence is an intrinsic and non-separable form of existence related to a thing or nature of a thing. But we must also take a dynamic approach to problems of transcendence and immanence and see both terms sometimes as contrasting and at other times as intrinsically connected to each other. In the case of God as the wholly other of Christian theology, God is no doubt transcendent to humanity whereas human aspiration for God is immanent. But in the case of the *Tian* (天 Heaven) in Chinese classical philosophy, Heaven can exist in the form of the way of Heaven, which is embodied in all things and in the nature of the human person, and in this sense one may say that Heaven exists in man even though Heaven could be considered a transcendent but non-separable source for humanity and human creativity. Thus when we say here that there is no thing beyond this world of *tai-ji* and the *Dao*, there is no transcendence in the contrasting sense. But there is nothing to prevent us from saying that there is still transcendence in a connected sense, namely that Heaven or *tai-ji* as the source of the ultimate reality and the *Dao* as the overall process of transformation are not to be identified with each individual thing or person even though they can be said to be within their existence or nature. This also means that one can strive for the *Dao* and return to the origin of things in a process of transformation and self-cultivation.

30. Hence we need to speak of the structure of each *gua* in terms of how one line related to another. For example, one may see in a *gua* how the first line responds to the fourth line, the second line responds to the fifth line and the third line responds to the top line. Then there is the relation of close support of one line over another, again depending on the position of the line.

31. In a sense *shen-ming* (神明) becomes internalized as part of my wisdom and innate understanding as a human person.

32. In my estimation there are over sixty comments touching on either the *gua* or the line of a *gua* in the *Yi* text. Thus I would call it Confucius' *Yi-Zhuan* which I distinguish from the Confucian *Yi-Zhuan* and which is the primary source for the Confucian *Yi-Zhuan* commonly known as the *Yi-Zhuan*.

33. See Deng Qiubai 1987: 481.

34. Although reputedly it was reputed that it is Zi-xia (子夏) who inherited the Confucian philosophy of the *yi*, we do not have authentic works of Zi-xia preserved. We may therefore treat the whole *Yi-Zhuan* as a miscellany of many contributions to the interpretation of the *Yi* text and also the formulation of the *yi* onto-cosmology as inspirited by Confucius. It is mainly in the texts of the *Yi-Zhuan* that we find what I have referred to as Confucius' commentary on the *Yi* texts.

35. The *Ru-Lin-Zhuan* (儒林传) in the *Shi-Ji* records that it was Zi-xia who received *yi* understanding from Confucius and then after six generations transmitted it to Tian He (田何) in Qi which should be about 300 BCE. Tian He influenced many scholars, such as Ding Kuan (丁寬), Zhouwang Sun (周王孙), Qi Fusheng (齊服生), of *yi* at the beginning of Han (about 200 BCE). It takes another 200 years to reach the time of Meng Xi (孟喜) and then Jingfang (京房), whereby the *Xiang-Shu* come to flourish and enjoyed a time of high popularity with both the court and the populace.

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Chapter 3
CLASSICAL CONFUCIANISM (I): CONFUCIUS AND THE *LUN-YÜ*

Edward Slingerland

The *Analects*, or *Lun-Yü* (論語 lit. 'ordered sayings'), purports to be a record of the teachings of Kong Zi (孔子) and his disciples. Kong Zi is more commonly known in the West by the latinization 'Confucius', bestowed upon him by Jesuit missionaries in the eighteenth century. His traditional dates are 551–479 BCE, but little is known for sure about his life.[1] Most of the traditional details of his biography are derived from an account in the *Record of the Historian*, compiled around 100 BCE by the Grand Historian Sima Qian, and which consists largely of legend and literary invention. Some Western scholars have attempted to construct coherent chronologies of Confucius' life from a variety of early sources and to separate potential facts from clear fiction,[2] but so little can be known for sure that it seems best to stick to whatever facts we might glean from the *Analects* itself.

Confucius was clearly a native of Lu (18.2), of humble economic background (9.6), and seems to have been a member of the scholar–official (*shi* 士) class, the lowest of the three classes of public office holders. Originally referring to an aristocratic warrior, *shi* had, by the time of Confucius, come to refer to a class of people who filled the middle and lower ranks of state governments, in primarily civil posts. Like Confucius, it seems that a subset of these scholar–officials were also *ru* (儒). This term, which later came to mean 'Confucian', and appears only once in the *Analects* (6.13), referred in Confucius' time to a class of specialists concerned with transmitting and preserving the traditional rituals and texts of the Zhou dynasty. The fact that mastery of the Zhou classics and traditional ritual etiquette was a valued skill in public officials led many aspiring scholar–officials to seek out *ru*-like training for the sake of acquiring public office and – most importantly – the salary and public prestige that went along with it. This was only one of many contemporary phenomena that troubled Confucius, who felt that training in traditional cultural forms should be pursued as an end in itself. Confucius himself probably never held anything more than minor posts in his lifetime,

failing to realize his ambition of being employed at a high level, under a virtuous ruler, so that he could put his vision into practice.

He did, however, gather around himself a fairly sizeable group of disciples, some of whom managed to obtain high governmental posts after the Master's death. His vision was picked up by two prominent Warring States followers, Mencius and Xun Zi, the latter of whom was an extremely influential intellectual and teacher of Han Fei and Li Si, the two legalist thinkers who helped the first emperor of Qin unify China in 221 BCE. It was not until well into the Han dynasty, however, that Confucius was finally officially recognized as a great sage by the rulers of China, at which time the book that purports to be the record of his teachings, the *Analects*, became required reading for any educated Chinese person. Although Confucianism was eclipsed, during the Sui and Tang dynasties, by Buddhism, it continued even during this period to exert a powerful influence on the Chinese mind, and it was officially revived in the Song dynasty by the so-called 'Neo-Confucian' school. During the Ming dynasty the so-called 'Four Books' assembled by Zhu Xi (1130–1200) as the core of Confucian teachings – the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, along with two chapters from the *Record of Ritual* called the 'Great Learning' and the 'Doctrine of the Mean', all accompanied by Zhu Xi's commentary – became the basis of China's civil service examination, and were therefore memorized by every single educated Chinese person from 1313 until the last nationwide exam in 1910. Similar national exams in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam assured the hold of the *Analects* on the minds of the educated classes in those nations as well. Therefore, although the Master had little influence during his own lifetime, the cultural legacy he left to East Asia is difficult to overestimate. As Simon Leys has observed, 'no book in the entire history of the world has exerted, over a longer period of time, a greater influence on a larger number of people than this slim little volume' (1997: xvi).

1 The Text of the *Analects*

Traditionally, the *Analects* has been viewed as a coherent and accurate record of the teachings of the Master, recorded during his lifetime or perhaps shortly after his death, but this view of the text began to be called into question by the philologists of the Qing dynasty. The earliest explicit quotation of the *Analects* is by another early text, the *Record of Ritual*, which most scholars agree is of pre-Han provenance, and unattributed quotations of the *Analects* found in other pre-Han texts suggest that something not unlike our received version was circulating during the Warring States period.[3] There is no doubt among contemporary scholars that this received version is a somewhat heterogeneous collection of material from different time periods, assembled by an editor or series of editors, probably considerably after the death of Confucius.[4]

There continues to be debate concerning their identification of the different strata, as well as in the significance they attribute to these differences. At one end of the spectrum of opinion are scholars such as D.C. Lau (1979), who – drawing upon the work of the Qing scholar Cui Shu (1740–1816) – separates the book into two strata (the first fifteen books and the last five) of different ages, but treats the work as more or less thematically homogenous. Steven Van Zoeren (1991) represents what was until

recently the other end of the spectrum. He uses a form-critical approach to divide the work into four strata – from earliest to latest, the 'core books' 3–7, books 1–2 and 8–9, books 10–15, and books 16-20 – which he sees as representing not only different time periods, but also substantially different viewpoints. This end of the spectrum has since been pushed to a new extreme by Brooks and Brooks (1998), who see each individual book as representing a discrete stratum, identify vast numbers of 'later interpolations' within each stratum, and claim that the work was composed over a much longer period of time than has been generally accepted – the later strata being put together as late as the third century BCE. Brooks and Brooks radically reorganize the structure of the *Analects*, and view it as an extremely heterogeneous collection of different (and in many cases competing) viewpoints. Their view is quite speculative, however,[5] and it is the D.C. Lau–Cui Shu approach that seems most plausible. Though no doubt representing different time periods and somewhat different concerns, the various strata of the *Analects* display enough consistency in terminological use, conceptual repertoire, and general religious viewpoint to allow us to treat the text as a whole as presenting a unified vision. The probable late date of the final books in the *Analects* (especially books 15–20) should always be kept in mind. Nonetheless, the fact remains that nowhere in the *Analects* do we find even a hint of the sophisticated new conception of the heart-mind (*xin* 心), debates about human nature, and inter-school rivalries that so permeate Warring States texts such as the *Mencius*, *Zhuang-Zi*, and *Xun-Zi*. This makes it highly unlikely that any stratum of the *Analects* was composed after the early fourth century BCE, which in turn means that we can safely view the text as a genuine representation of the state of the 'school of Confucius' before the innovations of Mencius and Xun Zi.

2 The Thought of Confucius[6]

The thought of Confucius is often characterized as a 'philosophy' or 'way of life' rather than as a religious vision. This sentiment can be traced back to the Enlightenment *philosophes* of the eighteenth century, who became aware of Confucius through vague accounts trickling into Europe via Jesuit missionaries, and saw in his 'philosophy' an existence proof that one could have ethics without religion. This was held up as a crucial response to those who believed that the *philosophes*, by dethroning God, were auguring in an age of social chaos and personal wickedness. The theme of Confucianism as an Enlightenment-friendly philosophy, free of old-fashioned theistic or metaphysical baggage, was also enthusiastically embraced by native Chinese scholars in the early twentieth century, who were eager to portray Confucianism as entirely compatible with such hallmarks of modernity as 'Mr Science' and 'Mr Democracy'. The modern instantiation of this trend has been an interpretation of Confucius that presents him as a deontological ethicist, creative aesthete, or existential self-maker, thoroughly in tune with modern sensibilities.[7] These interpretations *do* capture certain important aspects of the *Analects*, often in a way that speaks vividly to modern concerns.[8] The interpretation of Confucius that follows here, however, will present him as a fundamentally religious thinker,[9] advocating a theistically informed, culturally conservative

virtue ethic,[10] a view which seems to me to do better justice to the historical and cultural context in which the *Analects* was formed.

2.1 Pre-Confucian background

Traditional Chinese historiography presents the Xia dynasty as the first of the legendary dynasties of the Golden Age, supposedly founded by the legendary sage-king Yu. Yu is also credited with taming the floods of the Yellow River, thereby making what we now think of as north-central China habitable for the Chinese people. The earliest Chinese civilization for which we have archeological and written evidence, however, is the Shang dynasty (sometimes alternately referred to as the Yin dynasty), the traditional dates of which are 1751–1122 BCE. It is from the Shang that we have the first written records of China, in the form of so-called 'oracle bones'. These oracle bones are pieces of ox scapula or tortoise shells used in divination: questions concerning the proper course of action or requests for things such as rain, directed to the spirits of the Shang ancestors, were written on them, and heat was then applied. The answer from the ancestors was revealed in the resulting pattern of cracks decoded by the diviner, who was often the Shang king himself.

In particularly important situations the ancestors were asked to intercede with the being who wielded the greatest power of all over the Shang people, the ur-ancestor known as the 'Lord on High' (*shang-di* 上帝). The Lord on High seems originally to have been a non-human god who gradually came to be viewed as the first human ancestor of the Shang people, and therefore – by virtue of seniority – the most powerful of the ancestor spirits. The Lord on High and the other ancestor spirits of the Shang were viewed as dwelling in a kind of netherworld somewhere above the human realm (hence the Lord 'on High'), from which vantage point they continued to monitor the behavior of their descendants, receive sacrificial offerings from them, hear questions and requests, and control all of the phenomena seen as lying beyond human control: weather, health and sickness, success or failure in battle, etc. Establishing and maintaining a good relationship with these spirits – especially the most powerful of them, the Lord on High – was therefore one of the primary concerns of the Shang ruler. In the oracle bones we find a special term referring to the power accrued by a ruler who, through timely and appropriate sacrifices, had successfully established and preserved such a relationship with the ancestors: *de* (德). I will translate this term as 'Virtue,'[11] with the caveat that the reader should keep in mind the original sense of the Latin *virtus* – the particular 'power' residing in a person or thing, preserved in modern English in such expressions as 'By virtue of his great intelligence, he was able to solve the problem'. Virtue in the early Shang context refers to a kind of attractive, charismatic power residing in a ruler who had won the endorsement of the ancestral spirits. This power could be perceived by others, serving as a visible mark of the spirits' favor, and its attractive qualities allowed the ruler to both win and retain supporters.[12]

Sometime near the end of the second millennium BCE a people known as the Zhou invaded the Shang realm and deposed the last of the Shang kings. The traditional date

of the conquest is 1122 BCE, but this has been the subject of great dispute, and the conquest may in fact have occurred over a period of time rather than in one fell swoop. We have much more in the way of written material from the Zhou dynasty that helps us to understand their worldview. The most reliable source is the set of inscriptions that have been found on bronze ritual vessels discovered in tombs, intended as commemorations of the occasion of the making of the vessel, that reveal much about early Zhou history and thought. Less reliable – because subject to scribal changes, both intentional and unintentional – but far more rich in content are the received texts that purport to date from the Zhou dynasty. The most helpful of these are the *Book of Documents* (*Shang-Shu* 尚書 or *Shu-Jing* 書經) and the *Book of Odes* (*Shi-Jing* 詩經), the former a collection of historical documents and governmental proclamations supposedly dating back to the earliest years of Chinese history, and the latter a collection of folk songs and official state hymns. The current belief in scholarly circles is that at least half of the *Book of Documents* is a fourth-century CE forgery, whereas much of the *Book of Odes* represents genuinely pre-Confucian material, probably dating to between 1000 and 600 BCE.

The religious worldview of the Zhou borrowed heavily from the dynasty that they replaced. One reflection of the Zhou eagerness to identify with the Shang was their adoption of the Shang god, the Lord on High, who was conflated with and eventually replaced by their own tribal god – *tian* (天). Early graphic forms of *tian* seem to picture a massive, striding, anthropomorphic figure, who is from the earliest times associated with the sky. Hence 'Heaven' is a fairly good rendering of *tian*, as long as one keeps in mind that 'Heaven' refers to an anthropomorphic figure – someone who can be communicated with, angered, or pleased – rather than a physical place. Heaven possessed all of the powers of the Lord on High, and in addition had the ability to charge a human representative on earth with the 'Mandate' (*ming* 命) to rule. *Ming* refers literally to a command issued by a political superior to an inferior or a decree issued by a ruler; in a metaphorical and religious sense, it refers to Heaven's command to its proxy on Earth, the king, to rule the human world. Just as the Lord on High sent blessings down to those of his descendants who performed the sacrifices correctly, Heaven was believed to grant the Mandate to the ruler who maintained ritual correctness. The *Book of Odes* and *Book of Documents* claim that the Shang lost the Mandate because of gross ritual improprieties and general immorality, which motivated the Lord on High/Heaven to withdraw the Mandate from them and give it to the Zhou. In this way, the Zhou rulers presented their motivation for conquering the Shang to be merely the desire to enact Heaven's will, rather than any selfish desire for power on their part. Similarly, since the holder of the Mandate was believed to also receive Virtue from Heaven as a sign of its favor, early texts present the conquest as relatively effortless: King Wu simply arrived on the battlefield with his troops, and the awesome power of his Virtue caused most of the opposing armies to immediately submit to him.[13] This is the origin of two themes in Chinese thought that were inherited by Confucius: that only someone who is selfless and sincere will receive Virtue from the Heaven, and that political order is properly brought about only through the charismatic, non-coercive power of Virtue – the need to exert force being viewed as evidence that a ruler does not truly enjoy Heaven's favor.

Another important development seen in early Zhou texts is what might be described as the increasingly impartial nature of their supreme deity. The Lord on High was the blood ancestor of the Shang royal line, and thus had a special loyalty to the Shang kings. Heaven, on the other hand, is a supreme deity who has chosen to bestow the Mandate upon the Zhou because of their ritual propriety. In this case, what has been given can also be taken away. Ancestors still play a crucial role, and the Zhou were eager to claim for their ancestral line the same sort of privileged access to the supreme deity that the Shang line enjoyed, but there is no longer any guarantee that the ancestors can protect their descendents from the wrath of Heaven if they go against its will. This accounts for a constant refrain seen throughout the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of History*: the Zhou kings must be extremely careful about preserving their Virtue, lest they suffer the same fate as the Shang. As in Shang times, the manner in which to assure the favor of the supreme being was through the proper observance of a set of practices collected referred to as 'ritual' (*li* 禮), but in the Zhou conception both the scope and nature of ritual practice was understood differently. Shang ritual consisted primarily of sacrificial offerings to the spirits of the ancestors, and the main concern was that the sacrifices were performed properly – that the food and drink offered were of sufficient quality, that the proper words were intoned, etc. By Zhou times, the scope of ritual had grown significantly, encompassing not only sacrificial offerings to the spirits, but also aspects of the Zhou kings' daily lives that we might be tempted to label as 'etiquette': the manner in which one dressed, took one's meal, approached one's ministers, etc. In addition, proper performance of ritual duties became more than a matter of simply observing external forms, because in order for ritual practice to be acceptable to Heaven, it was necessary that the king perform it with *sincerity*. We thus see in the Zhou the beginnings of a concern with internal states of mind – a demand that one's emotions and thoughts match one's external behavior – that becomes a primary theme in the thought of Confucius.

Related to the perceived need for sincerity in ritual practice are the hints in early Zhou texts of a religious ideal that will come to be known as *wu-wei* (無為). Meaning literally 'no-doing' or 'non-doing', *wu-wei* might be best translated as 'effortless action', because it refers not to what is or is not being done, but to the *manner* in which something is done.[14] An action is *wu-wei* if it is spontaneous, unselfconscious, and perfectly efficacious. *Wu-wei* action represents a perfect harmony between one's inner dispositions and external movements, and thus is perceived by the subject to be 'effortless' and free of strain. In early Zhou texts, a sort of unselfconscious skill and sincerity are associated with ideal exemplars, of which we can distinguish two primary types. The first is the aristocratic lord or gentleman (*jun-zi* 君子), who throughout the *Book of Odes* is described as embodying the martial and social virtues that become his station with an effortless ease – an ease that manifests itself in his efficacious skill as much as his personal bearing. This *wu-wei* lord or gentleman in the *Odes* primarily represents a martial, aristocratic ideal – the handsome and physically powerful warrior.[15] A more explicitly moral ideal of *wu-wei* is exemplified by another type of paragon in the *Odes*: the virtuous sage-ruler of old. Here both effortlessness and unselfconsciousness are emphasized. In Ode 241, for instance, we find the Lord on High praising King Wen:

> I cherish your bright Virtue;
> Despite your great renown, you do not flaunt it,
> Despite your prominence, it remains unchanged.
> Without recognizing or being conscious of it
> You flow along with my model.

King Wen is able to effortlessly 'flow along with' the normative standard embodied by the Lord on High in a completely unselfconscious manner. Although this accordance with the cosmos endows him with a powerful moral Virtue, King Wen does not dwell on it or parade it in front of others, nor allow it to become corrupted by arrogance or pride. He enjoys his Virtue naturally and unselfconsciously.

Throughout early Zhou texts, the effortless moral skill of rulers such as King Wen is portrayed as a result of a special relationship to Heaven. Virtue is understood in these texts as accruing to those who are ritually correct in a *wu-wei* fashion – that is, those who accord with Heaven's Mandate in a completely sincere, spontaneous, unselfconscious fashion.[16] Attaining a state of *wu-wei* harmony with Heaven, they are thus rewarded with a power that not only brings them personal benefit, but that also allows them to more effectively realize Heaven's will in the world. This theme is elaborated in the *Analects*, where Confucius' *wu-wei* gentleman combines both the physical mastery of the martial aristocrat in the *Odes* – although his mastery shows itself in ritual performance rather than in war – and the unselfconscious ease and selflessness of the virtuous kings of the Zhou, also sharing with them a special relationship to Heaven.

2.2 The age of Confucius

The Zhou system resembled that of feudal Europe, where the king enjoyed the fealty of the local feudal lords (*zhu-hou* 諸侯) – usually relatives of the royal family or favored retainers – to whom he had granted hereditary fiefdoms. Although these fiefdoms were governed independently, all of the feudal lords were bound to obey the Zhou king in times of war and to submit periodic tribute to the Zhou royal court. The beginning of the decline of the Zhou can be traced to the sack of the Zhou capital in 770 BCE by barbarian tribes allied with rebellious Chinese principalities. The Zhou court was forced to flee, and a new capital was established farther east. The movement of the capital marks the beginning of the so-called 'Eastern Zhou' period (770–221 BCE), the latter part of which is in turn often subdivided into the 'Spring and Autumn' (722–481 BCE) and 'Warring States' (403–221 BCE) periods. The Eastern Zhou period was characterized by a gradual decline in the power of the Zhou kings, with local feudal lords and ministers gradually usurping the traditional Zhou kingly prerogatives, and more and more openly running their fiefdoms as independent states. By the time of Confucius' birth in 551 BCE, the Zhou kings had been reduced to mere figureheads, and even many of the feudal lords had seen their power usurped by upstart ministers. This was the case in Confucius' native state of Lu (魯), where the authority of the dukes – who could trace their ancestry back to the Duke of Zhou

himself – had been usurped by a group of powerful clans, collectively known as the 'Three Families'.

2.3 Confucius' religious mission

'Would that I did not have to speak!' Confucius sighs in 17.19. His stubbornly obtuse disciple Zigong is puzzled. 'If the Master did not speak,' he asks, 'then how would we little ones receive guidance?' Confucius' response is brief, poetic, and perhaps tinged with a trace of bitterness: 'What does Heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons go round and find their impetus there, and the myriad creatures are born from it. What does Heaven ever say?' Heaven governs the natural world in a *wu-wei* fashion, without having to resort to words. The seasons go round, the myriad creatures are born and grow to maturity, and all these phenomena find their source in Heaven. The counterpart to Heaven in the human world is the sage-king of old, someone like Shun: 'Was not Shun one who ruled by means of *wu-wei*? What did he do? He made himself reverent and took his [ritual] position facing South, that is all' (15.5). In the ideal state of harmony between Heaven and humans that obtained in ancient times, the ruler had no need to act or to speak. He simply rectified his person and took up the ritual position fitting for a ruler, and the world became ordered of its own accord.

In Confucius' view, this sort of natural, spontaneous, unselfconscious harmony had once prevailed during the reigns of the ancient sage-kings Yao and Shun, as well as during the Golden Age of the 'Three Dynasties' – the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou. This idealized vision of the past serves as Confucius' moral and religious benchmark, which is why he finds the need to 'speak' – that is, to teach, cajole, admonish – so distasteful, and is so contemptuous of 'glibness' and those who speak too much.[17] The social world should function in the same effortless, *wu-wei* fashion as the natural world, and it is only because in Confucius' own age the Way has long been lost that he has been summoned to speak, to bring the world back into the state of wordless harmony from which it has fallen. Confucius' own speaking – the 'categorized conversations' that constitute the *Analects* – is thus a necessary evil, a wake-up call sent from Heaven to a fallen world. Such is the opinion of the border official of Yi (3.24), who perceives quite clearly the sacred nature of Confucius' mission. After being presented to Confucius, he has some comforting and prophetic words for the disciples: 'Why should you be concerned about your Master's loss of office? The world has been without the Way for a long time now, and Heaven intends to use your Master like the wooden clapper for a bell.'

This mention of 'the Way' (*dao* 道) should be noted, because Confucius seems to have been the first to use this term in its full metaphysical sense. Referring literally to a physical path or road, *dao* also refers to a 'way' of doing things, and in the *Analects* refers to '*the* Way': that is, the unique moral path that should be walked by any true human being, endorsed by Heaven and revealed to the early sage-kings. More concretely, this 'Way' is manifested in the ritual practices, music, and literature passed down from the Golden Age of the Zhou, which were still preserved in the state of Lu by a few high-minded, uncompromising *ru* (6.13, 19.22). The fact that 'the Way of

Kings Wen and Wu has not yet fallen to the ground' (19.22) serves for Confucius as a small glimmer of hope in an otherwise bleak landscape. He saw his mission to be serving Heaven by helping to reinvigorate this Way in his otherwise fallen and corrupt age, and to thereby bring about a restoration of the lost Golden Age – a 'second Zhou in the East', as he puts it in 17.5. Below I briefly explore the various elements of Confucius' religious vision: his diagnosis of the causes of the fallenness of his age; the path of self-cultivation that he proposes to remedy this state of fallenness; and the characteristics of the ideal state which lies at the end of this path – the state of *wu-wei*, or 'effortless action'.

2.4 Fallenness

Contemplating his own age, Confucius was appalled by the sorry state of his contemporaries. In 8.20, he reflects wistfully upon the relative wealth of talented officials who served the ancient sage-kings Yao and Shun, and notes that this flourishing of Virtue reached its peak in the Zhou dynasty. Infused with this powerful Virtue, the ritual practice of the Zhou was of the highest efficacy and brought order throughout the world. Asked in 3.11 about the *di* sacrifice – the performance of which was the prerogative of the Zhou kings – Confucius answers: 'I do not understand it; one who understood it could handle the world as if he had it right here', pointing to his palm. By his time, however, the performance of the *di* – continued by the nominal successors of the Zhou in his own native state of Lu – had degenerated to the point where Confucius could no longer bear to look upon it (3.10). This degeneration in ritual performance was accompanied by a similar decline in the quality of men participating in public life. After having explained the various grades of worthiness in 13.20, Confucius is asked: 'What about the men who are in public service today?' He answers dismissively: 'Oh! Those petty functionaries are not even worth considering.' Even in their faults and excesses the men of ancient times were superior to those of Confucius' own day (17.16), and the general state of decline that followed the demise of the Zhou is summed up by the disciple Master Zeng in 19.19: 'For a long time those above have lost the Way and the common people have therefore become confused.'

What, in Confucius' view, are the causes of this degeneration? It would seem that two factors can be distinguished. The first is the usual panoply of basic human weaknesses: lust, greed, sloth, etc. These seem to be barriers that all people aspiring to the moral life must learn to overcome.[18] The second factor – of relatively more timely concern to Confucius – is the quality of the tradition into which one is acculturated: the system of ritual practice, music, and language use that, in Confucius' opinion, plays a primary role in shaping human character. It is clear that by the time of Confucius the Zhou ritual tradition had been severely corrupted, and that this corrupted tradition was in turn responsible for leading the vast majority of people astray. What *caused* the Zhou tradition to decline is never adequately explained in the *Analects*, but it is quite clear that natural weaknesses of human beings are only magnified under the rule of a corrupted tradition, making the re-establishment of harmony between humans and the cosmos very difficult indeed. In his only recorded comment on human nature in

the *Analects*, Confucius seems to emphasize the importance of the practice of traditional forms over that of inborn human nature: 'By nature people are similar; they diverge as the result of practice' (17.2). The view that prevails in the *Analects* seems to be that the imperfections inherent in human beings are not too great a problem for a tradition in good order – one which has the resources to trim, guide, and reform one's raw nature in such a way that a state of harmony between both the individual and society and the social order and the cosmos can be attained. The Way of the Zhou in its heyday was just such a tradition. It is only in the absence of such a tradition – or in the presence of a corrupted or decadent tradition – that these unsavory qualities of human nature are allowed to run amok.[19]

Such a situation of moral chaos is what Confucius saw around him in a society that had lost the true Way because of its obsession with externalities (5.27, 14.24). In ancient times, people focused on the internal goods of the Confucian practice,[20] such as their own moral qualities, their level of self-cultivation, and their love for the Way. Although Confucius believed that such devotion to the Way of Heaven would ideally result in external rewards – good reputation, social honor, wealth, etc. – the correlation was not perfect. The actions of Heaven are mysterious, and inner Virtue is not always immediately rewarded with external goods, which means that the true servant of Heaven should focus solely upon his Virtue and leave its recompense to fate.[21] The problem with his contemporary world, in Confucius' view, was that it had lost sight of the goods internal to Confucian moral self-cultivation. People of his day mechanically fulfilled the outward forms of the rites and engaged in study as if they were true seekers after the Way, but their activities amounted to nothing more than empty show. Even the most intimate and personally significant of the rites – one's filial duties toward one's parents – had in Confucius's view been rendered hollow and meaningless: 'These days "filial" means simply being able to provide one's parents with nourishment. But even dogs and horses are provided with nourishment. If you are not respectful, wherein lies the difference?' (2.7).

For Confucius, the emptiness and superficiality of his age was personified in the figure of the 'village worthy' (*xiang-yuan* 鄉愿), who carefully observes all of the outward practices dictated by convention, and in this way attains a measure of social respect and material comfort, but who lacks the inward commitment to the Way that characterizes the true Confucian gentleman. Confucius referred to the village worthy as the 'thief of virtue' (17.13), for from the outside he *seems* to be a gentleman and so lays a false claim to virtue. This is no doubt the sentiment informing 17.18: 'I hate it that purple is usurping the place of vermillion, that the tunes of Zheng are being confused with classical music, and that the clever of tongue are undermining both state and clan.' Just as the debased people of his time used the mixed color of purple in place of pure vermillion and confused the decadent music of Zheng with true music, they mistook village worthies and 'clever talkers' for true gentlemen. The prevalence of these counterfeiters of virtue and the popularity of decadent music were not the only signs of the fallenness of Confucius' age. The most prominent and egregious reflection of the sorry state of his contemporaries was the corruption of ritual practice among the political and social elite. It has already been noted above that, in

Confucius' native state of Lu, the practice of the *di* sacrifice had degenerated to the point that Confucius could not bear to look on it. Similarly, the overweening pride of the Three Families who ruled Lu in Confucius' time caused them to usurp the ritual privileges properly accorded only to the Zhou kings – a transgression against the very structure of the cosmos which appalled and saddened Confucius (3.1–3.2, 3.6)

2.5 The constitutive role of traditional cultural forms

As noted above, the survival of Zhou cultural practices in the state of Lu served for Confucius as a gleam of hope in an otherwise dark age. The soteriological path he advocated involved intensive personal self-cultivation based upon emulation of ideal models from this past Golden Age,[22] when a harmony between human beings and Heaven was perfectly realized in the sagely rulers and ritual practices of the Zhou. Were the scholars of his age able to realize in their own persons the ideals embodied in the Zhou cultural heroes and institutions, they would be able to transcend the fallenness of their own age and attain the status of 'gentlemen' or even 'sages', and the suasive power of their Virtue would be able to transform the common people and lead them back to the Way. The primary Confucian practices – ritual training, the learning of classical texts and music – can thus be essentially characterized as different forms of model emulation: in perfecting ritual practice, the student is emulating and internalizing models of ideal behavior in various life-situations, and through intensive learning he is imbibing literary and artistic forms, as well as learning from the deeds and words of ancient exemplars. These traditional models serve a dual role: to *restrain* one's natural emotions and habits, and (more importantly) to *constitute* the basis for a new way of being. These dual functions can be seen as correctives for the two sources of fallenness noted above: in restraining inborn nature, the basic weaknesses inherent to human beings are corrected; similarly, in constituting a new way of acting, thinking, and expressing oneself, the corruption springing from the defective nature of contemporary tradition is overcome.

In 12.1, Yan Hui is warned by Confucius: 'Do not look unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not listen unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not speak unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not move unless it is in accordance with ritual.' As can be seen clearly in book 10, ritual for Confucius encompasses every aspect of one's dress, demeanor, and deportment. Confucius himself was famous for his strict adherence to the rites; in 10.10, we read that 'he did not sit, unless his mat was straight'. By submitting to and internalizing ritual forms, the student is able to both restrain improper inborn tendencies (8.2, 17.8) and acquire the means to 'take his place' (*li* 立) among other adults in society (2.4, 16.13, 20.3). As the Qing dynasty commentator Liu Baonan observes:

> Looking, listening, speaking, and moving were all things that the ancients regulated by means of ritual … If only I am able to restrain myself and return to ritual, whenever I am confronted with something that is not in accordance with ritual, I will have within myself the means to restrain my eyes and not

look at it, restrain my ears and not listen to it, restrain my mouth and not speak of it, and restrain my heart and not put it into action. This is all that is meant by 'restraining oneself and returning to ritual.'

(Cheng Shude 1990: 822)

Ritual thus plays a constitutive function in Confucian self-cultivation, not only reshaping one's innate endowment, but also giving the individual a kind of behavioral language allowing him to conduct himself as a proper human being. Herbert Fingarette has described quite clearly the humanizing function performed by Confucian ritual training:

Is it enough to merely be born, to eat, breath, drink, excrete, enjoy sensual gratification and avoid physical pain and discomfort? Animals do this. To become civilized is to establish relationships that are not merely physical, biological, or instinctive; it is to establish *human* relationships of an essentially symbolic kind, defined by tradition and convention and rooted in respect and obligation.

(Fingarette 1972: 76)

The importance of ritual for constituting anything worthy of being viewed as human behavior accounts for Zhu Xi's remark in his commentary on 20.3: 'A person who does not understand ritual has no idea where to focus his eyes and ears, and has no place to put his hands and feet' (Cheng Shude 1990: 1378).

For Confucius, the constitutive role of tradition extends even to the cognitive realm and the practice of 'learning' (*xue* 學). The common alternate translation of this term as 'study' gives it too much theoretical flavor, for although 'learning' generally does focus on classical texts, its point is the actual practice of emulating and internalizing of models of ideal behavior and speech exemplified in these works. In addition, the scope of learning extends beyond textual study, and includes observing and benefiting from the behavior of others (7.22, 19.22). The role of classical texts, such as the *Book of Odes*, is to not only give one the language to express oneself (16.13, 17.9), but the accumulated wisdom of the ancients that they represent is to form the very basis of one's thinking (*si* 思) (2.2). In Confucius' view, thinking outside the context of study might be compared to randomly banging on a piano in ignorance of the conventions of music: a million monkeys given a million years might produce something, but it is better to start with the classics. Hence Confucius' confession in 15.31: 'I once engaged in thought for an entire day without eating and an entire night without sleeping, but it did no good. It would have been better for me to have spent that time in learning.' This necessity for the individual to rely on inherited cultural forms accounts for Confucius' avid devotion to learning (5.28, 7.17, 7.28), as well as the meticulousness with which he pursued this endeavor (7.18). The extent of learning's role in shaping a properly formed worldview can be gauged by Confucius' advice to his son in 17.10: 'To be a man and not apply yourself to [the *Odes*] would be like standing with your face to the wall, would it not?'

Another important cultural form for Confucius is the network of 'names' (*ming* 名) established by the ancients, whereby labels were applied to social roles, practices, and the myriad objects in the world. By Confucius' time, this system of names was gravely disordered. In 6.25, we are presented with the infamous *gu* (觚) ritual vessel that is not – for reasons that are not entirely clear to commentators – a true *gu*, presumably because it is being used or made improperly. Whatever the reason, the incorrect application of the name *gu* to this vessel by Confucius' contemporaries represents, in his eyes, a disturbing corruption of the ritual standards set by the ancient Zhou kings. The importance of the correct application of names is perhaps more clearly apparent in the case of social relations. In 12.11, a ruler asks Confucius about how to properly govern a state, and Confucius replies: 'Let the lord be a true lord, the ministers true ministers, the fathers true fathers, and the sons true sons.' The point here is that 'names' such as 'lord' bring with them a set of normative assumptions and guidelines for behavior, and nothing further would be required for proper social order if the actual behavior of everyone in the ruler's state simply matched the 'name' of his or her social role. This issue of social labels fitting actualities of behavior is formulated explicitly as a problem of correct naming in 13.3, where Confucius describes the 'rectification of names' (*zheng-ming* 正名)[23] as the first priority of one attempting to impose order on a chaotic state:

> Zilu asked, 'If the Duke of Wei were to employ you to serve in the government of his state, what would be your first priority?'
>
> The Master answered, 'It would, of course, be the rectification of names.'
>
> Zilu said, 'Is this really a matter of concern? It would seem that the Master's suggestion is rather wide of the mark. Why worry about rectifying names?'
>
> The Master replied, 'How boorish you are, Zilu! When it comes to matters that he does not understand, the gentleman should remain silent. If names are not rectified, speech will not be in accordance with actuality; when speech is not in accordance with actuality, things will not be successfully accomplished. When things are not successfully accomplished, ritual practice and music will fail to flourish; when ritual and music fail to flourish, punishments and penalties will miss the mark. And when punishments and penalties miss the mark, the common people will be at a loss as to what to do with themselves. This is why the gentleman only applies names that can be properly spoken, and assures that what he says can be properly put into action. The gentleman simply guards against arbitrariness in his speech. That is all there is to it.'

One way to conceptualize the rectification of names is to see it as establishing a hierarchically organized set of spaces within which each individual can find his or her proper 'place'. This is how the author of the *Annals of Lü Buwei* explains it:

> Those who govern must make establishing clear distinctions (*ding-fen* 定分) their first priority. When lords and ministers, fathers and sons, and husbands and wives all occupy their proper positions, then the lower member of each

pair will refrain from overstepping their place, and the higher member will refrain from behaving arbitrarily. Juniors will not be audacious or unrestrained, and seniors will not be careless or arrogant … The difference between what is similar and what is dissimilar, the differentiation between noble and base, and the proper distinction between elder and junior are things about which the Ancient Kings were very careful, and constitute the guiding principle for controlling disorder.[24]

This bounded-space metaphor allows us to imagine the sort of chaos and disorder that can result if clear boundaries are not established and maintained by those in positions of influence, leaving the common people to drift about arbitrarily, with no sense of their proper place in society. This in turn helps us better appreciate why Confucius was so worried about so-called 'lords' not behaving like *true* lords and so-called 'ministers' not behaving like *true* ministers.

Another of Confucius' concerns was the state of music in his time. Although there is little explicit theorizing about the role of music in self-cultivation in the *Analects* itself, later ritual texts explain that the power of music derives from its ability to directly enter into a person and mold his or her emotions.[25] Something similar to this view was no doubt shared by Confucius, considering the extent to which he worried about the quality of the music to which his contemporaries listened.

Music was seen not merely as a matter of taste, but as a crucial aspect of moral self-cultivation.[26] The classical standard was the court music of the ancient sage-kings, such as the legendary Shun or King Wu (3.25). In Confucius' time this restrained, balanced, perfectly formed classical music was being displaced by the licentious, seductive, popular music of Zheng – the early Chinese equivalent of Elvis Presley or of Rap – that was currently the rage among Confucius' contemporaries (15.11, 17.18). Little is known about the exact nature of the Zheng music, other than the assertion of commentators that it had a simple but catchy beat, was sung by mixed groups (men and women), and gave rise to sexual improprieties – all of which should sound very familiar to concerned parents of any nation or age. Confucius was very concerned about the effect of music on people's dispositions, and properly regulating music was thus seen as a crucial part of ordering both the individual and the state. In 7.14 we get a hint of the sort of pleasure one could derive from the proper sort of music: 'When the Master was in the state of Qi he heard the Shao music,[27] and for three months after did not even notice the taste of meat. He said, 'I never imagined that music could be so sublime.'' We see in this passage an association between music, joy, and forgetfulness that is also echoed by the graphic pun between the words for 'joy' and 'music' in ancient Chinese, both of which are represented by the character 樂. The joyous rapture inspired by sublimely beautiful music – involving as it does a kind of unselfconscious ease and a loss of one's sense of self – thus serves for Confucius as a powerful metaphor for the ideal of effortless (*wu-wei*) perfection discussed below. Music is portrayed as a 'perfecting' force in 8.8, which nearly sums up the constitutive role played by the cultural forms mentioned above: 'Find inspiration in the *Odes*, take your place through ritual, and be perfected by music.'

2.6 *The perfection of goodness: autonomy in practice*

It is interesting to note that, despite the importance of cultural forms and self-cultivation in the Confucian scheme, it is always emphasized that acquired 'cultural refinement' (*wen* 文) must be firmly grounded in one's basic emotional disposition or 'native substance' (*zhi* 質). Confucius worried a great deal about the problem of artificiality – that is, of cultivation becoming so dissociated from human needs and desires that it is no longer organically grounded in the dispositions. He was always alert to the dangers of *over*-cultivation and hypocrisy, and preferred to err on the side of simplicity (3.4, 3.8, 19.14). The goal of all of the cultural practices mentioned above is to produce a perfect balance between refinement and substance, which allows one to avoid both the wild crudeness of unrestrained native substance and the rigid pedantry of excessive refinement (6.18). The end-goal of Confucian self-cultivation was the overarching virtue of *Goodness*[28] (*ren* 仁), and the autonomy in practice that this virtue brings with it – the 'flip-side' of immersion in and formation through tradition.

There has been some disagreement over how precisely to translate *ren*, although most scholars are in agreement that it is not merely a specific virtue, but in most contexts has the general sense of the highest of Confucian virtues.[29] In pre-Confucian texts such as the *Book of Odes*, *ren* is an adjective referring to the appearance of a handsome, strong, aristocratic man, and is cognate with the word meaning 'human being' (*ren* 人). In this context, *ren* is thus perhaps best rendered as 'manly'. One of Confucius' innovations was to transform this aristocratic, martial ideal into an ethical one: *ren* in the *Analects* refers to a *moral* rather than a physical or martial ideal.[30] In post-*Analects* texts, it has the more specific sense of 'empathy or kindness between human beings' – especially of a ruler toward his subjects – and in such contexts is therefore usually translated as 'benevolence'.[31] Although we see hints of this later usage in the *Analects* (12.22, 17.21), it is much more commonly used there in the more general sense of 'Goodness', the overarching virtue of being a perfected human being, which includes such qualities as empathetic understanding (*shu* 恕) or benevolence (*hui* 惠).

Despite altering the sense of *ren*, Confucius did preserve an early Zhou linkage between *ren* and 'the gentleman' (*jun-zi* 君子): *ren* continues to be a quality characterizing the true gentleman. The result of this linkage is a similar moralization of the term *jun-zi*. Meaning literally 'son of a lord', *jun-zi* originally referred to a member of the warrior aristocracy. In Confucius' hands, it comes to refer to anyone capable of becoming a kind of moral aristocrat: an exemplar of ritually correct behavior, ethical courage, and noble sentiment – in short, a possessor of *ren* in the general moral sense.[32] In Confucius' view, anyone from any station of life was capable of becoming a gentleman (7.7) – his greatest student, Yan Hui, came from a humble social background characterized by miserable poverty – although few in practice actually do so. Therefore, even though Confucius claimed to be merely a transmitter of ancient culture rather than an innovator (7.1), he in fact subtly altered the religious system of the Zhou in many ways.

The good person is usually referred to as the 'gentleman', but is sometimes also

referred to as the 'complete person' (*cheng-ren* 成人) – i.e. an individual who possesses all of the other virtues and properly balances them through being fully trained in Confucian practice (14.12). Goodness is, in fact, often defined in terms of the perfection and harmony of the lesser virtues (13.19, 13.27, 14.4, 17.6).[33] We also sometimes see the sentiment that even the Confucian practices themselves – ritual training, study, the enjoyment of music, which perform such an important constitutive function for Confucius – are meaningful only to the extent that they are informed by the virtue of Goodness.[34] As Confucius notes in 3.3: 'What has a man to do with the rites who is not Good? What has a man to do with music if he is not Good?' The Confucian gentleman is thus one who can unify the various Confucian practices in his person, put them in their proper places, and bring them to completion (15.18). This seems to involve striking the proper balance between innate, spontaneous, emotional responses (native substance) and the demands of traditional cultural forms (cultural refinement).

The fact that true Goodness involves attaining such a balance accounts for the emphasis on individual participation and autonomy of judgment evinced in the *Analects*. For instance, with regard to the practice of learning, it was noted above that the individual's cognitive contribution, thinking, was to take place in a context defined by tradition if it was to lead to anything worthwhile. Nonetheless, it is also emphasized that learning requires – at least after the preliminary stage – the active participation of the student. While learning takes place within a certain structured context, it involves more than simply the passive absorption of knowledge: learning (what one hears from teachers and reads in the classics) and thinking (how one processes and integrates this knowledge) must be properly balanced. Although Confucius preferred to err on the side of conservatism – 'If you learn without thinking about what you have learned, you will be lost', he notes in 2.15, but quickly adds, 'If you think without learning, however, you will fall into danger' – he nonetheless saw the student as more than simply an empty receptacle for knowledge. Indeed, the ideal student will come to the project possessed of an inchoate need for what learning is able to provide and a passion for acquiring it. While Confucius certainly saw the role of traditional knowledge as being much more essential than Socrates did, there is nonetheless a similar maieutic quality to his method: 'I will not open the door for a mind that is not already striving to understand, nor will I provide words to a tongue that is not already struggling to speak. If I hold up one corner of a problem, and the student cannot come back to me with the other three, I will not attempt to instruct him again' (7.8; see also 1.16, 9.31, 15.16). Similarly, the rites are not merely rigid forms of behavior which can be performed in a mechanical fashion – they require an emotional commitment, combined with a refined sensibility, on the part of the practitioner (3.12, 3.26, 17.11, and 19.1).

Indeed, one of Confucius' great concerns is that, in his decadent age, the rites *had* degenerated into mere formal patterns of behavior, uninformed by either emotional commitment or true goodness. For instance, in 2.8 Zixia asks about filial piety. The Master replies: 'It is the demeanor that is difficult. If there is work to be done, disciples shoulder the burden, and when wine and food are served, elders are given precedence,

but surely filial piety consists of more than this.' The Qing dynasty commentator Qian Dian illustrates the point of 2.8 with a historical example:

> When King Wen was the crown prince and participated in the court audiences of Wang Ji [his father], he would ask the eunuchs three times every day whether or not the Prime Minister was feeling well that day. When it was replied that he was well, King Wen's demeanor became suffused with joy; when it was replied that he was unwell, King Wen's demeanor became filled with anxiety – he would be so shaken that even his gait became unsteady. This is what is meant by 'it is the demeanor that is difficult'.
>
> (Cheng Shude: 89)

Thus, although such virtues as filial piety are expressed by means of external cultural forms – giving precedence to elders, for instance, or inquiring after their health – in the case of *true* virtue these external forms are accompanied by genuine, spontaneous feeling.

Once the proper balance between outward cultural forms and individual participation is attained, the harmony that is thereby established between inner emotional states and the dictates of morality allows the Confucian gentleman to act in accordance with the principles and rules by which ethical practices are constituted, while at the same time displaying a level of autonomy and flexibility impossible for one who is merely 'going by the book.'[35] Indeed, in the Master's view, a student cannot be said to have properly mastered the Way until he knows how to apply it skillfully and in a context-sensitive manner (13.5). The goal is to develop a *sense* for the practice, and not to focus too exclusively on its formal rules. Similarly, clinging too rigidly to codes of moral conduct will cause one to lose sight of morality itself; it is better to hold fast to a developed sense for what is right (*yi* 義) and respond with flexibility to the situations that present themselves (4.10, 15.37). What Confucius is hoping to inculcate in his students is a set of virtues: stable, acquired, autonomous, context-sensitive dispositions to act in a normatively positive fashion, which include both intellectual and emotional components.

This need for flexibility and some degree of autonomy seems to inform the virtue of 'sympathetic understanding' (*shu* 恕). The prominence given to this virtue in the text suggests its importance. In 4.15, coupled with 'dutifulness' (*zhong* 忠), it is described as the 'single thread' tying together all that Confucius taught. In 15.24, it is described as the 'single teaching that can be a guide to conduct throughout one's life' and is expressed by Confucius as: 'Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire' (see 5.12, 6.30). Understanding what is entailed in 'sympathetic understanding' is therefore quite clearly essential if one is to comprehend Confucius' moral vision, and 4.15 makes it apparent that any conception of this virtue will involve explicating its relationship to dutifulness. In the contexts in which it appears in other passages in the *Analects*, as well as in the *Xun-Zi*[36] and *Mencius* 4B.31,[37] *zhong* seems to mean something like 'dutifulness' – the virtue of fulfilling one's role-specific obligations. This also seems to be how the term is used in the *Zuo Commentary* and early Han texts,

where it is identified with political loyalty[38] and linked to ritual duties.[39] Although *zhong* is often translated as 'loyalty', 'dutifulness' is preferable because the ultimate focus is upon one's ritually prescribed duties rather than loyalty to any particular person, and indeed *zhong* would involve opposing a ruler who was acting improperly (13.15, 13.23, 14.7). As for *shu*, the character itself is made up of components meaning 'comparing' (*ru* 如) and 'heart-mind' (*xin* 心), and is defined in the *Analects* in terms of what might be called a 'negative' version of the Golden Rule: 'Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.' It might thus be rendered as 'sympathetic understanding', in the sense of an ability to show sympathy through putting oneself imaginatively in another's place. The *Esoteric Commentary*, for instance, explains *shu* in this way:

> The fact that you yourself hate hunger and cold allows you to understand that everyone in the world desires food and clothing. The fact that you yourself hate labor and bitter exertion allows you to understand that everyone in the world desires rest and ease. The fact that you yourself hate poverty and deprivation allows you to understand that everyone in the world desires prosperity and sufficiency.
>
> (3.38)

Understood in this manner, then, one way to characterize these virtues and their relationship to one another is to see dutifulness as the virtue of properly fulfilling one's ritually dictated duties in service to others, whereas understanding is a complementary virtue that 'humanizes' dutifulness.[40] Sympathetic understanding seems to refer to a cultivated ability to amend or suspend the dictates of dutifulness – or to apply them flexibly – when holding to them rigidly would involve 'imposing on others what you yourself do not desire'.[41] The ability to combine role-specific propriety with some sort of context sensitivity thus seems an essential aspect of the overall virtue of Goodness. As Zhu Xi remarks with regard to *shu*, 'it is the sort of thing a genuinely Good person concerns himself with, and cannot be forced' (Cheng Shude 1990: 317).

Confucius himself appears to serve in the *Analects* as an exemplar of this sort of context sensitivity. The entirety of book 10 – an extended account of ritual behavior, probably culled from a later ritual text, but traditionally attributed to Confucius – can be seen as a model of how the true gentleman flexibly adapts the principles of ritual to concrete situations. While this chapter is often skipped over in embarrassment by Western scholars sympathetic to Confucianism but nonetheless appalled by the seemingly pointless detail and apparent rigidity of behavior[42] ('With a black upper garment he would wear a lambskin robe; with a white upper garment he would wear a fawnskin robe; and with a yellow upper garment he would wear a fox-fur robe. His informal fur robe was long, but the right sleeve was short' – 10.6), this discomfort is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the purpose of book 10. While the scope and detail of Confucian ritual certainly (and quite rightly) seems alien to a modern Westerner, it is important to understand that what is being emphasized here is the ease and grace with which the Master embodies the spirit of the rites in every aspect

of his life – no matter how trivial – and accords with this spirit in adapting the rites to new and necessarily unforeseeable circumstances. For instance, 10.23 reads: 'When receiving a gift from a friend – even something as valuable as a cart or a horse – he did not bow unless it was a gift of sacrificial meat.' There was probably no specific clause in the rites that dictates this specific response to this particular situation; rather, Confucius, by virtue of his sensitivity to the ritual value of sacrificial meat relative to a sumptuous – but non-ceremonial – gift, simply *knows* how to respond properly. That Confucius' flexibility in applying the rite is the theme of Book Ten is made clear in the last passage, 10.27: 'Startled by their arrival, the bird arose and circled several times before alighting upon a branch. [The Master] said, "This pheasant upon the mountain bridge – how timely it is! How timely it is!" Zilu bowed to the bird, and then it cried out three times before flying away.' This poetic, somewhat cryptic, passage seems like a non-sequitur at the end of a chapter devoted to short, prosaic descriptions of ritual behavior – unless, that is, it is seen as a thematic summary of the chapter as a whole. 'Timeliness' (*shi* 時) is Confucius' particular forté, and indeed he is known to posterity (through the efforts of Mencius) as the 'timely sage': the one whose ritual responses were always appropriate to circumstances (see *Mencius* 5B.1).

Having over the course of a long process of self-cultivation internalized the rules and conventions that define such practices as the rites, Confucius is able to display a degree of autonomy in applying – or even potentially evaluating, criticizing, or altering – them. Hence the famous passage, *Analects* 9.3, where Confucius accedes to a modification in the rites:

> The Master said, 'A ceremonial cap made of linen is prescribed by the rites, but these days people use silk. This is frugal, and I follow the majority. To bow before ascending the stairs is what is prescribed by the rites, but these days people bow after ascending. This is arrogant, and – though it goes against the majority – I continue to bow before ascending.'

It is certainly possible to exaggerate the iconoclastic character of this passage – we should note that the change Confucius accedes to is a rather minor one, and that he does not actually *propose* changing the rite, but simply goes along with popular practice (with possibly a hint of reluctance). Nevertheless, we can appreciate the sense of it without ignoring Confucius' profound conservatism: rites are expressive of a certain feeling (this constitutes their *meaning*), and thus an alteration in the actual rite is permissible if it will not – in the opinion of one who has perfectly harmonized his inner feelings with the outward dictates of ritual – alter its essential meaning.

2.7 Understanding the Heavenly Mandate

It is important to recognize that Confucius' purpose in urging a return to the ritual and other practices of the Zhou is not to merely revive a contingent, archaic practice that happened to appeal to him for political or personal reasons, but to realize what he perceived as the Heavenly Mandate (*tian-ming* 天命) – that is, to reinstate the

religious dynamic that once existed between the early Zhou rulers and Heaven. We have seen above that, in pre-Confucian times, the Mandate referred to a relationship between Heaven and the Shang and early Zhou kings, who derived the Virtue that allowed them to rule by obeying the will of Heaven. Donald Munro has described the manner in which the relationship established through cultural training between the Confucian gentleman and Heaven can be seen as a democratization of this relationship that previously existed exclusively between Heaven and the ruler (1969: 61–3). That is, by mastering the Way of the Zhou, the sincere Confucian practitioner is also according with the Mandate of Heaven, and is correspondingly infused with Virtue. In Confucius' view, this sort of accordance can be achieved *only* through the practices of the Zhou, which represent the one true Way for human beings to relate to both the universe and each other. This is the sentiment informing 6.17: 'Who is able to leave a room without going out through the door? How is it, then, that no one follows this Way?' This also explains why the power of the gentleman's Virtue is not culturally specific, and extends to even non-Chinese barbarians (9.14, 12.19, 13.19). Confucius is possessed of a fundamentally *religious* faith that he is on a mission – that he understands the Mandate of Heaven – and it is this faith that is sufficient to sustain him and any other true gentleman through periods of doubt and crisis (3.24, 7.23, 7.35, 9.5). Throughout the *Analects*, Confucius is portrayed as pursuing his task with the determination that can come only from religious commitment – certainly he was not motivated by the prospect of immediate success (9.9, 14.35, 14.38–39). Confucius is not merely an aspirant to political power, a defender of the social status quo, or a ritual aesthete, but rather a man infused with a profound religious faith on a sacred mission. This spirit is perhaps best summed up in 4.8, where Confucius proclaims: 'Having in the morning heard that the Way was being put into practice, I could die that evening without regret.' As Zhu Xi explains this remark, 'If one were able to hear the Way, one's life would flow easily and one's death would come peacefully, and there would be no more regrets' (245). It is infused by the sort of faith that comes only from understanding the cosmic importance of the Confucian Way that one can persist on the long road to becoming a gentleman, which is why consciously understanding the sacredness and universality of the Confucian mission is an essential part of being a gentleman (2.4, 16.8, 20.3).

This faith also helps to explain the Confucian gentleman's indifference to externalities, such as official position, material possessions, health, and even lifespan. An alternative sense of *ming* (命) that one begins to see in the *Analects* is as a referent to the whole range of circumstances that are both external to the Confucian practice itself and beyond the control of human beings – the realm of 'fate'.[43] Since circumstances subject to fate are external to Confucian practice, they are not the proper concern of the gentleman (4.14, 12.5, 15.32), who in any case – like all human beings – is powerless to effect them (14.36, 6.10). As Huang Kan remarks: 'When it comes to those things in life that are subject to fate, whether or not one receives them is up to Heaven, therefore one must understand fate. If one does not understand fate and tries to forcibly pursue those things that are subject to it, one will not be able to perfect the Virtue that will allow one to become a gentleman' (Cheng Shude 1990:

1377). In addition, even when used in the sense of 'fate', *ming* continues to preserve its connection to Heaven and the metaphor of 'mandating' or 'commanding': fate is what is mandated by Heaven, the normative standard of the universe. It is therefore not only pointless, but also morally wrong, to struggle against it (11.19). The proper attitude of the Confucian gentleman is to accept whatever fate brings with grace and equanimity, confident that Heaven has a plan, and to focus his efforts on serving Heaven through cultivating the Confucian Way.

2.8 Feeling at home in Goodness: Confucian wu-wei

For a concise summary of the Confucian path of self-cultivation as I have traced it thus far, we can do no better than to turn to Confucius' spiritual autobiography, which is recorded in *Analects* 2.4: 'At fifteen I set my mind upon learning; at thirty I took my place in society; at forty I became free of doubts; at fifty I understood Heaven's Mandate; at sixty my ear was attuned; and at seventy I could follow my heart's desires without overstepping the bounds of propriety.' We can see this spiritual evolution as a set of three pairs of stages. In the first two stages, the aspiring gentleman commits himself to the Confucian Way, submitting to the rigors of study and ritual practice until these traditional forms have been internalized to the point that he is able to 'take his place' among others. In the second two stages, the practitioner begins to feel truly at home with this new manner of being, and is able to understand how the Confucian Way fits into the order of things and complies with the will of Heaven. The clarity and sense of ease this brings with it leads one into the final two stages, where one's inner dispositions have been so thoroughly harmonized with the dictates of normative culture that one accords with them spontaneously. This final stage represents Confucius' conception of personal *wu-wei*, or effortless action.

Confucius often speaks of the importance of loving the Way,[44] as well as the unselfconscious 'joy' (*le* 樂) that arises spontaneously once one has harmonized one's inner dispositions with the demands of practice (1.1, 7.14, 7.19). It is precisely this sense of joy that distinguishes a true practitioner from one who has not yet seen the Way. In 6.20 Confucius describes the progression of affective states that a Confucian practitioner must experience: 'One who knows it is not the equal of one who loves it, and one who loves it is not the equal of one who takes joy in it.' That is, it is not enough to have a merely intellectual understanding of the meanings of the rites and other aspects of the Way; one must spontaneously respond to these teachings from the depth of one's heart. Once this stage is reached, the student will be firmly situated within the practice proper to a true human being, and will thus be at ease in the world (4.1, 4.2). Feeling at home in Goodness, the perfected gentleman embodies it in every action – 'following the desires of the heart without overstepping the bounds of propriety'. Yan Hui was apparently very close to this stage, and in any case far ahead of his fellow students: 'The Master said, "Ah, Yan Hui! For three months at a time his heart did not stray from Goodness. The rest could only sporadically maintain such a state"' (6.7; see the account of the Master in 5.26). For a perfected gentleman such as Confucius, the Way comes to permeate every aspect of his life. This is why even in moments of

leisure he appears 'correct though relaxed' (7.4; see also 7.37, 7.38), and why he begins to worry about himself only when the Way of the Zhou no longer penetrates even into his dream-life (7.5). The requirement that the Confucian Way be embodied in this kind of spontaneous, unselfconscious manner is perhaps the reason that Confucius is reluctant to pronounce others Good based only on accounts of their exploits. Virtuous deeds can be faked, but true virtue is a stable disposition that endures over time and shines forth in the subtlest details of one's everyday life. This is also why Confucius emphasizes that – although it is always a treacherous undertaking to pass judgment upon others – a person's true character can be discerned if one observes the everyday details of their life (2.10).

2.9 Universal salvation through personal transformation: the rule of virtue

Most treatments of the role of *wu-wei* in Confucian thought have focused on its governmental function, and it has been seen by most as a primarily political concept in the *Analects*.[45] As we have seen above, to interpret Confucian *wu-wei* in such a manner is to overlook its function as first and foremost an *individual* spiritual ideal. The bulk of the *Analects* is concerned not with matters of government but with the cultivation of the self and the attainment of a state of spiritual development where one's inner dispositions are perfectly harmonized with the dictates of ancient normative culture – that is, with the overcoming of fallenness through personal effort. That being noted, however, we should now observe that Confucius' vision does not end with the salvation of the individual, but goes on to portray this individual attainment as the key to the eventual salvation of the world from its state of corruption. The theme of the gentleman rectifying himself in order to rectify (in a concentrically expanding circle) the family, the state, and eventually the entire world becomes a prominent theme in such later Confucian texts as the 'Great Learning' (*Da-Xue* 大學), and its roots can be found in the *Analects*:

> Zilu asked about the gentleman.
> The Master said, 'He cultivates himself in order to achieve respectfulness.'
> 'Is that all?'
> 'He cultivates himself in order to bring peace to other gentlemen.'
> 'Is that all?'
> 'He cultivates himself in order to bring peace to the common people. Cultivating oneself and thereby bringing peace to the common people is an accomplishment that even a Yao or a Shun would not disdain.'
>
> (14.42)

It thus seems that the project of personal self-cultivation advocated by Confucius, while not always overtly related to the ordering of the world at large, was understood to have ramifications that extend far beyond the individual himself. This individual – the Confucian gentleman – serves ultimately as the key to the salvation of the world

as a whole, and is thus responsible for the salvation of the mass of common people who are incapable of achieving salvation through their own efforts.[46]

The attractive quality of Virtue in the Confucian scheme is described in such passages as 4.25, where we read: 'Virtue is never solitary; it always has neighbors.' Perhaps more important, though, is Virtue's power to *transform*. The Virtue acquired through proper ritual behavior on the part of the gentleman is described as evoking a return to Virtue on the part of the common people (1.9, 3.11, 14.41), and the ability of a fully cultivated gentleman to almost magically raise the standard of cultivation of those around him through the power of his Virtue is so great that even utter barbarians – who have not even been exposed to the Way, not to mention actually understanding it – are susceptible to its influence (9.14). The key to saving the world thus does not involve actively engaging in government in the sense of promulgating laws or raising armies. Confucius had a very dim view of the capacity of legal manipulation or managerial techniques to have an effect on the hearts and minds of the people (2.3, 12.18), and was very dubious about the efficacy of force in bringing the fallen world back to the Way (12.19, 15.1). His faith lay in the gentle transformative power of Virtue. In the opinion of Confucius, then, the best way to govern the world is to *not* govern it: rectify yourself, he says, and the world will follow (12.17). This is his answer to someone who questions why – with the world in such a sorry state – he spends all of his time and attention in the pursuit of such apparently trivial practices as ritual and music, when presumably he should be out 'doing something' to save the world:

> Some people said of Confucius, 'Why is it that he is not participating in government?'[47]
>
> [On being informed of this,] the Master remarked, 'The *Book of Documents* says,
>
> "Filial, oh so filial,
> Friendly to one's elders and juniors;
> [In this way] exerting an influence upon those who govern."
>
> Thus, in being a filial son and good brother one is already taking part in government. What need is there, then, to speak of "participating in government"?'

The best way to 'do governing', then, is to *not do* it: to be *wu-wei*.

In the ideal state of universal *wu-wei*, names are correctly applied to things, the rites and other traditional practices are in proper order, and everyone knows how to act without the need for deliberation. The Virtue-infused individual occupying the place of the ruler then functions as the proxy of Heaven on Earth – hence the later appellation for the Emperor, *Tian-zi* (天子) or 'Son of Heaven' – receiving the spontaneous and yet pre-ordered homage of the world, just as Heaven commands the orderly progression of the seasons and the Pole Star rules over the fixed constellations in the nighttime sky (2.1). The multitude of stars do not crowd together at random, trying to get as close to the Pole Star as possible. Rather, they all remain situated in their proper, predefined places, which in turn are ultimately oriented toward and held together by

the central attractive power of Pole Star.[48] The Virtue-infused ruler thus brings the order of Heaven – which can be observed in the processes of the natural world – back into the human world (8.19), returning the fallen world of Confucius' age to the state of harmony that once prevailed in the Zhou.

Notes

1. For the difficulties involved in separating the *historical* Confucius from the myths that came to surround his persona, see Csikszentmihalyi 2002.
2. See Legge 1893/1991: 56–90; Creel 1960: 25–56; and Lau 1979: 161–94.
3. The earliest extant version of the *Analects* is the so-called Dingzhou (定州) version, written on bamboo strips and recovered in 1973 from a Han dynasty tomb that was sealed in 55 BCE. The Dingzhou *Analects* appears to be a variant of the so-called Lu version, and reflects slightly less than half of the received text. See Ames and Rosemont 1998: 271–8 for an English-language discussion of the Dingzhou discoveries.
4. For a detailed discussion of textual issues surrounding the *Analects*, see especially Cheng 1993 and Makeham 1996.
5. For a more thorough discussion of Brooks's approach the reader is referred to Slingerland 2000.
6. Throughout this discussion, 'Confucius' will be used as a useful shorthand for the editor(s) who assembled the *Analects*, whose thought presumably owes at least something to the historical figure.
7. For Confucius as tradition-transcending deontologist, see Roetz 1993; for interpretations of the *Analects* emphasizing personal creativity and individuality, see Hall and Ames 1987; Eno 1990; and Ames and Rosemont 1998. A representative recent example of the 'creative Confucius' interpretation is Lai 2006.
8. Some of the advocates of such approaches to the *Analects* acknowledge that they are more interested in Confucius as a resource for thinking about contemporary concerns than in presenting Confucian thought in its historical context. In his presentation of the creative-aesthetic vision of Confucian self-cultivation, for instance, Gier concedes that he is 'making a contemporary appropriation of an ancient view that did not recognize the full range of individual creativity that the fine-arts model allows' (2001: 281). See Yearley 2002 on 'historic' versus 'existential' readings of the *Analects*.
9. Of course, the philosophy–religion distinction itself is problematical, assuming as it does that 'philosophy' is free of metaphysical or normative commitments, and the definition of 'religion' is also a contentious issue. I understand the Confucian project of self-cultivation to be 'religious' in the sense that it is intimately linked to a sacred, normative order to the cosmos – the Way, as established by Heaven – and the place of human beings within this order. This conception of religion owes a great deal to Charles Taylor's definition of 'spirituality' as involving a network of ontological claims that allow one to make 'strong evaluations' – that is, judgments of absolute right and wrong (1989: 3–5); for a similar characterization of 'religion', see Robert Neville's 'Foreword' in Rodney Taylor 1990: ix–x. For the classic discussion of the religious elements of Confucianism, refer to Rodney Taylor 1990, and for the fundamentally 'religious' nature of Confucian ethics, see Kupperman 1971.
10. For an introduction to virtue ethics, see MacIntyre 1981 and the essays in Crisp and Slote 1997; the growing literature on virtue ethics and its relationship to Confucian self-cultivation includes: Kupperman 1971; Mahood 1974; Chong 1998; Yu 1998; Gier 2001; Ryan 2001; Slingerland 2001; Wilson 2002; and Tan 2005. MacIntyre himself has tried to problematize the comparison of Aristotelian and Confucian ethics implicit in referring to Confucius as a virtue ethicist; see MacIntyre 1991 and the response of Wan Junren 2004. For an extended argument that Confucian ethics should be seen, not as a virtue ethic, but as a 'unique kind of ethics, in which rule and virtue are united', see Liu Yuli 2004.
11. *De* as a particular power derived from Heaven will be translated as 'Virtue' in order to distinguish it from 'virtue' in a more general sense, although in the *Analects* and later writings it sometimes does possess the latter sense.
12. For more on Virtue in the early Chinese context, see Nivison 1997: 17–30.

13. *Book of Documents*, Chapter 31 ('The Successful Completion of the War').
14. See Slingerland 2003 for *wu-wei* as a central concept in early Chinese thought.
15. See, for instance, Odes 106, 143, 173, 174, 189, and 214.
16. See, for instance, Ode 166.
17. See *Analects* 1.3, 5.5, 11.25, 12.3, 13.27, 15.11, and 16.4
18. Contrast this with the view that the 'holistic' Confucian conception of the self had no room for a tension between reason and the appetites (e.g. Gier 2001).
19. See Chan 1984 on the concept of tradition in the *Analects*.
20. The use of the terms 'internal' and 'external' to categorize goods begins in the commentarial tradition with Mencius, for whom 'internal' goods are the Confucian virtues, which have moral value and can be sought after and attained through human effort, as opposed to 'external' goods (such as wealth, fame, or longevity) that have no moral value, and the attainment of which is ultimately outside of human control (see especially *Mencius* 7A.3).
21. *Analects* 4.9, 4.14, 4.16, 11.18, 14.36, 15.32, 12.4–5.
22. For the importance of model emulation for Confucian self-cultivation, see Munro 1969: 96–112; Cua 1971; Hall and Ames 1987: 297; and Tan 2005. For a contrast between 'model-emulation' theories of morality and 'natural law' theories and how it relates to the *Analects*, see Fingarette 1981 and Hall and Ames 1987: 180.
23. While it is not at all certain that the word *zhengming* is being used in 13.3 as a technical term, and there is some evidence that 13.3 is a rather late passage, it is nonetheless still clear that something like the idea of the 'rectification of names', as developed by Xun Zi, for instance, was very important to the compilers of the *Analects*. For more on the 'rectification of names', see Makeham 1994.
24. Chapter 25.5 ('Keeping to One's Lot in Life').
25. See, for instance, Chapter 19 ('Record of Music') of the *Record of Ritual*.
26. See Kupperman 2002 for the importance of 'taste' in Confucian self-cultivation. Also refer to Fingarette 1972, Eno 1990, Richey 2000, Gier 2001 and Kupperman 2002 for the relationship of aesthetics to morality in the *Analects*, and to Fingarette 1983, Cook 1995 and Brindley 2006 for the role of music in Confucian self-cultivation.
27. The court music of the sage–king Shun.
28. I follow Arthur Waley in capitalizing 'Goodness' (*ren* as noun) and 'Good' (*ren* as adjective) to mark it off as a distinctive term, as well as to distinguish it from *shan* (善 'excellent, good at something, good').
29. For discussions of *ren*, see especially Wing-Tsit Ch'an 1955; Waley 1989: 27–9; and Kwong-loi Shun 2002. Shun's piece also includes a very helpful summary of the various positions students of the text have taken on the issue of defining *ren*.
30. See Schwartz 1985: 75. As Brooks and Brooks have noted, *ren* in the *Analects* continues to retain traces of its original, military origins: 'The *ren* man has the traits of an ideal comrade-at-arms: strength, courage, steadfastness in crisis, consideration for others, capacity for self-sacrifice' (1998: 15).
31. The reader will thus note that, in the discussions of other Chinese thinkers that follow, *ren* will generally be rendered as 'benevolence'.
32. We see a similar evolution occurring with the English word 'gentleman', which originally referred to a member of the aristocracy, but later came to mean someone from any stratum of society capable of exemplifying the ideals and manners of that class.
33. See Lee 1999 on the unity of the virtues in Confucius and Aristotle.
34. The nature of the relationship between Goodness and the most prominent of the Confucian practices – ritual – has been a topic of debate among modern scholars, but the definitive statement on this question is perhaps Shun 2002. Shun explains that the various views on the relationship between Goodness and ritual can generally be classified into two opposing views: the *instrumentalist* and *definitional*. In the instrumentalist interpretation, it is the virtue of Goodness alone that has ultimate value; ritual exists solely to foster Goodness (which is a state of mind distinct from ritual practice), and Goodness can be used as an independent standard to evaluate the rites. In the definitionalist interpretation, the ideal of Goodness is defined in terms of the ritual practice actually existing in the Chinese society of Confucius' time, and cannot be understood apart from this practice. The rites thus

have evaluative priority over Goodness. As Shun observes, each interpretation seems to have some textual support.

35. See Cua 1971 and Lai 2006 for more on the role of flexibility in Confucian ethics.

36. See especially the discussion of *zhong* in Chapter 13 ('The Way of the Minister').

37. This is the only passage in the *Mencius* that gives a clear example of *zhong*: disciples who have faithfully followed instructions from their master describe their actions as respectful and *zhong*.

38. For just a sampling, consider the claim that 'knowing what is advantageous to the Duke's family, doing whatever I can to bring it about is *zhong*' (Duke Xi, Year 9 – 650 BCE); the story of a loyal minister who defends the good name of his ruler and the altars of his state (Duke Xiang, Year 14 – 558 BCE); or the statement that 'not forgetting one's state in the face of danger is *zhong*' (Duke Zhao, Year 1 – 540 BCE).

39. E.g. '*Zhong* and trustworthiness are the instruments of ritual propriety' (*Zuo Commentary*, Duke Zhao, Year 2 – 539 BCE); '*Zhong* and trustworthiness are the root of ritual propriety' (*Record of Ritual*, Chapter 10, 'Ritual Instruments').

40. This particular formulation of the *zhong-shu* relationship is derived from the interpretation of David Nivison, as modified by P.J. Ivanhoe. See Nivison 1996: 59–76 and Ivanhoe 1990 for the details of these positions. Ivanhoe's article also includes a review of previous interpretations; for more recent overviews of the issue, see Van Norden 2002b and Bo 2004.

41. Although the distinction is not clear in the *Analects* itself, in later texts *zhong* seems to be an *upward*-directed virtue, having to do with the duties one owes to one's superiors, whereas *shu* is more of a *downward*-directed virtue, often appearing in the context of superiors being flexible and merciful in their demands upon the people below them. This seems to explain the interpretation of *zhong* and *shu* provided in the possible apocryphal He Yan commentary to *Analects* 4.15 found in two Song Dynasty versions of the text: '*Zhong* is the means by which one serves one's superiors, whereas *shu* is the means by which one relates to one's inferiors' (Cheng Shude 1990: 265).

42. James Legge's comment on book 10 might serve as a representative example: 'It is not uninteresting, but hardly heightens our veneration for the sage', he sniffs. 'After being viewed in his bedchamber, his undress, and at his meals, he becomes divested of a good deal of his dignity and reputation' (1893/1991: 227). Dismissiveness concerning book 10 is not limited to Western scholars of the text; the great Song dynasty writer and scholar Su Shi, for example, dismissed book 10 as a 'miscellaneous record of everyday ritual observances, not particularly relevant to Confucius himself' (Cheng Shude 1990: 636).

43. For a discussion of *ming* as 'fate' in the *Analects*, see Slingerland 1996 and Chen Ning 1997.

44. *Analects* 1.14, 4.6, 5.28, 6.3, 6.20, 9.18, 9.31, 11.7, 13.4, 14.41, 17.8, and 19.5.

45. See, for instance, Ames 1994: 28–53.

46. Although we have seen that Confucius was quite radical in ethicizing and to a certain extent democratizing the early Zhou worldview by making the attainment of 'gentleman' status and the ability to establish a Virtue-relationship with Heaven goals within the reach of any man who chose to apply himself, it is quite clear that the possession of true Goodness is a rarefied achievement quite beyond the grasp of most people (8.9).

47. Literally 'doing government' (*wei-zheng* 謂政). The reference is to Confucius' lack of an official position.

48. It is worth noting the culturally specific manner in which this power of Virtue functions. Since Heaven is the source of both the specific patterns of Zhou culture (9.5) and the Virtue residing in the person of the gentleman (7.23), the attractive and transforming power Virtue functions in a similarly specific manner: it attracts people away from the corrupted practices that characterize barbarianism (whether that of actual non-Chinese barbarians on the borders or the fallen Chinese people of Confucius' own day) and back to *the* Way – the Way that once prevailed in the Zhou. When we read of the power of Virtue, perhaps the first image that comes to mind is that of a charismatic figure in the Weberian sense, drawing flocks of people to his or her person and leading them off to forge a revolutionary new path. This is not the Confucian conception. The Virtue of the Confucian gentleman draws people into the *ordered system* within which he himself has a proper and predetermined place.

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Chapter 4
THE MOHIST SCHOOL
Chris Fraser

1 Introduction

The Mohist school was among the most influential philosophical and social movements of pre-Han China. It was devoted to practicing and promulgating the teachings of a man named Mo Di (墨翟) (fl. ca 430 BCE), who became known as Mo Zi (墨子), or Master Mo. Mo Zi and his followers were the originators of philosophical argumentation in China. They were the first to point out that conformity to traditional mores does not ensure that actions are morally right. They formulated China's first explicit ethical and political theories and advanced the world's earliest form of consequentialism, on which actions, practices, and policies that promote the welfare of all are morally right, while those that interfere with that welfare are wrong. This ethical theory was justified by appeal to the intention of Heaven (*tian* 天), a god-like entity that the Mohists argued is committed impartially to the benefit of all. Heaven's intention provides a reliable epistemic criterion for moral judgments, they held, because Heaven is the wisest and noblest agent in the cosmos.

This basic consequentialist and religious framework motivated a platform of ethical and political doctrines that the Mohists tried to persuade the rulers of their day to adopt. Those doctrines included moral concern for all; opposition to military aggression; personal and state frugality; support for a centralized, authoritarian state led by a virtuous sovereign and run by a merit-based bureaucracy; and reverence for Heaven and the ghosts worshiped in traditional folk religion.

The Mohists also developed sophisticated theories of language and knowledge, and initiated the study of logic and argumentation in China. Members of the school were among China's earliest scientists, undertaking inquiries in geometry, mechanics, optics, and economics. Many aspects of Mohist views on language, ontology, knowledge, and argumentation reflect background assumptions widely shared by other classical Chinese thinkers. So a greater understanding of Mohist thought advances our understanding of early Confucianism, Daoism, and other schools as well.

The first two sections of this essay sketch the historical background to and sources for Mohist thought. Section 4 summarizes the ten doctrines that make up the heart of the Mohists' reform agenda. Section 5 describes the fundamental aim and orientation of their social and philosophical project. Sections 6 and 7 introduce their political

and ethical theories, while the next two sections give a brief overview of their epistemology, philosophy of language, and logic. The concluding section describes the decline of the Mohist movement during the Qin and Han dynasties.

2 Historical Background

History has preserved little biographical information about Mo Di or the members of his school. The *Shi-Ji* (史記), a Han dynasty record, tells us he was an official of the state of Song (宋), who lived either at the same time as or after Confucius (d. 479 BCE), with whom many Han texts pair him as the two great moral teachers of the Warring States era. Most likely, he flourished during the middle to late decades of the fifth century BCE. 'Mo' is an unusual surname and is the common Chinese word for 'ink'. Hence scholars have speculated that it may have been an epithet bestowed on Mo Zi because of his dark skin or because he was once a slave or convict, and as such may have had his face tattooed.

Our primary source for the thought of Mo Zi and his followers is a corpus of anonymously authored texts collected into an anthology called the *Mo-Zi* (墨子). Other sources include anecdotes and comments about the Mohists preserved in early texts such as the *Lü-Shi-Chun-Qiu* (呂氏春秋), *Han-Fei-Zi* (韓非子), *Zhuang-Zi* (莊子), and *Huai-Nan Zi* (淮南子), along with criticisms of them by two of their major opponents, the Confucians Mencius (孟子) and Xun Zi (荀子).

The Mohist texts give only a handful of clues about Mo Zi's life. One passage depicts King Hui of Chu (楚惠王) (488–432 BCE) refusing him an audience because of his low social status. Several anecdotes depict him as a master craftsman and military engineer. The *Huai-Nan-Zi*, a Han text, claims he was an apostate *Ru* (儒) ('literati' or 'erudite', a term usually denoting followers of Confucius), but nothing in the *Mo-Zi* supports this. A more likely conjecture is that he was originally an artisan, probably a carpenter. Indeed, the many references in the *Mo-Zi* to crafts, trade, work, warfare, and economic hardship suggest that Mohism emerged from a rising class of craftsmen, merchants, and soldiers that grew in size and political influence during the Warring States era.

This background distinguishes the Mohists from most early Chinese thinkers, who were typically members of privileged social groups, such as royal advisors or ritual priests. As Graham observes (1989: 34), the Mohists' low social origins may help to explain why they make no use of the paradigmatic moral contrast of Confucian ethics, that between the *jun-zi* (君子 noble man) and *xiao-ren* (小人 petty man), terms that originally referred to social rank ('prince' versus 'commoner'). For the Mohists, as for the Confucians, virtuous role models play an important part in moral education and practical reasoning. But instead of the *jun-zi*, their exemplary person is the *ren-ren* (仁人 humane man or man of good will), a term with no class connotation.

The Mohists' social origins may have partly motivated features of their thought, such as their focus on objective ethical standards. For the elite *Ru* (Confucians), the traditional ritual etiquette of the fading Zhou dynasty provided grounds for consensus in ethical judgments. The Mohists identified less with the Zhou high culture and

so looked for other guidelines. Their social background may also help explain why they treated material welfare and social order as basic goods. As craftsmen, traders, and soldiers, the Mohists could be expected to value practical utility, and they spoke for the lower classes likely to die or starve because of economic mismanagement or military recklessness.

As their movement flourished in the fourth and third centuries BCE, the Mohists branched into a number of groups, each led by a *ju-zi* (鉅子) or grand master. Two early sources, the *Han-Fei-Zi* (book 50, ca 233 BCE or later) and the *Zhuang-Zi* (book 33, perhaps second century BCE), mention a total of six groups of Mohists, who apparently quarreled among themselves over the details of Mohist doctrine. Another early text, the *Lü-Shi-Chun-Qiu* (ca 239 BCE), mentions at least three other Mohist *ju-zi*. These Mohist groups appear to have been disciplined organizations devoted to moral and practical education, political advocacy, government service, and in some cases military service. They were renowned for their austere lifestyle and fervent commitment to their ethical principles.

The Warring States era was marked by frequent warfare, the larger states each aspiring to conquer its neighbors and unify the empire. Committed to maintaining a peaceful social order and concerned for the welfare of all, the Mohists condemned unprovoked military aggression. Yet they also took a strong defense force to be essential to the welfare of society. Some Mohist groups became specialists in defensive warfare, traveling from place to place assisting cities and states under threat of attack.

3 The Mohist Texts

The *Mo-Zi* is a diverse compilation of polemical essays, short dialogues, anecdotes about Mo Zi, and compact philosophical discussions. The different parts of the anthology probably range in date from the fifth to the third century BCE. Even single 'chapters' or 'books' (originally scrolls) tend to contain materials of diverse origin, some of which may have been assembled in stages. No part of the anthology purports to be from the hand of Mo Zi himself.

According to a table of contents compiled during or before the Han Dynasty, the *Mo-Zi* originally consisted of seventy-one books, of which eighteen are now lost. The seventy-one books fall into five groups, likely of different origin. The first group comprises seven books containing mainly short summaries of Mohist doctrines from perhaps the mid-to-late third century BCE. The second group is the core of the anthology, comprising ten 'triads', or sets of three essays expounding the ten main doctrines of the Mohist school, plus two books criticizing the Ru (Confucians). Of these thirty-two texts, eight are lost. This block of texts probably contains the earliest parts of the corpus, perhaps from Mo Zi's lifetime. The essays appear to be of varied date and origin, however. Several theories have been proposed to explain why there are three essays on each doctrine (Fraser 2002). One plausible explanation is that the essays represent different stages in the development of Mohist thought. It is also possible that some represent the views of different factions of the Mohist movement.

The third group are known as the later Mohist texts or the Mohist *Dialectics* (*Mo-Bian* 墨辯). These include two books of short 'canons' (*jing* 經); two of longer 'explanations' (*shuo* 說) of the canons; a brief but rich text on argumentation and logic; and a collection of fragments from two or more lost essays on ethics and semantics. These books are probably of a later date than most of the doctrinal essays. A reasonable conjecture is that they were written during the first half of the third century BCE.

The fourth group comprises five books that we might call the 'Mohist Analects', which contain short conversations and debates between Mo Zi and various disciples or opponents. The books reflect a flourishing Mohist organization that trains students, recommends them for government posts, and dispatches them on military assignments. They likely date from the middle to late decades of the fourth century BCE. Many of the conversations they present are probably fictional.

The final block of twenty-one books is devoted to military engineering and tactics for defending cities during sieges. Ten of these books are lost. Many are organized as replies by Mo Zi to questions from a leading disciple, Qin Gu Li (禽滑釐), who is referred to as 'Master Qin'. This suggests the texts may have been composed by Qin's followers.

All but three of the essays in the triads begin with an incipit 'Our Master Mo Zi states …'. Since much of the content is attributed to Mo Zi in this way, readers have traditionally taken the essays as reports of his speech and treated him as their author. However, most writing in pre-Han China was anonymous, and it was common for writers to place their own ideas in the mouth of a venerated teacher or worthy. The triad essays probably present and develop theses or ideas first set forth by Mo Zi. But the essays in each triad exhibit linguistic differences and sometimes present different, even incompatible, views. In some, much of the argument is presented in a narrator's voice, rather than attributed to Mo Zi. So it is likely that many of the statements in the texts are not Mo Zi's own, but represent developments, revisions, or new ideas introduced by his followers. Accordingly, instead of referring to the thought of 'Mo Zi', it is becoming conventional to refer to 'Mohist' doctrines, understood as a set of related but sometimes conflicting or evolving views written down by different members of the school over many years.

4 The Ten Doctrines

The Mohists themselves summarized the teachings of their school as a set of ten doctrines, organized into five pairs. The ten doctrines, which correspond to the titles of the ten triads, provide a quick synopsis of Mohist ethical and political views.

According to the doctrine of 'conforming upward' (*shang-tong* 尚同), the aim of government is to achieve a stable social, economic, and political order (*zhi* 治) by promulgating a unified conception of morality (*yi* 義). This project is carried out by encouraging everyone to 'conform upward' to the good example set by social and political superiors, rewarding those who do and punishing those who do not. Government is to be structured as a centralized, bureaucratic state led by a virtuous

monarch and managed by a hierarchy of appointed officials. 'Elevating the Worthy' (*shang-xian* 尚賢) argues that appointments should be made on the basis of competence and moral merit, without regard for candidates' social status or origin.

'Inclusive concern' (*jian-ai* 兼愛) was the Mohists' signature doctrine. To achieve social order and exemplify the virtue of *ren* (仁 humanity, goodwill), people must be inclusively concerned for each other, having as much moral concern for others' lives, families, and communities as for their own. Thus in our relations with others, we should seek mutual benefit. Almost equally famous was the doctrine of 'rejecting aggression' (*fei-gong* 非攻). Military aggression – all too common in the Mohists' time – is wrong for the same reasons that theft, robbery, and murder are: it harms others in pursuit of selfish interest, while failing to benefit Heaven, the spirits, or human society.

According to 'moderation in use' (*jie-yong* 節用), wasteful luxury and useless expenditures should be eliminated, so as to benefit society and ensure the welfare of the populace. 'Moderation in burial' (*jie-zang* 節葬) contends that, to promote social order and the economic welfare of the common people, the *ren* (humane) person avoids wasting resources on extravagant burials and prolonged mourning (a pre-Han custom staunchly defended by the Confucians).

'Heaven's intention' (*tian-zhi* 天志) is the Mohists' label for their view that Heaven (*tian*) is the noblest, wisest, moral agent, so its intention is a reliable, objective standard of what is morally right (*yi*) and must be respected. Heaven rewards those who obey its intention and punishes those who defy it; so people should strive to be humane and do what is right. 'Elucidating Ghosts' (*ming-gui* 明鬼) contends that social and moral order (*zhi*) can be advanced by encouraging belief in ghosts and spirits who reward the good and punish the wicked.

'Rejecting music' (*fei-yue* 非樂) refers to the Mohist view that the humane (*ren*) person opposes the extravagant musical entertainment and other luxuries enjoyed by rulers and high officials, since they waste resources that could be used to feed and clothe the people. The Mohists also argue for 'rejecting fatalism' (*fei-ming* 非命). By teaching that our lot in life is predestined and human effort is useless, fatalism interferes with pursuit of economic wealth, a large population, and social order – the goods that constitute the welfare of society. Fatalism is not supported by good evidence and so must be rejected.

In presenting their ideas to the ruler of a state, the Mohists would emphasize different parts of their program, depending on the circumstances:

> If the state is in disorder, expound 'elevating the worthy' and 'conforming upward'; if the state is poor, expound 'moderation in utilization' and 'moderation in funerals'; if the state overindulges in musical entertainment, expound 'rejecting music' and 'rejecting fate'; if the state is dissolute and indecorous, expound 'respecting Heaven' and 'serving ghosts'; if the state is devoted to aggression and intimidation, expound 'inclusive concern' and 'rejecting aggression.'
>
> (Book 49, 'Questions of Lu')[1]

As their ten core doctrines suggest, the Mohists saw themselves mainly as a moral, political, and religious advocacy group devoted to pursuing a morally right society and way of life, one that promotes welfare or benefit (*li* 利) and eliminates harm (*hai* 害) for all. Because of this practical orientation, their ten-doctrine program alludes only indirectly to the underlying ethical and epistemic theories that support their proposals. The next several sections will explore these theoretical underpinnings.

5 The Mohist Project

Probably the central aim of Mohist thought is to secure *zhi*, or moral, social, and political order, an intrinsic good the Mohists assume is valued by almost everyone. As they see it, a fundamental step in pursuing this aim is to unify society's moral standards, so that people agree in their value judgments, thus eliminating potential reasons for conflict. The unified moral standards cannot be arbitrary, though, for if people see that the standards do not genuinely promote order, they will defy them. So a crucial issue for the Mohists is what to take as the basis for an objectively justified moral code.

One answer, accepted by many *Ru* (erudites, Confucians) and other 'gentleman of the world' criticized by the Mohists, is the *li* (禮 ritual, ceremony), a traditional code of propriety specifying behavior appropriate for various social roles and situations. We can take the *li*, supplemented by the situational discretion (*quan* 權) of the virtuous gentleman, as a basic standard of conduct. This solution of course presupposes a basic, gentlemanly consensus about what is and is not appropriate behavior.

Mo Zi and his followers found this sort of traditionalist consensus an unconvincing moral guide. To the suggestion that tradition can serve as a moral standard, they respond by distinguishing between custom and morality, pointing out that conformity to traditional custom is not enough to ensure something is morally right. They make this point by considering the apparent challenge to moral objectivity posed by disparate cultural practices:

> Now the supporters of extravagant burials and lengthy mourning say: 'If extravagant burials and lengthy mourning are in the end not the way of the sage kings, then how do we explain why the gentlemen of the central states perform these without ceasing, hold on to them without letting go?'
>
> Our Master Mo Zi said, 'This is what's called treating habit as appropriate and custom as morally right. Formerly, east of Yue there was the country of Gai Shu. When their first son was born, they dismembered and ate him, calling this an obligation to his brothers. When their grandfather died, they carried off their grandmother and abandoned her, saying, 'One cannot live with the wife of a ghost.' These were treated as policy above and as custom below, performed without ceasing and held onto without letting go. But how can these really be the way of what is humane and right?'
>
> (Book 25, 'Moderation in Burials')

Different cultures sometimes have different, conflicting customs, not all of which can be morally right. Moral concepts such as *ren* (humanity) and *yi* (right, duty) are distinct from mere custom, as embodied in traditional *li* (ritual). That a practice is traditional or customary, as the rituals are, does not show that it is right. We need to find other, objectively justified, standards by which to unify morality.

This search for objective moral standards to guide action and reform society lies at the heart of the Mohist philosophical and political project. The master idea driving Mohist thought is that in ethics and politics, as in any other practical field, we must find and apply such standards, which the Mohists call *fa* (法 models, paradigms, standards, laws). *Fa* is among the key notions through which Mohism influenced the third-century BCE Confucian Xun Zi (荀子) and his student Han Fei (韓非), leading representative of a school of thought that became known as the *fa-jia* (法家 the School of *Fa*, often translated as 'Legalism'). A later-generation Mohist summary explains the role of *fa* this way:

> Our Master Mo Zi said, 'Those in the world who perform any task cannot work without models (*fa*) and standards. To work without models and standards, yet complete their task successfully – no one can do it. Even officers serving as generals or ministers, they all have models; even the hundred artisans performing their tasks, they too all have models. The hundred artisans form squares with the L-square, circles with the compass, straight edges with the string, vertical lines with the plumb line, [even surfaces with the level]. Whether skilled artisans or unskilled, all take these five as models. The skilled can conform to them exactly; as to the unskilled, though they cannot conform to them exactly, if they follow them in performing their tasks, they still surpass what they can do on their own. So the hundred artisans in performing their tasks all have models to measure by.
>
> 'Now for the most powerful to order the world and their deputies to order great states and yet have no models to measure by, this is to be less discriminating than the hundred artisans.'
>
> (Book 4, 'Models and Standards')

As this passage indicates, the Mohists see *fa* (models) as similar to tools used to guide and check the performance of skilled tasks, such as sawing a square corner or drawing a circle. *Fa* provide a clear standard against which we can compare things to judge whether they are correct or on the mark, just as we can use an L-square or compass to see whether something is truly square or round. They are objective, reliable, and easy to use, so that with minimal training anyone can employ them to perform a task or check the results. *Fa* are understood primarily as practical models, not principles or rules, though these too can be *fa*. They may be role models, prototypes, exemplars, or analogies, or they may be tools or measuring devices. In short, any criterion or paradigm that helps us make correct judgments or act correctly can be a *fa*.

Our primary task in governing or ordering (*zhi*) society, then, is to find reliable, objective *fa* to guide our actions, practices, and policies. As with the *li* (ritual), though,

the Mohists point out that any standard specific to our particular family, education, or community could turn out unreliable.

> So then what will be acceptable to take as a model (*fa*) for order (*zhi*)? How would it be for everyone to model themselves on their parents? Those in the world who are parents are many, but those who are *ren* (humane, good) are few; if everyone models themselves on their parents, this is modeling not-*ren*. Modeling not-*ren* – it's not acceptable to take that as a model.
>
> <div align="right">(Book 4, 'Models and Standards')</div>

Having rejected parents as a fundamental moral model, the passage next rejects teachers (or 'studies') and rulers on the same grounds: We cannot be sure that our teachers and political leaders are all *ren*. The text concludes that 'among these three, parents, teachers, and rulers, none is acceptable as a model for order'. An objective standard is needed, one that is not morally fallible in the way that any particular individual or cultural tradition might be. The Mohists propose that we can find such a standard by considering the attitudes of an ideally impartial, benevolent, and reliable moral agent: *tian* (Heaven, nature, the sky), whom they revere as a personal god.

> So then what will be acceptable to take as a model for order? Thus he said, Nothing is like modeling oneself on Heaven. Heaven's conduct is expansive and impartial; its gifts are generous and demand no repayment; its brightness endures without fading. Thus the sage kings model themselves on it.
>
> <div align="right">(Book 4, 'Models and Standards')</div>

This notion of taking Heaven as a moral role model leads the Mohists to develop an ethical code based on equal, impartial concern for the welfare of all. Ideally, this code is to be practiced and promulgated by the state, as the Mohists explain in their political theory.

6 Political Thought

The Mohists' account of the origin and justification of the state is grounded in a distinctive state of nature theory. Like Hobbes, the Mohists depict society without government as descending into violent disorder. But unlike Hobbes, they see this disorder as the result of normative disagreement, not individuals' untrammeled pursuit of their own interests. People's primary motivation is not self-interest, but their diverse conceptions of *yi* (morality, right). Individuals all tend to do what they think is right; the problem is that everyone disagrees about what that is. The plurality of moral standards leads to resentment, belligerence, wasted resources, and social chaos.

> Our Master Mo Zi stated, In antiquity when people first arose, before there were punishments and government, probably the saying was, 'People have different moralities (*yi*).' Thus for one person, there was one morality; for two

people, two moralities; for ten people, ten moralities – the more people, the more things they called 'moral.' Thus people deemed their own morality right and on that basis deemed others' morality wrong, and so in interaction they deemed each other wrong. Thus, within the family, fathers and sons, elder and younger brothers resented each other and split up, unable to get along harmoniously. The people of the world all injured each other with water, fire, and poison. It reached the point that, having surplus strength, they were unable to work for each other; they would let surplus resources rot rather than share them and conceal good *dao* (ways) rather than teach them. The disorder in the world was like that among the birds and beasts.

(Book 11, 'Conforming Upward')

The root of this chaos, the Mohists contend, is the absence of political leaders who will unify moral standards, thus putting an end to contention and animosity. The solution is to install a wise, virtuous sovereign – the 'Son of Heaven' – who will establish a unified moral code and bring order (*zhi*) to society.

It was understood that the world was in disorder because the people lacked political leaders to unify the world's morality. So the most worthy, wise, and intelligent man in the world was selected, established as the Son of Heaven, and commissioned to unify the world's morality (*yi*).

(Book 12, 'Conforming Upward')

The texts do not explain how the ruler is selected, nor how people manage to agree on who qualifies as the most worthy candidate. No social contract is depicted. Instead, the sovereign's legitimacy seems to rest on an implicit consensus that social order is a paramount value and can be achieved only by establishing a centralized state that will impose unified moral norms. For the Mohists, then, the central task of the state is moral education, training everyone to reliably conform to the same moral standards in judgment and action. This is the basis for such other aims as national defense, public security, economic management, and social welfare. The state's responsibility for moral education is a distinctive theme of classical Chinese thought, prominent in both Mohism and Confucianism and much criticized in Daoist texts.

To assist him in unifying the world's morality, the sovereign appoints three dukes, who help divide the world into myriad states and appoint a lord for each. The lords in turn appoint other officials down to the level of the district, village, or clan head. Then the work of unifying moral norms begins. The main technique used is that of model emulation. People are ordered to 'conform upward' to the moral judgments articulated by their political superiors and not to ally together below. This moral guidance is reinforced by social and behavioral incentives. Those who conform and do good are praised, rewarded, and promoted; those who do not are censured and punished. For the Mohists, rewards and punishments are justified instrumentally, by their role in encouraging good behavior and discouraging bad.

The government officials in place, the Son of Heaven issued an order to the people of the world, saying: 'Hearing of good and bad, in all cases report it to those above you. What those above deem right (*shi* 是), all must deem right; what they deem not (*fei* 非), all must deem not. If those above commit an error, then criticize them; if those below do good, then recommend them. Conform upward and do not ally together below. This is what those above will reward and those below will praise.

'On the other hand, hearing of good and bad but not reporting it to those above; not deeming right what those above deem right; not deeming "not" what those above deem "not"; not criticizing those above when they commit an error; not recommending those below when they do good; allying below and not conforming upward – this is what those above will punish and the people will condemn.'

(Book 11, 'Conforming Upward')

Officials on each level of the hierarchy repeat a variant of these instructions to their subordinates, urging them to model themselves on the good example set by the judgments, speech, and conduct of the leader on the next level up. Moral wisdom and a virtuous character are thus crucial qualifications for political office.

At the top of the hierarchy, the lords of states lead their people to emulate the Son of Heaven, who brings order to all the world. The Son of Heaven is still fallible, however, and so cannot be the highest moral paragon. Above him is Heaven (*tian*), to whose intention he and society as a whole must conform. In the Mohist theory, politics is not distinct from ethics and religion, and unlike in Hobbes, the sovereign's power is not absolute, for he must answer to independent moral standards.

If the people of the world all conform upward to the Son of Heaven, but do not conform upward to Heaven, then calamity will still not cease. Now if whirlwinds and bitter rain come again and again, this is how Heaven punishes the people for not conforming upward to Heaven.

(Book 11, 'Conforming Upward')

A distinctive feature of the political theory is that, as we might expect from the Mohists' conception of *fa* (models), moral education is seen as similar to teaching a practical skill. It is mainly a process of emulating the judgments and conduct of moral exemplars, specifically how they distinguish right (*shi*) from not right (*fei*) and act accordingly. Superiors teach chiefly by setting an example and then praising or correcting the learner's performance. Sometimes they may set forth *fa* in the form of explicit rules or principles, as when the Son of Heaven issues the original order for everyone to conform upward. But primarily moral education is seen as a kind of skill training aimed at developing virtues, reliable dispositions to distinguish right from wrong correctly in speech and action.

The theory of 'conforming upward' argues for a centralized state with a hier-archical, tightly organized bureaucracy. The other prominent Mohist political doctrine,

'elevating the worthy', contends that to ensure the state's success in promoting the welfare of all, appointments to the bureaucracy must be based on ethical merit and professional ability. Talented commoners should be considered for office, not only the elite. This doctrine is partly a response to new administrative challenges arising from population growth, economic expansion, and interstate military rivalry, which could be met only by moving beyond the traditional feudal system and developing a class of professional government officials. It is also a reaction against nepotism and incompetence and an appeal for equality of opportunity for commoners, such as the Mohists themselves.

'Elevating the worthy' is an important complement to the Mohist moral education and incentive system. To work, the system must be perceived as promoting and rewarding the genuinely worthy and offering a fair opportunity for advancement to all. Otherwise, those below will see little reason to cooperate. The doctrine also reflects the Mohists' communitarian orientation. Their defense of equality of opportunity does not rest on the individualist view that, other things being equal, people deserve to be treated similarly. The argument is that the state is best served by employing the best qualified candidates, no matter what their background.

The communitarian nature of Mohist thought can be hard for us to fully recognize, accustomed as we are to the individualism of contemporary liberal democratic societies. As is the case with most early Chinese political thinkers, the Mohists' fundamental concern is with what is best for society, not individuals' rights or well-being. What is right for the individual is determined by whatever *dao* (道 way) is right for society. It is assumed that if a moral code is right for society, then individuals committed to morality will conform to it. The Mohists see no distinction between public and private morality, between values that everyone must share in order to maintain a stable society and those about which individuals can reasonably disagree without disrupting social order. An individual's legitimate interests are identified by his social role. Like the Confucians, the Mohists see individuals as largely constituted by the hierarchical, relational, social roles they occupy, such as ruler or subject, father or son, elder or younger brother, male or female, elder or youth, and member of a clan or community.

This communitarian focus is a major contrast with Western social contract theories and utilitarian political theory. Utilitarians and social contract theorists (excepting perhaps Rousseau) typically treat individuals' interests as primary. The state is justified because it promotes individuals' welfare or interests better than any alternative. For the Mohists, the state is instrumentally justified because social order (*zhi*) is an intrinsic good, recognized by all, and government is needed to achieve it. The 'Heaven's intention' triad hints at an intrinsic justification as well, one on which the Mohist political system can be considered part of the content of *zhi* (order) and *yi* (morality).

Mohist political theory, with its emphasis on centralized, all-encompassing control, probably strongly influenced other early political thinkers, such as the Confucian Xun Zi and his two most famous students, the Legalist thinker Han Fei and the statesman Li Si (李斯), political architect of the Qin empire. Yet the Mohists' brand

of authoritarianism did not lack critics. Their conception of social order (*zhi*), along with those of Xun Zi and Han Fei, epitomizes views that are sharply attacked in Daoist texts such as the *Dao-De-Jing* (道德經) and *Zhuang-Zi* (莊子). In sharp contrast to the Mohists, parts of the Zhuang-Zi imply a relatively liberal political stance.

7 Ethics

In the course of arguing for their social and political doctrines, the Mohists present a sophisticated ethical theory that is a form of indirect consequentialism. Its leading principle – or, as they think of it, *fa* (model) – is that people should have an attitude of 'inclusive concern' (*jian-ai* 兼愛) toward others and in their interactions seek to benefit (*li*) each other. In this way, we promote the welfare of all.

The Mohist ethical theory is similar to rule consequentialism, but is probably better characterized as practice consequentialism or, even more appropriately, '*dao* (way) consequentialism'. For the Mohists, as for other classical Chinese thinkers, the salient unit of human activity and the focus of ethical reflection is not the individual act but *dao*, a general notion referring to a way, style, or pattern of life or of performing some activity. *Dao* may include practices, institutions, and traditions, along with rules, techniques, styles, and attitudes. As a way of life, *dao* also includes dispositions, and thus virtues, so Mohist consequentialism incorporates some features of motive consequentialism.

The Mohists' primary concern is thus not to find a theory by which to judge whether particular acts are right or wrong, so much as to identify 'the *dao* (way) of the humane (*ren*) and right (*yi*)'. In their eyes, the defining feature of this *dao* is that it promotes the welfare or benefit (*li*) of all and helps prevent harm to all. 'The benefit of all the world' (*tian-xia-zhi-li* 天下之利) is the general standard of moral permissibility.

> The task of the humane is surely to seek to promote the benefit of all the world and eliminate harm to all the world, and to take this as a standard (*fa*) in the world. Does something benefit people? Then do it. Does it not benefit people? Then stop.
>
> (Book 32, 'Rejecting Music')

Some passages in the texts go beyond the simple distinction between what does and does not benefit people to recognize differences in degree. The extent to which something is right or wrong is determined by the degree to which it benefits or harms others: 'The more one injures another, the greater his inhumanity, and the more severe the crime' (book 17, 'Rejecting Aggression').

The Mohists do not attempt to ground ethical value in a single, fundamental good or principle. Unlike the classical utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, their theory does not take individual happiness as a fundamental good. Instead, it is based on a loose notion of human welfare comprising a plurality of goods, many of them public or social. The general notion of 'benefit' (*li*) comprises mainly three sorts of goods: material prosperity, a large population or family, and sociopolitical order (*zhi*). These

provide concrete moral criteria. Practices and institutions that tend to advance them are humane and right; those that do not are malicious and wrong – as, the Mohists contend, extravagant burials are:

> Could it be that, supposing we follow their statements, adopt their plan, and have extravagant burials and lengthy mourning, this can really enrich the poor, multiply the few, secure those in danger, and order what is in disorder? Then this is humane (*ren*), right (*yi*), and the task of the filial son, and in planning for others, one cannot but encourage it. The humane will promote it throughout the world, establish it and make the people praise it, and never abandon it.
>
> Or could it be that, supposing we follow their statements, adopt their plan, and have extravagant burials and lengthy mourning, this can not really enrich the poor, multiply the few, secure those in danger, and order what is in disorder? Then this is not humane, not right, and not the task of the filial son, and in planning for others, one cannot but discourage it. The humane will seek to eliminate it from the world, abandon it and make people condemn it, and never perform it.
>
> (Book 25, 'Moderation in Burials')

Consequentialist arguments based on one or more of these goods are used to justify nine of the ten core Mohist doctrines, including the fundamental moral principles of inclusive concern and rejecting aggression. The tenth doctrine, 'Heaven's intention' (to be discussed below), provides a justification for the consequentialist theory itself.

Of the three goods, the Mohists' concept of 'order' (*zhi*) calls for special attention. This is a complex good comprising a variety of conditions the Mohists probably regard as constitutive of the good social life. From passages in which they characterize order and its opposite, *luan* (亂, disorder, turmoil), we find that it includes at least the following conditions: people at all levels of society follow a unified set of moral norms, and incentives and disincentives are administered accordingly by fair, virtuous leaders; social harmony and public security prevail; community members habitually offer assistance to each other and provide charity to the needy; and people manifest the virtues associated with their social roles – rulers are benevolent, their subjects loyal, fathers kind, sons filial, and brothers loving and respectful.

The Mohists' characterization of benefit or welfare supports several interesting inferences. First, though they frequently state that the humane man should promote the welfare of all, their ethical theory does not call for selfless altruism. What they describe amounts mainly to respect for others' lives, property, families, and political sovereignty, and to reciprocal assistance and cooperation among community members. Altruistic charity is called for only in cases of special hardship.

Second, the prominence of the virtues associated with core social roles indicates that the Mohists, like the Confucians, attach great importance to certain paradigmatic social relationships. An orderly society will be one in which these relationships flourish. Intriguingly, though, what the texts cite as constituents of *zhi* (order) are not

the relationships themselves, but the role-related virtues manifested by the persons bound together in them: benevolence, loyalty, kindness, filial devotion, and brotherly love and respect. Apparently, the Mohists see flourishing social relationships as partly constituted by the practice of these role-specific virtues. Accordingly, since these virtues are among the intrinsic goods of their ethical theory, the Mohists think it is intrinsically morally admirable and right to be an appropriately virtuous brother, son, father, subject, or ruler.

Despite their commitment to inclusive moral concern, then, the Mohists evidently agree with the common-sense view that we should devote more care to those with whom we have close personal relationships. To be a kind father or filial son, for example, we must give our children or parents preferential treatment over others. 'The benefit of all the world' includes good family relationships, and such relationships require loving emotions toward and special treatment for family members. Mencius, among others, was wrong in thinking that Mohist ethics undermines normal human relationships, because it entails treating one's own father no differently from anyone else's (*Mencius* 3B: 9). Mohist ethics does not advocate that we treat everyone alike, but only that we have moral concern for all.

The later Mohist *Dialectics* develops the ethical theory in a new way, explicating benefit (*li*) and harm (*hai*) in terms of the happiness or dislike that results from obtaining something. It is unclear whether this account is intended as an extension of the earlier theory or a replacement for it. 'Benefit' (*li*) remains the basic standard of what is moral or right (*yi*). But now 'benefit is what one obtains and thereby is happy', while 'harm is what one obtains and dislikes' (Graham 2003: A26–7).[2] Interestingly, happiness here is not a fundamental good, but a criterion by which to identify goods that constitute benefit. So the Mohist theory avoids Butler's well-known criticism of hedonistic theories of value, that they treat happiness as a basic good when actually it is only a byproduct of achieving other, more fundamental goods.

The new account of benefit has the potential both to undermine certain earlier Mohist doctrines and to rectify a potential weakness in the original ethical theory. One defect of Mohist ethics is its narrow conception of human welfare, which comprises little more than material wealth and peaceful, harmonious social relations. (This minimalist conception of welfare is understandable, given the harsh social and economic conditions in which the Mohists lived.) Little attention is devoted to individual happiness or fulfillment, to a conception of well-rounded human excellence, or to aesthetic and cultural goods. With the new, psychological criterion of benefit, one could argue for incorporating a broader set of goods into the Mohist ethical theory, thereby making it more plausible. At the same time, though, an internal critic could apply the new criterion of benefit to argue against Mohist views on music and frugality, for instance, by contending that musical shows and non-essential spending sometimes produce a great deal of happiness.

7.1 Inclusive concern

The ethical guideline for which the Mohists are most well known is *jian-ai*, sometimes translated as 'universal love', but probably better rendered as 'inclusive concern'. *Jian* (兼 together, jointly) has the connotation of including everyone together within a whole. Like the English 'care', *ai* (愛 love, care, concern) is ambiguous, since it may refer to a range of attitudes, from strong affection to detached concern. In Mohist texts the word typically seems to refer to a dispassionate moral concern for the welfare of its object.

In its complete form, the Mohist doctrine is that people are to follow the *fa* (model) of 'inclusive concern for each other and in interaction benefiting each other' (*jian-xiang-ai, jiao-xiang-li* 兼相愛、交相利). As the full phrase suggests, the Mohists see the psychological attitude of concern and the beneficial conduct that results from it as two sides of a coin. They may even hold that the presence of one is a sufficient condition for the other. Yet an important difference between the two is indicated by the adverbs in the two parts of the slogan. Concern is all-inclusive, encompassing everyone, whereas beneficial behavior is directed only at those we actually interact with. In practice, then, the slogan does not call for self-sacrificing altruism, but mainly for us to cultivate an attitude of concern for others that motivates us to interact with them in a reciprocally beneficial way.

The Mohists give two main arguments to justify inclusive concern: one, to be discussed below, is that it is Heaven's intention; the other is by appeal to its good consequences. 'Harm to the world' arises from excluding other people, families, cities, and states from the scope of one's concern. This exclusion leads to injury, crime, violence, and failure to practice the virtues associated with the core social relations. Were people to practice inclusive concern, on the other hand, they would eliminate these harms and promote the welfare of all. Or so argues the following passage, which interprets inclusive concern as the attitude of being for – that is, concerned for the sake of – others' interests just as we are for our own.

> So then what is the reason that inclusion can replace exclusion? He said, 'If people were for others' states as though for their state, then who would raise up his state to attack others' states? One would be for others as though for oneself. If people were for others' cities as though for their city, then who would raise up his city to assault others' cities? One would be for others as though for oneself. If people were for others' families as though for their family, then who would raise up his family to disrupt others' families? One would be for others as though for oneself. So then, states and cities not attacking each other, and people and families not disrupting and injuring each other, is this harm to the world? Or is it benefit to the world? We must say: It is benefit to the world.
>
> 'Now suppose we try to trace the source from which these many benefits arise. From what do these arise? Do these arise from despising and hurting others? Then we must say: Not so. We must say: They arise from caring for

and benefiting others. If we distinguish and name caring for and benefiting others in the world, is it "exclusion"? Or is it "inclusion"? Then we must say: inclusion. So then, this inclusion of each other really gives rise to great benefit to the world!' Thus our Master Mo Zi said, 'Inclusion is right (*shi*).'

(Book 16, 'Inclusive Concern')

The Mohists contrast inclusive concern with an attitude they call 'exclusion' (*bie* 別, separating off as 'other'). This attitude is not, as sometimes thought, one of distinguishing differences of degree in our concern for others, according to the closeness of their relation to us. Rather, *bie* refers to 'despising and hurting others', excluding them from moral consideration altogether. So the Mohists' case is for inclusive concern as against complete disregard for others. We can grant that their arguments establish that *bie*, or excluding others from all concern, is morally wrong, and that inclusive concern has good consequences and is thus humane and permissible. But if their aim is to show that inclusive concern is obligatory, then they pose a false dilemma. A different ethical guideline might promote everyone's welfare equally or more effectively without the stringent demand that we all be as concerned for others' interests as for our own. Alternatively, we could say that the Mohists' arguments justify inclusive concern only in the weak sense that we are obliged to be morally concerned for everyone to at least some degree.

A further problem is that the texts typically describe inclusive concern in terms that seem to entail *equal* concern for all. The Classical Chinese word *jian* (兼) generally connotes all-inclusiveness, not equality. But the passage quoted above, for instance, depicts inclusive concern as being concerned 'for others as though for oneself'. Another text says that it is 'to regard others' states as though regarding one's state, regard others' families as though regarding one's family, and regard others' persons as though regarding one's person' (book 15). We might take these statements to refer only to recognizing that everyone's welfare has equal moral weight, rather than to feeling equal concern for all. This is probably the most sympathetic way to interpret the Mohist doctrine. But the *Dialectics* seems to state explicitly that inclusive concern is having equal concern for all (Graham 2003: EC 13), and our degree of concern for others is to be the same as that for ourselves (EC 10).

If inclusive concern is interpreted as equal concern, the doctrine is probably untenable. Most people are inclined to feel sympathy for others, including strangers, and thus to be concerned about their welfare. But it would take a heroic feat of social engineering to get us all to be as concerned about strangers as we are about ourselves and those close to us. Even with the proviso that we need benefit only those with whom we actually interact, equal concern for others seems an impractically high demand.

Interestingly, then, the Mohists' examples of the practice of *jian ai* suggest that it is not especially demanding. It is mainly a matter of performing our social roles virtuously, thus contributing to the welfare of our family and community; helping friends and neighbors in need; assisting the elderly, solitary, and orphaned, who have no family to care for them; and avoiding harm to others. Extensive self-sacrifice or

altruism is not required. The only people expected to work on behalf of everyone are government leaders, who are responsible for benefiting all of their subjects. There seems to be a gap between the equal concern we are to have for everyone and the unequal treatment we give them, caring mainly for our own and helping others only in cases of special need.

The *Dialectics* makes this gap explicit, in a doctrine called 'relation ordering' (*lun-lie* 倫列) (EC 9). We are to have equal concern for everyone, but to benefit some more and others less, depending on their relation to us. Those we are to benefit more include the sovereign, government officers, elders, relatives, and ourselves. The justification for this system is presumably that the welfare of all is best secured by having everyone treat others in a way appropriate to their social relation, doing more for closer relations and less for distant. For instance, elderly parents are generally more effectually cared for by their own adult children, who love them and understand their needs, than by strangers.

The Mohists are thus committed to a split between the level of treatment we provide others and our degree of moral concern for them. A critic might argue that this split seems counterintuitive. It would be more natural – and fully consistent with the arguments for inclusive care – to allow the degree of concern to vary with the closeness of the relationship, provided that even distant strangers be the object of at least a minimal degree of concern. This approach would probably allow individuals to perform their roles as government official, subject, parent, child, and so forth more effectually. The doctrine of 'relation ordering' could be modified to allow different degrees of concern on the same consequentialist grounds that justify different degrees of beneficial treatment: doing so would better promote the welfare of all. Alternatively, the Mohists could recast the demand for equal moral concern as a doctrine about moral justification. Institutions and practices are to be justified on the grounds that they reflect an equal concern for the welfare of all. Training members of society to think of justification in this way would probably be feasible, and indeed may correspond largely to what we think of as normal moral education.

7.2 Inclusive concern and motivation

As political and moral reformers, the Mohists aimed to persuade everyone in society to adopt and practice the doctrine of inclusive concern. They thought this task was feasible, because they took the doctrine to be consistent with most people's existing motives and values: in their view, people largely already have the motivation needed to put inclusive concern into practice. Most people tend to be committed to doing what they think is right, and they tend to desire the basic goods that follow from the practice of inclusive concern. Besides their own self-interest, people care about the interests of their family and community. So they already possess strong moral motivation and some degree of empathy for others. What is needed to get them to act morally is mainly education and normative arguments, which will teach them to identify and do what is right. Through education, they can easily learn to guide their actions by the *fa* (model) of 'regarding others as though regarding oneself', which will strengthen the habit of acting out of sympathy for others' interests.

Not everyone shared this optimistic view of moral motivation, of course. The Mohists were especially concerned to answer critics who claimed that inclusive concern is too difficult to put into practice. They replied that it is far less difficult than other things rulers have led people to do in the past, such as sacrificing their lives, limiting their diets, and wearing rough clothing (books 15 and 16). Inclusive concern seems difficult, they claimed, only because people fail to recognize that it is to their own long-term benefit. If institutions are set up to encourage cooperation and prevent abuse, then 'within a generation' people can be led to practice it, for several reasons. First, people naturally tend to emulate admired and respected leaders, so if rulers encourage inclusive concern, people will tend to go along. Second, rulers can institute rewards and punishments to make practicing it beneficial to everyone's short-term self-interest. Third, people naturally tend to reciprocate good treatment, so being concerned for and benefiting others is in our long-term self-interest as well.

Moreover, we know inclusive concern is feasible, the Mohists claim, because the sage–kings practiced it. The texts cite purportedly historical examples to show that the sage–kings ruled fairly and impartially, performed public works projects that benefited everyone, brought peace to society, and ensured that the needy were provided for. To the worry that inclusive concern conflicts with well-justified pre-existing motives, such as caring for the welfare of one's family, the Mohists argue that these very reasons should motivate us to choose it as a moral code, since the practice of inclusive concern by everyone is likely to help ensure the welfare of those near and dear to us.

The Mohists' case here is reasonably persuasive, provided we keep in mind that they are focusing on habits and social practices that yield reciprocal benefit, not the psychological attitude of equal concern for all. As we have seen, the practical demands of inclusive concern are not especially high.

7.3 The role of Heaven

The Mohists justify their consequentialist ethics by appeal to the intention of Heaven (*tian*), a nature deity they believe provides an objective criterion of morality. Among their reasons for obeying Heaven's intention are gratitude for its gifts, fear of punishment, and their belief that it is the noblest, wisest moral agent in the cosmos. Here we will examine this third – philosophically more interesting– rationale, setting aside Heaven's role as an object of religious worship and enforcer of moral order.

The crux of the appeal to Heaven in Mohist ethics is that as the highest, wisest moral agent, Heaven unfailingly sets an example of the correct moral norms. Its intentions are reliably humane and right. To obtain an objective criterion of moral right and wrong, then, we need only observe its actions and notice the norms it is committed to. Heaven's intention can serve as a fundamental ethical *fa* (model, standard), one that is clear and easy for anyone to apply, just as a craftsman's measuring tools are: 'Thus our Master Mo Zi's having Heaven's intention, to give an analogy, is no different from a wheelwright's having a compass or a carpenter's having a square' (book 27, 'Heaven's Intention'). With Heaven's intention as a standard, distinguishing humane (*ren*) from inhumane conduct is as easy as distinguishing black from white (*ibid.*).

According to the Mohists, Heaven's actions show that it wants people to care for and benefit each other (book 4). It desires that morality (*yi*) prevail, and thus it desires life, wealth, and social order for people (book 26). Indeed, it desires all of the goods posited by Mohist ethics, including peace and security, social cooperation, economic sufficiency, and the exercise of the virtues associated with the core social roles (book 27). In short, Heaven itself endorses the goods the Mohists take as criteria for what is morally right. Their ethical theory is thus correct, they believe, because it captures the ethical norms followed by Heaven itself.

This justificatory appeal to Heaven has sparked a debate over whether Mohist ethics might fundamentally be a form of divine command theory (see e.g. Soles 1999; Duda 2001). Without question, a few passages in the *Mo-Zi* urge people to conform to moral norms specifically because doing so is Heaven's will. But the texts never analyze or define the notion of right (*yi*) in such terms. All four of the books about Heaven's intention assign it an epistemic role, as a test or criterion by which to distinguish right from wrong. They argue that it can be taken as a model (*fa*) or guideline (*jing* 經) of moral rightness (*yi*). The point is that Heaven's intention can be used to identify what is right, not that what is right is right because Heaven so dictates. Moreover, the Mohists give moral reasons to support taking Heaven's intention as a moral criterion. They argue that Heaven is a guide to what is humane and right because it is noble, wise, impartial, and benevolent. Their arguments apply evaluative notions of humaneness, right, and order (*zhi*) that are independent of their concept of Heaven.

Unlike the triads, the ethical theory of the *Dialectics* does not appeal to the doctrine of Heaven's intention. It is unclear whether or why the writers abandoned the doctrine. They may have rejected it because of the epistemological and conceptual difficulties facing the claim that Heaven supports a particular set of ethical norms. One isolated passage seems to grant that Heaven's intention cannot provide moral standards, because the doctrine can be twisted by a criminal to claim that, since Heaven gave him a criminal disposition, it is right for him to be selfish (Graham 2003: EC 1). However, the passage is so obscure and corrupt that any interpretation is tentative. The writers might have omitted the doctrine simply because the *Dialectics* treats only the content of the ethical theory and not its foundations. Another late book, 'Models and Standards' (Book 4), continues to appeal to Heaven as an ethical model, though it is likely the work of a different branch of the school.

8 Epistemology

Like other early Chinese thinkers, the Mohists conceived of knowledge in practical terms. Having knowledge is not a matter of knowing a fact, but of being able to act correctly – most fundamentally, of being able to draw distinctions properly. The conception of knowledge the Mohists use most commonly is a form of recognition, or *knowledge-of*. Knowledge-of is manifested as the practical ability to correctly distinguish the referent of a word, or 'name' (*ming* 名), that denotes the object of knowledge. To qualify as having knowledge of *x*, an agent must be able to reliably pick out the sorts of things denoted by the word '*x*'. The object of knowledge is typically an

object or event, denoted by a term, rather than a fact, expressed by a sentence. Factual knowledge is explained in terms of the ability to distinguish various kinds (*lei* 類) of things: to know that *a* is *F* is to know to distinguish *a* as the kind of thing denoted by the term '*F*'.

The Mohists' primary conception of knowledge is illustrated in the following passage, which emphasizes that knowledge lies not in the ability to make correct statements, but in the ability to select the things denoted by a word, or 'name'.

> Our Master Mo Zi said, 'Now the blind say, "What's bright is white, and what's dark is black." Even the clear-sighted have no basis for changing this statement. But place white and black together and make a blind man select among them, and he cannot know them. So as to my saying the blind do not know white and black, it's not on the basis of their naming, it's on the basis of their selecting.'
>
> <div align="right">(Book 47, 'Valuing Duty')</div>

The passage depicts the blind as possessing what we would call factual knowledge about the colors white and black. Yet it claims that the blind do *not* qualify as 'knowing white and black', because they are unable to identify them in practice. The criterion of knowledge is not the ability to make correct statements – as when the blind 'name the names "white" and "black" in the same way' as the sighted – but the ability to 'distinguish the things' denoted by these words (book 19, 'Rejecting Aggression').

The later Mohists eventually came to categorize knowledge more finely, recognizing that knowing how to use names – as the blind do – is itself a form of knowledge. The *Dialectics* presents a fourfold categorization of knowledge that recognizes knowledge of names, knowledge of things, knowledge of relations between names and things, and knowledge of how to act. Knowledge is still conceived of as a type of ability, however, and factual knowledge is treated only indirectly, as the ability to classify things in the proper way. Perceptual knowledge is characterized as the ability to *describe* (*mao* 貌) something encountered, probably by applying a term to it. Discursive understanding is explained as the ability to sort (*lun* 論) or classify things into kinds. Such understanding corresponds functionally to factual or propositional knowledge, in that it will typically be expressed in statements of the form 'A is B' – such as 'Oxen are animals' – which express facts. But the Mohists' explanation is that such a statement manifests the ability to sort or distinguish oxen as falling within the kind *animal*.

The Mohist conception of knowledge has no element corresponding to the justification component in the traditional Western analysis of knowledge as justified true belief. Instead, they treat knowledge as the ability to reliably draw distinctions correctly – in their conceptual scheme, roughly the analogue of true belief formed through a reliable process. Knowledge is not merely drawing a distinction correctly in one case or another, but a reliable ability to draw distinctions correctly in a variety of cases.

> Now suppose there is a man here who, when he sees a small amount of black, he says 'Black,' but when he sees a large amount of black, he says, 'White.'

> Then surely we would take this man to not know the distinction between black and white. Or suppose that when he tastes a small amount of something bitter, he says 'Bitter,' but when he tastes a large amount of something bitter, he says, 'Sweet.' Then surely we would take this man to not know the distinction between sweet and bitter.
>
> <div align="right">(Book 17, 'Rejecting Aggression')</div>

A plausible account of the purpose of the justification component in the traditional tripartite analysis of knowledge is that it disqualifies accidentally true beliefs – beliefs that happen to be true, but are based on no good reason – from counting as knowledge. The Mohists' externalist conception of knowledge handles this issue by acknowledging only reliably correct distinction-drawing as knowledge. Fundamentally, to them knowledge is not a correspondence between mental states and the world, but an ability to perform certain skills reliably and correctly. Accordingly, cognitive error – false assertion or belief – is not explained as a failure to represent the world accurately, but as 'disorder' (*luan*) or 'confusion' (*huo* 惑) in drawing distinctions.

To evaluate an assertion as correct or not, the Mohists appeal again to their concept of *fa* (model, paradigm). To make an assertion is to draw a distinction, and to check whether we have distinguished something properly, we compare it to a relevant *fa*. We follow an analogous procedure whether one is a wheelwright distinguishing something as round or not or a philosopher distinguishing a claim as correct or not. We can also appeal to comparison with a *fa* to justify a claim. What conforms to the *fa* is 'this' (*shi*) – right or correct, the same sort of thing as the *fa* – while what does not is 'not' (*fei*) – wrong, or unlike the *fa*.

The Mohists propose three *fa* for claims or 'statements' (*yan* 言), by which 'the distinctions between "this" (*shi*, "right") and "not" (*fei*, "wrong") and benefit and harm … can be clearly known' (book 35, 'Rejecting Fatalism'). (I here discuss only the first of the three versions of the doctrine.) The three *fa* are that statements must have a 'root', a 'source', and a 'use'. The 'root' is the historical precedent provided by the deeds of the ancient sage kings, moral exemplars who reliably distinguished right from wrong correctly. The 'source' is an empirical basis in what people can see and hear. The 'use' is that, if adopted as grounds for government administration and punishment, a statement must produce benefit (*li*) for the state, clan, and people. The first two *fa* articulate views widely shared by pre-Qin thinkers. A common presupposition was that the ancient sage kings were paragons of wisdom and virtue whose practices could be taken as tried and true. Sense perception too was generally accepted as a reliable source of knowledge. The third *fa*, benefit to society, presumably was taken to be justified by Heaven's intention.

The Mohists appeal to these three criteria repeatedly in arguing for their core doctrines. When the claim at stake concerns empirical facts, as when arguing for the existence of ghosts or the nonexistence of fate, they apply all three. In other cases, only the first and third standards may be applied. In condemning elaborate musical shows, for instance, the writers contend that the sage kings did not tax the people to pay for expensive musical instruments, and that on balance, grand concerts and feasts

are not beneficial, since they waste resources that could otherwise be used to satisfy people's basic material needs. Such extravaganzas are thus *fei* (wrong).

The third *fa* is particularly remarkable, since it means the Mohists sometimes appeal to consequentialist criteria to resolve factual issues, not only ethical ones. In a notable passage in the discussion of ghosts (book 31), Mo Zi is depicted as arguing that even if ghosts do not exist, we should still behave as if they do, because this is beneficial to society (potential criminals will be deterred by fear of retribution from the ghosts). This extraordinary appeal to the third *fa* underscores the practical focus of Mohist thought. Their theoretical concern is less factual truth than the proper *dao* (way) by which to guide social and personal life. As for other early Chinese thinkers, for them the primary purpose of language and judgment is to guide action, not express truths.

9 Language and Logic

The Mohist *Dialectics* presents a naturalistic semantic theory on which referential relations between general terms and objects are explained by speakers' associating names (*ming*, words or terms) with kinds (*lei*) of similar things. As in the *Analects* of Confucius, the other parts of the *Mo-Zi*, and the *Xun-Zi*, theoretical attention focuses on the issue of applying names to things correctly, and not on the structure or truth of sentences. Unlike traditional Western theories of language, such as Lockean conceptualism, the Mohists do not explain the relation between language and the world by appeal to mental ideas or meanings that words stand for. Instead, speakers communicate by mastering practices for distinguishing the referents of names for various things. By virtue of these practices, members of the same language community know that each general term stands for all similar things of a certain kind.

All words are regarded as different types of names (*ming*). Three types of name are identified, according to the scope of their denotation (A78): 'reaching' names, such as 'thing', which 'reach to' or denote anything; 'kind' names, such as 'horse', which denote all things similar to each other in some respect; and 'personal' or 'individual' names, such as the proper noun 'Jack', which 'stop' in one thing only, the individual that bears the name. Kind names are in effect general terms. They are established by dubbing things of a certain kind by that name. Having named something 'horse', for example, we are committed to applying the same name to all similar things (A78).

Names are used to talk about various *shi* (實 stuff, things, reality). The Mohists and other early Chinese thinkers take it as a brute fact that *shi* may be similar or different in various respects, and they seek criteria by which to divide them into kinds based on these similarities and differences. Features they cite as criteria include 'shape and visual appearance' (*xing-mao* 形貌), 'residence and migration' (*ju-yun* 居運), and 'amount and number' (*liang-shu* 量數) (Graham 2003: NO 2). Whether a particular thing falls within a certain kind, and thus takes a certain name, is determined by comparing it with a *fa* (model) for that kind. The Mohists seem to have assumed that things divide into natural kinds, though they do not give an explicit defense of this view.

Language or speech (*yan*) in general consists of a series of 'bringings up' (*ju* 舉) (A32). 'Bringing up' something is explained as a way of 'modeling' or 'presenting a model for' it (*ni* 擬) (A31). The idea seems to be that names function as models, which the speaker uses to represent objects, in effect showing others what she is talking about (B53). Using a name of something is 'characterizing' (*mao*) it, just as if we drew a picture (A32). If we 'bring up' our friend as an example of a rich merchant, then we are using our friend's name to show what a rich merchant is (B53).

The Mohists' theory that 'bringing up' things is 'modeling' them can be seen as a version of the common-sense idea that words represent or signify things. But the Mohist notion of 'presenting a model' (*ni*) goes beyond this basic idea. It is part of a broader theory that language enables us to communicate by appeal to shared practices for distinguishing similar and different kinds of things. On the Mohist view, words can represent things because they show us what the thing the speaker 'brings up' is 'the same as' (*tong* 同). They show us this because we have previously learned to distinguish the kind (*lei*) of thing denoted by that word. Given this background, language tells us what something is 'like' (*ruo* 若) and thus enables us to know the thing (B70). When someone uses a word to 'bring up' something, we know that thing is 'the same' as other things denoted by that word. Hence using words is a process of 'using what the person understands to rectify what he doesn't know' (B70). The Mohists compare this to using a measuring tool. We can use a ruler to measure length because we know the length of the marks on the ruler and we see that the thing measured is the same length as one of the marks. Analogously, through language, we can use what listeners are familiar with to inform them about what they don't know. By using a name of something, we indicate that the thing is relevantly similar to the other things conventionally referred to by that name. When we say something is 'white', we are indicating it is the same color as the other things we call 'white'. By grasping the reference of each others' words in this way, we are able to 'connect thoughts' (*tong-yi* 通意) (B41) and thus communicate.

Given their semantic theory, for the Mohists an assertion is in effect a claim that something is or is not 'similar' or 'of a kind' with something else. (Their concept of similarity or sameness (*tong* 同) comprises identity, part–whole, constitution, and predication relations (A86), making it roughly the counterpart, functionally, of the verb 'to be' in European languages.) For them, then, argumentation is a process that aims to distinguish whether things are or are not similar or of the same kind, and they tend to treat all argumentation as fundamentally analogical. Accordingly, in their logical inquiries, the Mohists focus on analogical reasoning. They do not investigate formal logic or deductive inference, nor formulate an explicit notion of logical consequence. They do apply versions of the laws of excluded middle and non-contradiction, along with concepts of logical 'admissibility' (*ke* 可) and its opposite, 'perversity' (*bei* 誖), that are intertwined with the concept of logical consistency. (Logical consistency is a necessary but insufficient condition for 'admissibility'; contradiction is a sufficient but not necessary condition for 'perversity.') They also employ a rigorous system of quantifiers and conjunctions of implication. Still, none of these logical notions is addressed as an explicit topic of investigation, nor are they organized and presented in a systematic way. Discussion focuses on semantics and analogical argumentation.

The Mohists refer to the field of activity in which we support, evaluate, and argue over assertions as *bian (辯)*, a word commonly translated as 'distinction drawing', 'discriminating', or 'disputation'. In its broadest sense, *bian* covers aspects of semantics, argumentation, logic, and rhetoric. It is comparable to the Greek notion of 'dialectics', considered loosely as debate or reasoning aimed at knowledge. In its more concrete sense, it is a process of disputing whether, with respect to some name or term (*ming*), some thing is *shi* (this) or *fei* (not), part of the extension of the term or not. Any two or more things that are *shi* (this) are thereby 'the same' (*tong*) in some way. So *bian* is in effect a process of distinguishing what is or is not 'the same'.

How do we determine whether the thing at hand is *this* or not? We cite a *fa* (model) of the kind in question and try to show that the thing is or is not relevantly similar to it. The overall process of citing a model, explaining the reasons for distinguishing something as *this* or *not*, and thus achieving understanding is called 'explanation' or 'persuasion' (*shuo* 説) (A72, NO 11). 'Explanation' is the analogue, in the Chinese context, of giving an argument for a claim. However, an 'explanation' has no particular formal structure. Nor is it regarded as proving a conclusion; the Mohists develop no conception of deductive proof. It is simply the process of explaining the grounds for distinguishing something as *this* or *not*.

Besides its role in their epistemology, the theory of the three *fa* (models) epitomizes the Mohists' view of logic and argumentation. Their basic model of reasoning can be thought of as having three parts. One or more *fa* are cited by which to distinguish *this* from *not* or to guide the use of some term, such as *ren* (humane) or *yi* (morally right). Then it is indicated how some object, event, or practice does or does not match or coincide with the *fa*. Accordingly, the thing in question is then distinguished as *this* or *not*. So what we think of as the major premise in a syllogistic piece of reasoning, the Mohists probably see as citing a *fa*. What we call the minor premiss, they see as a claim that something coincides with the *fa*. What we think of as drawing a conclusion, they see as distinguishing whether or not something is the same kind of thing as the *fa*.

Judgments about whether some thing falls within a recognized kind will often be based on comparison with a limited set of exemplars. In practice, we will typically proceed by identifying a few distinctive features of a handful of representatives of the kind, a process the Mohists call 'fixing the kind' (B1). Yet things of the same kind may be dissimilar in some respects, and things of different kinds may be similar in others. So problems can arise in identifying distinguishing features and differentiating kinds. The process of drawing distinctions will always be a fallible one.

Drawing distinctions on the basis of similarities between the terms and phrases we use to talk about things can be especially misleading, the Mohists found. Observations about formally similar but semantically dissimilar phrases led them to doubt that complex linguistic structures have any fixed relation to the patterns of similarity and difference that ground their correct use. For instance, in classical Chinese, *niu-ma* (牛馬) (oxen-and-horses) and *bai-ma* (白馬) (white horse) appear to have a similar formal structure, but the first is the sum of two kinds of things, the second a portion of one kind of thing. Formal similarities in linguistic structure are thus an unreliable guide to distinguishing kinds. A major theme of the Mohists' most important text on

argumentation, the 'Small Selection' (*Mo-Zi* book 45), is that formal parallels can guide us in discriminating kinds only up to a point, because linguistic similarities may not reflect actual similarities in things. A white horse is a horse, and riding a white horse is riding a horse. But although a carriage is wood, riding a carriage is not 'riding wood' (NO 14, 15). Unlike in the 'horse' example, formal parallelism fails to yield a correct assertion.

The Mohists thus became deeply skeptical about the extent to which formal or mechanical methods could be applied in disputation. This stance probably helped turn them away from undertaking any significant study of formal logic, though of course their logical inquiries were oriented in a different direction from the start. Rather than investigating formally valid inference procedures, they were exploring ways in which syntactic operations on formally parallel, correct claims may fail to produce further parallel, correct claims. When one of a pair of formally parallel claims conflicted with what they saw as the correct kind distinctions, the Mohists would reject it on the basis of semantics, which they took to be more fundamental than syntactic form.

10 Denouement

The Mohists deserve credit for many philosophical achievements, including China's first ethical and political theories, history's earliest form of consequentialism, and an impressive, in places compelling, semantic theory and epistemology. They present what is arguably a partly correct account of linguistic communication, and their externalist epistemology provides an intriguing contrast with the internalism that has dominated the Western tradition. They make major steps toward achieving a viable account of an impartial, objectively justified moral code. One of the strengths of their ethical theory is that many of its defects could probably be remedied without abandoning the basic framework. Both their insights and their errors are of great philosophical interest.

The Mohist school never achieved a position of dominance or orthodoxy, but at its peak in the fourth and third centuries BCE, no school was more influential. This status is attested by no less an authority than Mencius, who lamented that 'the statements of Mo Di and Yang Zhu (楊朱) fill the world' (*Mencius* 3B: 9), and by the attention Xun Zi devotes to refuting Mohist economic doctrines. Though their importance is routinely slighted in Confucian-biased accounts of Chinese thought, the Mohists played a major part in articulating the theoretical framework of early Chinese episte-mology, philosophy of language, logic, political theory, and ethics. Their ideas were a crucial stimulus for Mencius, Xun Zi, the Daoists, and the Legalists, all of whom either borrowed Mohist ideas or developed their own views partly in reaction to them. Confucianism owes an unacknowledged debt to Mohism for its notion of compre-hensive moral concern, as reflected, for instance, in Mencius's doctrine of extending our natural concern for kin so that it reaches everyone.

With few exceptions, Chinese thought after the Han turned away from the Mohists' epistemological, semantic, and logical interests to focus on moral metaphysics and moral psychology, thus passing over what might have been their chief legacy. Hence Mohism is sometimes depicted as a dead-end splinter movement, unrepresentative of

the Chinese intellectual mainstream. This view is false and anachronistic, however. Much of what is plausible or intriguing in Mohist thought directly reflects concepts, assumptions, and problems of mainstream pre-Han philosophical discourse.

Following the unification of China under the Qin dynasty, the Mohist school declined, eventually vanishing altogether by the middle of the Western Han. After Confucianism won imperial favor in 136 BCE, Confucius gradually came to be venerated as China's greatest sage. Mo Zi and his school fell into neglect and obscurity, their texts largely unread. Interest in Mohism revived only in the Qing dynasty, when scholars, stimulated partly by contact with the West, went looking for untapped intellectual resources in their own tradition, particularly materials related to science and logic.

The most likely explanation for Mohism's disappearance is that the school gradually collapsed into irrelevance as a social and philosophical movement. As Graham suggests, after unification, the Mohists and other representatives of the lower social classes probably lost whatever political influence they exerted in the smaller states of the pre-Qin era (1989: 34). Political unification also made the Mohists' trademark opposition to warfare redundant. Meanwhile, by the Han Dynasty, the compelling aspects of Mohist thought were all shared with one or more of the school's rivals. Their core ethical doctrines had largely been absorbed into Confucianism, though in a modified and unsystematic way. Key features of their political philosophy were shared with many thinkers. What remained as distinctively Mohist was a package of unappealing economic and cultural views, such as their obsession with parsimony and rejection of music, which too became obsolete as the economy developed and customs changed. Compared with the classical learning and rituals of the Confucians, the speculative metaphysics of *yin-yang* thinkers, and the romantic nature mysticism of the Daoists, the Mohist school had little to attract adherents. Unwilling or unable to modify its doctrines or to develop new ones in a changing social and intellectual setting, the school faded into insignificance.

Notes

1. All translations from the Chinese are by the author.
2. Citations of the Mohist *Dialectics* are given using the numbering system in Graham 2003.

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Chapter 5
THE SCHOOL OF NAMES
Yiu-ming Fung

1 What Is the School of Names?

As indicated by many scholars of Chinese history, the pre-Qin (先秦) period was a gloomy age of chaos in politics and social order, but it was also a golden age of creativity in philosophy and humanistic thinking. Most modern historians regard the rise of various trends or streams of thought in this period as different proposals in response to the problem of political and social change. The exponents of these various trends or streams of thought have exposed vigor, original, rich, and far-reaching ideas in Chinese intellectual history. Historians in the Han (漢) dynasty have attempted to make a classification for these trends or streams of thought. The first such attempt to classify them as distinct schools was by Sima Tan (司馬談 ?–110 BCE), an official historian and thinker of the former Han and the father of Sima Qian (司馬遷 145–86 BCE) who succeeded to the position of official historian and wrote the first comprehensive history of China in the biographical style, entitled *The Record of the Grand Historian* (史記 *Shi-Ji*). In his treatise entitled 'Lun-Liu-Jia-Yao-Zhi' (論六家要指, On the Essential Ideas of the Six Schools), Sima Tan has classified the thinkers of the preceding centuries into six major schools, including the *Yin-Yang* school (陰陽家 *Yin-yang-jia*), Confucianism (儒家 *Ru-jia*), Mohism (墨家 *Mo-jia*), the school of Names (名家 *Ming-jia*), Legalism (法家 *Fa-jia*), and Daoism (道德家 *Dao-de-jia*). In regard to this classification of Sima Tan, modern philologist and historian Hu Shi (胡適) has rightly demonstrated that it should not be understood as a factual description of reality in history. Nevertheless, I think it is still significant to use this classification as a prescriptive framework to understand the similarities and differences between various thinkers of the pre-Qin China in a sensible and systematic way.

A group of thinkers was identified as the school of Names by the scholars of the former Han, but its members had been generally recognized as the school of Forms and Names (刑名之家 *Xing-ming-zhi-jia*), or as 'sophists', 'disputers', or 'dialecticians' (辯者 *Bian-zhe*) during the Warring States (戰國 *Zhan-guo*) period. According to the records in the literature of the Warring States and former Han period, this group includes such main figures as Deng Xi (鄧析), Yin Wen (尹文), Hui Shi (惠施 350–260 BCE), and Gongsun Long (公孫龍 320–250 BCE). With the exception of the partially preserved *Gong-Sun-Long-Zi* (公孫龍子), the works of the sophists have all been lost. What we

can know today about the ideas of Hui Shi and other sophists is basically preserved in Chapter 33 ('Under the Heaven' 天下 *Tian-Xia*) of *Zhuang-Zi* (莊子).

In Sima Tan's treatise on the six schools, he remarks on the scholars of the group:

> The school of Names made minute examination of trifling points in complicated and elaborate statements, which make it impossible for others to refute their ideas. They specialized in the definition of names, but lost sight of human feelings. Therefore I say: 'They lead men to a sparing use of words which makes it easy to lose the truth.' Yet to force names to express actualities, and study logical order so that there will be no error, is a task that must be investigated.[1]

Although Sima Tan's remark is as negative as those which appeared in *Zhuang-Zi* and *Xun-Zi* (荀子), he does recognize one major concern of the school as significant: how to use names or words accurately or appropriately to express actualities or reality is an important topic that deserves investigation. Some scholars of the Han dynasty thought that the sophist followed Confucius' idea of 'rectification of names' (正名 *zheng-ming*), but they developed their ideas along a track that resulted in the loss of the spirit of Confucius' original idea. I think the sophists' idea of 'rectification of names' may have originated from Confucius', but this does not imply that their idea cannot be developed out of another idea distinct from Confucius' own. As clearly explained by some modern scholars, although Confucius and the sophists both claim that names (名 *ming*) should be met with their corresponding actualities or reality (實 *shi*), their respective terms of 'names' or 'words' and 'actualities' or 'reality' are used with different reference. For Confucius, the term 'names' is used to refer to the linguistic entities assigned to relevant agents or objects and stipulated or constrained by ritual norms, whereas the term 'actualities' or 'reality' is used to designate the ethical roles which are ascribed to relevant agents or objects and required or prescribed by ritual norms. So, Confucius' idea of 'rectification of names' is a thesis about the moral obligation of an agent or object with a specific title and position in an ethical context. However, this moral approach was no longer accepted by the sophists, who preferred a cognitive approach in the sense that any name should be met with its related actuality or reality in terms of proper and objective correspondence. Since most scholars during the later period of the Warring States, or after the rise of the Han dynasty, were in favor of Confucians' moral and pragmatic approach, it may be one of the reasons why they seriously criticized the sophists' cognitive and logical approach, and identified them as cunning debaters or liars.

In his analysis, Fung Yu-lan (馮友蘭) divides the sophists' twenty-one theses (recorded in Chapter 33 of *Zhuang-Zi*) into two groups and identifies Hui Shi and Gongsun Long as the leaders of these two groups and also the representatives of two different trends or streams of thought in the school of Names.[2] He claims:

> Hui Shih's [Hui Shi's] point of view stresses particular things, and so he says: 'All things are in one way similar, in another way all different,' and

concludes by saying: 'Love all things equally; the universe is one.' Kung-sun Lung [Gongsun Long], on the other hand, lays stress on the universal, and so speaks of the 'separateness of hard and white,' and summarizes by saying: 'They are all single, which is the correct (way of) the world.' Having such opposing viewpoints, the doctrines of these two groups were completely different. When persons of the Warring States period discussed the doctrines of the Dialecticians, they usually summarized them as 'the unity of similarity and difference, and separateness of hard and white.' This was only a general way of speaking, however. Actually the Dialecticians were divided into two schools: that of the 'unity of similarity and difference,' headed by Hui Shih; and that of the 'separateness of hard and white,' headed by Kung-sun Lung.'[3]

I think the above distinction is not only significant for understanding the distinct characteristics of these two major sophists, but also suggestive for understanding both theories in comparison with the thought of the later Mohism. In contrast to these two metaphysical approaches, I think it is sensible to interpret the empirical approach of later Mohist thought as 'the separateness of similarity and difference and unity of hard and white'.

2 The Main Doctrines of the School of Names

After the period of the Warring States, almost all traditional scholars or thinkers disagreed with the sophists' ideas: they did not appreciate the latter's cognitive and logical approach, and also accused them of creating confusion in seeking truth. In contrast, modern scholars are more or less sympathetic to the sophists and appreciate their approach, considering their ideas to be philosophically interesting and to have much in common with those of their counterparts – the Western sophists. Some modern sinologists and scholars in the field of Chinese philosophy claim that most of the Chinese sophists' ideas can be identified as paradoxes. For example, Joseph Needham follows Fung Yu-lan in regarding Hui Shi's ten theses and the other sophists' twenty-one theses as paradoxes. Although Fung identifies some of the twenty-one theses as paradoxes and classifies them as belonging to Gongsun Long, he has never considered any sentence in the main text of *Gong-Sun-Long-Zi* as a paradox. On the contrary, Needham, A.C. Graham, Chad Hansen, and many other Western scholars believe that there are paradoxes in the main text. Furthermore, Hansen and Christoph Harbsmeier have even identified some of the self-referring sentences in the *Mohist Canons* (墨經) as semantic paradoxes.[4] Almost all these so-called 'paradoxes' do look like ridiculous, absurd, puzzling, surprising or counterintuitive expressions. But, in what sense they can be called 'paradoxes'? Can they be positioned within Quine's classification of paradoxes?[5] It seems to me that these questions have not yet been addressed by the scholars mentioned above.

With regard to these questions, if we look carefully at the relevant sentences in the sophists' texts, it is obvious that we cannot identify any one as a paradox of the third category of Quine's classification, which means that the truth-value of all the

so-called 'paradoxes' is not logically indeterminate just like that of the liar paradox or the set-theoretical paradox. Since Hui Shi and other sophists issued their puzzling sentences without explanation, we cannot know their intention in issuing them. In this sense, we may say that the truth-value of their sentences is not determinate. However, these sentences cannot be classified as paradoxes of the third kind (i.e. antinomy) though their truth-value has not yet been determined; for, if we know the sophists' intentions and explanations, we can be sure whether they use the sentences to make arguments and we can judge whether their arguments are valid. When we make clear these points, I think their truth-value can be ascertained. In other words, the truth-value of these sentences is not in principle indeterminate. Their truth-value is only empirical but not logically indeterminate and will be determined if we can know more about the background knowledge in future. In this sense, it is appropriate for us to say that these sentences can be recognized as either veridical or falsidical paradoxes if they are not understood as merely surprising or puzzling but embedded with a contradiction or seeming contradiction for making an indirect proof. (With regard to Quine's classification, please refer to the Appendix below.)

3 Hui Shi's Ten Theses[6]

Hui Shi was one of the famous sophists and a pioneer of the school of Names in the pre-Qin period. Some of his main theses are reported in the chapter 'Under the Heaven' of *Zhuang-Zi*. His ten theses are expressed in some sense quite counter-intuitive and look like the Western paradoxes. These ten theses can be translated as follows:[7]

(H1) The greatest has nothing beyond itself, and is called the 'Great Unit' (大 *da-yi*); the smallest has nothing within itself and is called the 'Little Unit' (小 *xiao-yi*).

(H2) That which has no thickness cannot be increased in thickness, yet in extent it may cover a thousand miles.

(H3) The Heaven is as low as the Earth; mountains are on the same level as marshes.

(H4) The Sun at noon is the Sun declining; the creature born is the creature dying.

(H5) The great similarity differs from a little similarity. This is called the 'Little Similarity-and-Difference' (小同異 *xiao-tong-yi*). All things are in one way similar, in another way all are different. This is called the 'Great Similarity-and-Difference' (大同異 *da-tong-yi*).

(H6) The south has no limit and has a limit.

(H7) I go to the state of Yue (越) today and arrived there yesterday.

(H8) Connected rings can be separated.

(H9) I know the center of the world; it is north of Yan (燕, the northernmost state) and south of Yue (越, the southernmost).

(H10) Love all things equally; the universe is one.

Among Hui Shi's ten theses, (H1) and (H5) can be understood as his philosophical definitions of the 'Great Unit' and the 'Little Unit', the 'Great Similarity-and-Difference' and the 'Little Similarity-and-Difference'. (H10) is about Hui Shi's ideas of the 'Unity of the World' and 'Universal Love', i.e. his view of the world and his attitude towards the world. All three theses give us a kind of philosophical idea which is, of course, far removed from the dictates of our common sense. But they are not paradoxes; just like many Western philosophical theses which are also far removed from our common sense and cannot be regarded as paradoxes. The other seven theses look like paradoxes, because each of them is not only surprising but also seems to be self-contradictory. But, unfortunately, Hui Shi does not provide any reasons to justify his assertions and to explain why he expresses these propositions in one but not another way. Many scholars have tried to do Hui Shi's own job for these purposes; but none of them is satisfactory. However, if we can discover some of the ideas of Hui Shi's contemporaries which are relevant or related to his theses, they may help us to understand the meaning of his expressions. As we know, the later Mohists also had a concept of 'no thickness' which seems relevant or related to Hui Shi's idea in (H2). The later Mohists define their concept as follows:[8]

> Canon A55: Thickness (厚 *hou*) is having extension.
> Explanation A55: Thickness: Only something without thickness has no extension.
> Canon A61: [Starting-]Point (端 *duan*) is the [geometric or physical] unit [or part] without thickness and in the front-most position [of a compound or whole].
> Canon A69: Adjacent [or the next] (次 *ci*) is without interval but not coinciding (相攖 *xiang-ying*).
> Explanation A69: Adjacent [or the next]: it is possible only when there is no thickness in between.

Shen Youding (沈有鼎), a modern logician from China's mainland, claims that the later Mohists' concept of 'no thickness' is used to describe a point which can be considered as a spatial or material unit and cannot be further divided, but Hui Shi's concept of 'no thickness' is used to refer not only to a point but also to a line and a plane both of which are infinitely divisible.[9] In some sense, it seems that the later Mohists hold a position similar to that of Greek philosophy's atomism whereas Hui Shi shares with Zeno the same idea of infinite divisibility. In this regard, Hui Shi can be understood as saying that a point, a line or a plane is without thickness and cannot be increased in thickness, yet in extent it may cover 1,000 miles; but for the later Mohists, 'no thickness' means 'no dimension' and only points are without thickness, so they probably agree with Hui Shi on the first but not the second sentence of (H2). Based on this comparison, if we accept the above interpretation, there will be no real contradiction in (H2). However, If Hui Shi's notion of 'no thickness' refers only to a point but not to a line or a plane, as claimed by Graham that there is no difference between the later Mohists and Hui Shi in the concept of 'no thickness',[10]

it will be false to say that 'which has no thickness [i.e. a point] cannot be increased in thickness, yet in extent it may cover a thousand miles'. Based on this interpretation, the apparent paradox can be regarded as a falsidical one which seems to include an unsuccessful *reductio ad absurdum* resulting from the confusion of the two concepts of 'no thickness'. On the other hand, if we believe that Hui Shi does have his own idea of 'no thickness' which allows the accumulation of length and breadth but excludes the accumulation in the third dimension, then (H2) cannot be considered as having a real contradiction and there will be no paradox in it. In this regard, (H2) performs the same kind of behavior as the sentence about Frederic's birthday mentioned by Quine, i.e. telling a truth in a tricky way.

The propositions (H3), (H4), (H6), (H7), (H8), and (H9) appear to involve contradiction, but none has been interpreted and elaborated by either Chinese or Western scholars as an antinomy. One of the reasons why they cannot be understood in this way may be that most antinomies involve self-referring sentences, but Hui Shi's all seem lacking in the characteristic of self-reference. Another reason may be that, if Hui Shi does share the view of relativity or perspectivism held by his Daoist friend, Zhuang Zi, it seems not plausible for him to claim a thesis without truth-value. Although he believes that people can have different views of the world and cannot prove their theses to be absolutely true, he does not consider all the different views as nonsense and their theses as indeterminate in truth-value. He may consider these theses relatively true, i.e. true from some perspective but false from some other perspective, and may regard their own metaphysical view as more sophisticated in micro-cognition and more comprehensive in macro-understanding and as higher than the view of common sense in terms of hierarchy of truth, but he does not give up truth-seeking. I think he would agree that each thesis has its truth-value based on its particular perspective though the truth-claim of each thesis is not accepted as ultimate. If I am right on this point, the truth-value of all six theses should be understood by Hui Shi as determinable. His intention in formulating the propositions may be that he wants to give some counterintuitive examples to demonstrate that we can have other truth-claims which are different from those based on common sense and coming from a physical perspective. To challenge the privileged status of the traditional viewpoint on the world may be one of the reasons why he offers his theses in such a counterintuitive way. His metaphysical speculation gives us the impression that his theses are absurd and not in accordance with people's ordinary views, but he does not choose a non-rational stand, as Zhuang Zi does, because his cognitive approach is different from Zhuang Zi's aesthetic-mystical one. So he does not intend to diminish or melt away all the distinctions made by human beings. He accepts that, in addition to his idea of the 'Great Similarity-and-Difference', there are distinctions based on the ordinary idea of the 'Little Similarity-and-Difference'. In the chapter 'Autumn Floods' (秋水 'Qiu-Shui') of *Zhuang-Zi*, Hui Shi challenges Zhuang Zi's aesthetic-cum-mystical view by questioning how he knows that the fish in the Hao (濠) river are enjoying themselves. It is obvious that he does not give up the rational approach, as Zhuang Zi does, though his theses also go beyond the physical perspective.

4 The Sophists' Twenty-One Theses

In addition to the ten theses attributed directly to Hui Shi, the chapter 'Under the Heaven' records twenty-one others made by sophists. According to Fung Yu-lan, they can be divided into two groups as follows:[11]

Group I Unity of Similarity and Difference

(S1) The egg has hair.
(S2) Ying (郢 the capital of Chu 楚) contains the whole world.
(S3) A dog may be a sheep.
(S4) The horse has eggs.
(S5) The frog has a tail.
(S6) Mountains produce mouths.
(S7) Tortoises are longer than snakes.
(S8) A white dog is black.

Group II Separateness of Hard and White

(S9) A chicken has three legs.
(S10) Fire is not hot.
(S11) Wheels do not touch the ground.
(S12) Eyes do not see.
(S13) *Zhi* (指) do not reach; things never come to the end.
(S14) T-squares are not square; compasses cannot make circles.
(S15) Chisels do not surround their handles.
(S16) The shadow of a flying bird never moves.
(S17) The rapid motion of a flying arrow consists of moments at which it is neither in motion nor at rest.
(S18) A dog is not a puppy.
(S19) A brown horse and dark ox make three.
(S20) An orphan colt has never had a mother.
(S21) If a rod one foot in length is cut every day by one half of its length, it will still have something left even after ten thousand generations.

Fung Yu-lan divides the twenty-one theses into two groups, one of which he attributes to Hui Shi and the other of which he attributes to Gongsun Long. I think his classification is arbitrary and the attribution is without evidence. Here I would like to divide these twenty-one theses into four groups.[12] Among them, I think the meaning of (S13) and (S19) (the first group) is unclear and difficult to understand. So, there is no reason for us to classify them as any kind of paradox as defined by Quine. (S8) and (S18) (the second group) expose contradiction literally; but we do not know the purpose of these self-contradictory sentences in the sophists' hands. Here I do not discuss these two groups of sentences because it seems pointless to do more work on them if we do not have any significant new input. The third group includes

fourteen sentences which are expressed with clear sense but look counterintuitive or contradictory to common sense: (S1)–(S7), (S9)–(S12), (S14)–(S15) and (S20). The last group includes (S16), (S17), and (S21) which appear similar to some of Zeno's paradoxes and are theoretically interesting. So I devote the space available to discuss this group of three propositions.

I believe that not all twenty-one theses can be interpreted as demonstrating antinomy, because they are not self-referring sentences and there is no evidence to prove that their truth-value is indeterminate. However, they can be interpreted as veridical paradoxes if we reconstruct them as successful indirect proofs, or they can be understood as falsidical ones if we demonstrate that they are unsuccessful as self-refuting arguments, or they can be identified as tricky sentences which are used by the sophists to criticize our views from common sense or the conceptual scheme behind those views. These are the only options we have for understanding them. But we cannot be sure which is right without more information from the pre-Qin texts.

Of the fourteen counterintuitive theses of the third group, I think we have some sources from later Mohism which may be helpful for interpreting (S10) and (S12). In the *Mohist Canons*, there are two paragraphs discussing the issue of perceptual knowledge:[13]

> *Canon B46* There is knowledge which does not come through the five roads (*wu-lu* 五路 the five senses). The reason for explanation is given under 'duration' (久 *jiu*).
> *Explanation B46* The knower sees by means of the eye, and the eye sees by means of fire [i.e. light], but fire does not see. If the only means for knowing duration were the five roads, it would not fit the fact. Seeing by means of the eye is like seeing by means of fire.
> *Canon B47* Fire is hot. The reason for explanation is given under 'suddenness' (頓 *dun*).
> *Explanation B47* It is the fire one calls 'hot', one does not treat the heat of the fire as belonging to oneself. It is as when one looks at the sun.

According to Shen Youding's interpretation,[14] Canon B46 and Explanation B46 appear to attack (S12) which claims that 'Eyes do not see', and Canon B47 and Explanation B47 seem to attack (S10) which claims that 'Fire is not hot'. He thinks that the view expressed in (S12) is similar to Gongsun Long's idea in his thesis of 'the separation of hard and white'. Gongsun Long asserts: 'White is seen by means of the eye which is by means of fire to see, but fire does not see. So, both fire and the eye do not see but the spirit [i.e. the mind] sees.' If the sophist of (S12) takes the same position as Gongsun Long, it seems that they both think the eye and fire (or light) are external conditions for seeing; the real seeing ability is from within, i.e. the perceptual mind. On the other hand, in Canon B46 and Explanation B46, the Later Mohists seem to reject this mental conception of 'seeing' and to maintain that the seeing sense, one of the five senses, is the seeing subject which plays a role different from fire in the sense that fire functions only as an external condition for seeing. Although they agree

that the eye, like fire, cannot be considered as a subject of knowing duration because duration is not a perceptual object, they do not accept the sophists' idea that both the eye and fire are external conditions for seeing and that they play the same role in seeing a perceptual object. If this confrontation is a historical fact and the sophists and Gongsun Long *do* share the above mental conception of 'seeing', then (S12) can be understood as a metaphysical view which is expressed in a tricky way. So, it is not a paradox in terms of Quine's definitions.

Similarly, Shen thinks that Canon B47 and Explanation B47 provide an objective conception of 'heat' to challenge the sophists' subjective one. The later Mohists assert that as a perceptual subject we do not possess the heat of fire; instead, heat is an objective property of fire. Just like looking at the Sun, the heat of the Sun is from the Sun, not in our perceptual sense. If it were in our perceptual subject, it would not give us a strong feeling of *suddenness* when we approach or touch fire. If it is right to say that the sophists are subjectivists in this regard, then (S10) should not be recognized as a paradox.

Besides (S10) and (S12), the similar contents of (S9) and (S20) are also discussed by the sophists' contemporaries. Proposition (S9) mentions that a 'chicken has three legs'. This seems strange because it is not in accord with our common sense. But it is not strange in light of an expression in the chapter 'Understanding Change' (通變論 *Tong-Bian-Lun*) of *Gong-Sun-Long-Zi*. The reason is that, when Gongsun Long says, 'To name chicken's leg, there is one; to count chicken's leg, there are two. Two plus one is thus three. To name ox or sheep's leg, there is one; to count ox or sheep's leg, there are four. Four plus one is thus five',[15] he seems to presuppose a view of two levels of world which is similar to Plato's idea of noumena and phenomena. This provides an example of demonstrating the theses 'Two does not have one (left or right)' and 'Two is not one (left or right)' which precede this paragraph. It is just like the case that a concrete *white-horse*, a particular object in the phenomenal world, emerges from the combination of a universal *white* and a universal *horse*, but when the combination process is finished, the combined particular *white-horse* would not contain its 'parent' *white* or *horse*. Similarly, a chicken usually has two legs that we can count, but its universal *leg* cannot be counted perceptually but only named intellectually. If the sophists follow Gongsun Long's two-world view, when they say that 'A chicken has three legs', it can be understood as a rhetoric variation of Gongsun Long's sentence 'Two plus one is thus three.' If I am right at this point, I think (S9) is nothing but another sentence of metaphysical speculation. It is not a paradox of any of the kinds defined in Quine' classification.

Proposition (S20) says 'An orphan colt has never had a mother.' It seems physically impossible that an animal has no mother. According to the Mohist Canon B61, 'It is possible for there not to be; but once there is, it is impossible for it to be dismissed. The reason for explanation is given under "it has been the case"', and Explanation B61, 'It is possible for there not to be. If something has happened, then it has been the case. It is impossible for there not to be', it is impossible to say that 'An orphan colt has never had a mother' if all animals must come out of their mother's body at the beginning of their life. Nevertheless, in the chapter 'Zhong-Ni' (仲尼, the first name

of Confucius) of *Lie-Zi* (列子), there seems to be a conceptual clarification of (S20). It says that, 'One who has a mother is not an orphan calf' [(∀x)(Fx→~Gx)]. In other words, although every calf or colt must be born with a mother, when a calf or colt becomes an orphan it is not one who has a mother' [(∀x)(Gx→~Fx)]. If we accept this stipulation, I think there would be no contradiction between the later Mohists' definition of 'It has been the case' (嘗然 *chang-ran*) and (S20). So, (S20) does not really violate our common sense.

I think the most interesting items of the twenty-one theses are (S16), (S17) and (S21) of the fourth group. Theses (S16) and (S17) talk about the issue of motion while (S21) discusses the problem of infinite divisibility. It seems that these three theses can be likened to some of Zeno's paradoxes. Thesis (S16) says that 'The shadow of a flying bird never moves', which looks like a contradiction if we interpret the sentence as saying that 'a moving object never moves'. But it is not really a contradiction, because it talks about the *shadow* of a moving object, not the moving object itself. Some may think that the shadow does not move because it does not have any dynamic energy. Unlike Zeno's flying arrow, the so-called *moving* shadow can neither possess inertia nor have forces acting directly on it. In other words, dynamically the shadow cannot engage in motion. It derives its apparent motion from the flying bird.[16] According to the Mohist Canon B17 and Explanation B17, 'A shadow does not shift. The reason for explanation is given under "change of happening"', and 'Where the light arrives the shadow disappears. If it exists, it would be at rest forever'. The Later Mohists provide a different explanation for the same phenomenon. The reason for the shadow's lack of motion is that it is not an independent phenomenon in terms of its existence; it is a phenomenon caused by another independent existent (i.e. the flying bird). Since something's moving presupposes the independent existence of itself, the Later Mohists seem to conclude that the shadow's moving is nothing but an illusion. If this interpretation is acceptable, (S16) should be regarded not as a paradox but rather as a plain truth.

Proposition (S17) is quite different from (S16) though they both appear to claim that motion is impossible. The sentence 'The rapid motion of a flying arrow consists of moments at which it is neither in motion nor at rest', (S17), seems to mean that 'there are temporal regions when a flying arrow is neither in motion nor not in motion'. Are there time regions when an event happens with such a contradictory state? It seems that this is also the question of Zeno's 'arrow' paradox. The only difference between them, I think, is that (S17) talks about temporal regions while the Zeno's 'arrow' paradox refers to spatial regions as described by Aristotle. The former provides a dilemma that, if there is a temporal region occupied by the flying arrow, it must not be in motion at that temporal region; on the other hand, if the arrow is flying with rapid motion, it is impossible for the arrow to be at rest. Proposition (S17) may be used as a skeptical criticism that the idea of *continuity of motion* cannot be in accord with the idea of *division of time*. It seems to me that the author of (S17) uses this example to challenge the ordinary conceptual scheme. If it is right to interpret (S17) as a variant form of Zeno's 'arrow' paradox in the sense that they provide the same kind of argument with the minor difference that the former

talks about temporal region instead of the latter's spatial region, (S17) may be the only one of the Chinese sophists' theses with a theoretical significance similar to that of the Greek sophists' paradoxes.

Thesis (S21) says: 'If a rod one foot in length is cut every day by one half of its length, it will still have something left even after ten thousand generations.' In comparison with Zeno's 'dichotomy' paradox, it also talks about the divisibility of the length of something (a rod or a race course), but unlike Zeno's paradox it does not talk about the motion within a traveling distance. In regard to the problem of infinite divisibility, the sophists seem to provide a dilemma in (S21): if each part for cutting has a definite non-zero size, then, since the rod consists of an infinite number of parts of that size for cutting, the rod itself must be infinitely long. But since all rods, of whatever size, are infinitely divisible, all rods must be of infinite length, which is plainly false. But if each part has no size, then the rod itself can only be of zero length, because even an infinite number of parts of zero size cannot add up to something of non-zero size.[17] One solution provided by some modern mathematicians is to accuse the sophists of comitting a fallacy in that the first horn of the argument is based on an incorrect intuition that the sum of an infinite number of positive quantities is infinitely large, even if each such quantity is extremely small. Some philosophers, of course, do not agree that the sophists' or Zeno's paradoxes are so easy to explain away. They think that what is involved is not exactly the same problem about the mathematical concept of infinite series and infinite divisibility; rather it is about the nature of the physical world. Here I do not want to enter into details.

In addition to the problem of infinite divisibility, there is a problem of physical possibility which I intend to discuss. This is the problem of *supertask*, i.e. how to finish the work of cutting a rod infinitely, or how to reach the end of an endless task of cutting a rod. It seems that it is not a real problem if we believe that to cut a physical object eventually has to stop at the level of the fundamental constituents of matter and therefore it is physically impossible to cut a rod infinitely. However, if we talk about the region of space occupied by the rod instead of the rod itself, it would seem that there is no problem of physical possibility in dividing the spatial region infinitely. Here I must confess that I am not sure whether this is a problem of physical possibility. If the idea of spatial region can be represented as a geometric unit and the idea of infinite divisibility of a spatial region can be interpreted as that of a mathematical series, it would not be a problem of physical possibility but a problem of logical possibility. If, on the other hand, we do not accept that the mathematical representation reflects the nature of space in the real world, we may think that the problem of physical possibility is a real problem and is still unsolved. So, to identify the status of this kind of paradox depends on which understanding is right.

If we regard it as committing the fallacy of confusing the divergent with convergent series, it can be identified as a falsidical paradox; if, on the other hand, we think it provides a self-refuting argument to reject the idea of infinite divisibility through a dilemma, it can be identified as a veridical one. No matter whether it is a successful argument based on a veridical paradox or an unsuccessful argument based on a falsidical paradox, it may be used as a tool to challenge a popular conceptual scheme

that the holder of the paradox does not accept. But I am not sure that the sophists of (S21) have this agenda behind their expression. Just like some other theses of the sophists, (S21) is expressed in the context that they want to propose an alternative view that is seemingly contradictory and different from the common view. Although it looks contradictory to the common view, they never claim that the common view is false. I think Hui Shi and other sophists have no intention to challenge the relative truth of the common view; what they want to challenge is the *one-truth theory* behind the common view. Furthermore, when they criticize the one-truth theory indirectly through their surprising or puzzling sentences, they are not criticizing the theory for its own sake; they just want to change people's attitude to the world and to guide people to accept a new view of the world which is supposed to be better for living. In this regard, I think the Chinese sophists are not so much interested in theory itself as the Western sophists are, and this may be one of the reasons why they express their propositions in the material mode of speech, lacking thinking in a formal way. If I am right on this point, I think some of the Chinese sophists' expressions may function as does the *koan* (in Japanese or *kung-an* in Chinese 公案) of Zen Buddhism, a special kind of speech-act which is used to make a perlocutionary effect through expressing a literally surprising sentence. Although each of the Chinese sophists' sentences has its distinctive literal meaning, they all share the characteristic of being counterintuitive, giving rise to surprise and puzzlement. This characteristic, I think, would have serve to provoke or persuade people to change their attitude towards the world from a common-sense perspective to a metaphysical one or from a static view to a dynamic one. This function of provocation or persuasion on the part of these sentences can be regarded as a perlocutionary force.[18]

5 Gongsun Long's Theses

Gongsun Long, another important figure of the school of Names in the pre-Qin period, was widely identified by his contemporaries as the most cunning of the sophists. He has at least four major theses which are recognized by modern scholars as paradoxes. They are as follows:

(G1) White-horse is not horse.

(G2) Opponent: [Supposing there is a hard and white stone,] is it possible to say hard, white, and stone[-shape] [i.e. that the properties of this particular object] are three?
Gongsun: No.
Opponent: Can they be two?
Gongsun: Yes.
Opponent: How?
Gongsun: When without hard [-ness] one finds what is white, this gives two.... When without white[-ness] one finds what is hard, this gives two. Seeing does not give us what is hard but only what is white, and there is

nothing hard in this. Touching does not give us what is white but only what is hard, and there is nothing white in this.

(G3) Opponent: Does two contain one?
Gongsun: Two does not contain one.
Opponent: Does two contain right?
Gongsun: Two has no right.
Opponent: Does two contain left?
Gongsun: Two has no left. …
Opponent: Can left and right together be called two?
Gongsun: They can.

(G4) There are no things (物 *wu*) [in the world] that are without *zhi* (指), but this *zhi* is not *zhi*.

Although Fung Yu-lan never used the term 'paradox' to characterize Gongsun Long's thesis 'White-horse is not horse' (G1) in the 'Discourse on White-Horse' (白馬論 'Bai-Ma-Lun'), the thesis has been widely recognized as a paradox in one way or another. For example, Needham states: 'No doubt Kungsun Lung's [Gongsun Long's] aim in stating an apparent absurdity, that a white horse was not a horse, was to attract the interest of prospective thinkers. The school of logicians [i.e. the school of Names] had a particular interest in paradox.'[19] But he provides no reason why this sentence of apparent absurdity can be classified as a paradox. Similarly, Graham, Hansen, and Harbsmeier all use 'paradox' to describe the thesis without any definition to explain their use. Hansen interprets the thesis as claiming either that the combined mass whole 'white-horse' is not identical with one of its parts (i.e., horse) or that the whole has one of its parts (i.e., non-horse).[20] Although Graham does not accept Hansen's mass-noun hypothesis, he follows his idea of part–whole relationship in seeing the thesis as a plain truth.[21] Although Harbsmeier provides some good philological evidence to reject this kind of interpretation, it is a surprise that he should still use 'paradox' to label what he considers as a trivial truth.[22]

It is obvious that the 'white-horse' thesis is not a paradox. I think it is a paradigmatic example used by Gongsun Long to rectify names from a metaphysical perspective. As I have argued elsewhere,[23] it is no reason to exclude some kind of realism as one of the possible options for understanding Gongsun Long's philosophy. Basically, Fung Yu-lan is right in using a realistic interpretation for the 'white-horse' thesis. His mistake is only that he should not regard the compound term, such as 'white-horse', as having the same ontological status as a single term, such as 'white' or 'horse'. As indicated in *Gong-Sun-Long-Zi*, the compound term 'white-horse' designates something that the world has, referring to something that exists in the phenomenal world; but the single term 'horse' refers to something which is separated from any other entity, meaning something that exists beyond the phenomenal world. Based on the premises that the mere *horse* is something without selecting any color and the *white-horse* is something having color selection, Gongsun Long concludes that the non-selection is not

identical with the selection. In the chapter 'Hard and White' (堅白論 'Jian-Bai-Lun'), he claims that the non-selection is something separated from the phenomenal world and is self-hidden (自藏 *zi-cang*) in a non-phenomenal world. One of the possible interpretations is that the *white-horse* as a particular object is different from the universal *horse* as such. In response to the question in (G2), '[Supposing there is a hard and white stone,] is it possible to say hard, white, and stone[-shape] [i.e. the properties of this particular thing] are three?', Gongsun Long gives a negative answer – but why? The reason provided by him is that 'seeing does not give us what is hard but only what is white, and there is nothing hard in this; touching does not give us what is white but only what is hard, and there is nothing white in this'. In other words, what cannot be seen is hidden from the phenomenal world and what cannot be touched is also separated from the phenomenal world. What is hidden or what is separated is a universal; it is one of the reasons why he claims that there are not three but only two phenomenal properties to be seen or touched. By using the idea of a universal–particular relationship to explain (G1) and (G2), we can make sense of both. It is obvious that they are not paradoxical expressions.

In comparison with the specific statements in (G1) and (G2), (G4) is a general description of the same issue. For Gongsun Long, the particular statement 'White-horse is not horse' can be generalized as '[Particular] thing [in the phenomenal world] is not *zhi* (指).' I think Gongsun Long's idea of *zhi* is similar to but not exactly the same as the Platonic 'Idea'. Generally speaking, for Gongsun Long, *zhi* (or the specific example, *horse*) is like Plato's universal (or *horseness*) in the sense that they both exist but not in the phenomenal world and both do not have the sense of concreteness defined by physical characteristics of phenomena; but they are different from each other in the sense that Gongsun Long's *zhi* can emerge into a phenomenal thing through its *jian* (兼 combining or joining) with other *zhi* or through its *ting* (定 specifying or fixing) into a concrete thing, while Plato's universal can be exemplified into each of the thing's instances without any meaning of emergence. In Plato's words, his Idea is absolutely transcendent and unchanged as an ontic ground which can be exemplified but cannot participate into the phenomenal world in a cosmic sense; on the other hand, Gongsun Long's *zhi* can emerge among phenomena, although before emergence it is transcendent and unchanged as a separate simple. Just like the metaphysical *dao* in Daoism, Gongsun Long's *zhi* plays a double role of ontological ground and cosmological origin; it is quite different from Plato's and other Western philosophers' metaphysics in terms of the separate role assigned to their key terms of ontic and cosmic entities respectively. In this sense, we may say that Gongsun Long has a realistic commitment in his language which is not necessarily in the Platonic sense. What (G4) ('There are no things [in the world] that are without *zhi*, but this *zhi* is not *zhi*') says is that all things are emergent from the combination of one *zhi* with another *zhi*; but the combinational thing (物 *wu*) with its components (物指 *wu-zhi*) is not identical to the separated *zhi*. Since Gongsun Long asserts in 'Discourse on *Zhi* and *Wu*' (指物論 'Zhi-Wu-Lun') that 'What I have mentioned above [= this *zhi* is not *zhi*] is not to say that "*zhi* is not *zhi*" [= a contradiction], but that "the *zhi* entering into *wu* [= *wu-zhi*] is not the separated *zhi*" [= *wu-zhi* is not *zhi*]', according to this

general statement, we can assert that 'A particular *white-horse* is not a universal *horse*' [an example of '*wu* is not *zhi*'] and 'The particular attribute *horse* in a *white-horse* is also not a universal *horse*' [an example of '*wu-zhi* is not *zhi*'].

Thesis (G3) is nothing but a formal expression of (G1). The accurate interpretation of (G3) is that the term 'two' refers to something combined from fixing two independent and separate *zhi* (one) into a compound *wu* (two). According to this interpretation, the expressions 'Two has no left [one]/right [one]' and 'Two is combined from left [one] and right [one]' can be interpreted as saying that 'The compound *wu* has no simple and unchanged *zhi* in it, though it is emerged from two unchanged *zhi* in terms of their fixing into something combined which is changeable'.

Based on the above interpretation and explanation, I conclude that Gongsun Long gives us a coherent picture of his metaphysical thinking which is grounded on a kind of two-world onto-cosmology. He can make a good sense of his theses and there is no paradoxical thinking in them.

With respect to the issue of reference in the book of *Gong-Sun-Long-Zi*, especially in 'Discourse on White-Horse', there has been no consensus in the field about the logical function of the name, what kind of reality is denoted by the name, and the mode of reference. However, some of the famous or influential interpretations based on different theoretical considerations for analyzing and explaining the issue in the 'Discourse' can be found in the literature of the field of logical thinking in ancient China. As far as I know, there are at least four representative interpretations which provide different opinions on the issue from distinct perspectives. The first is Hu Shi's 'Description-Theoretical Interpretation' which seems to be an application of Bertrand Russell's theory of definite descriptions or, more accurately, is an interpretation which is unconsciously based on the theory. The second is Fung Yu-lan's 'Realistic Interpretation', an application of the Platonic 'Idea' to the text in a quite consistent way. The third is Janusz Chmielewski's 'Set-Theoretical Interpretation', which assigns a logician status to Gongsun Long in terms of a particular notion of set theorizing. The fourth is Chad Hansen's 'Nominalistic Interpretation', which is based on the bold hypothesis of a mass noun and is considered by him as a replacement for the above three and for other kinds of abstract interpretations.[24]

With regard to the issue of reference in 'Discourse on White-Horse', the terms 'white', 'horse', and 'white-horse' are interpreted by Fung Yu-lan as names referring to the Platonic universals of whiteness, horseness and white-horseness respectively. It is obvious that his interpretation is abstract and can be identified as based on (Platonic) realism. Instead, Chmielewski considers these terms as names of *classes* or *sets*. This is also an interpretation of abstract entities, though class or set is not usually understood as a Platonic Idea. Hu Shi thinks that what the name refers to is *wu-zhi* (attribute of thing), such as shape and color; which is the attribute or property of a physical object. Since Hu does not explain the ontological status of *wu-zhi*, i.e. whether the attributes or properties are ontically independent of physical objects, it seems that we do not have enough evidence to identify his interpretation as either concrete or abstract. In comparison to these three interpretations, Hansen's nominalistic interpretation is the only clear case of the non-abstract characteristic.

His mass-noun hypothesis helps him explain away not only all the abstract references in the text but also all concrete references to physical objects, because only the names of mass-stuff can be considered under his interpretation as referring terms. Recently, there has been a constructive debate on the problem of reference in the 'Discourse on White-Horse'. In this debate, Chung-ying Cheng and Yiu-ming Fung elaborate their distinctive versions of realistic interpretation, while Bo Mou provides a conceptualistic interpretation with a collective-noun hypothesis which is different from Hansen's nominalistic interpretation, the latter being based on a mass-noun hypothesis. This debate may be understood as a continuation of the old problem in a more sophisticated form.[25]

I have examined the four kinds of interpretations elsewhere and concluded that only Fung Yu-lan's interpretation can survive if we make the necessary adjustment or revision for it.[26] Some theorists emphasize that Platonic realism has never featured elsewhere in the history of Chinese philosophy and Gongsun Long should not be an exception. However, I think, on the one hand, committing to abstract entities or entertaining one–many relationship between abstract and concrete entities in a thinker's theory or in the natural language of ancient China or any other non-Western cultures is not tantamount to accepting Platonism; on the other hand, it is implausible, if not impossible, for any mature language, whether ancient or modern, to be a language without abstract reference or without one–many relationships in its semantic structure or conceptual scheme. Appealing to the speculation that something or other never happened in non-Western cultures is not to find evidence that there is really no instance or exception.

In order to explain away all the possible instances of abstract reference, some theorists make too much effort to interpret ancient Chinese texts in an unnatural way. For example, they want to interpret *dao* (道) in *Lao-Zi* (老子) as 'guiding principle' and to explain away all the literal meaning of abstract entity by adding words into the original text or by reading the text in an artificial way. Nevertheless, Lao Zi's idea of *cosmic emergence* from *dao* to the myriad things in the natural world is not easy to reinterpret as merely meaning 'natural law' or 'spiritual guidance' based on *dao*. The one–many relationship is not to be accorded to Plato – it is embedded in the ancient Chinese language as it is also in other languages. For example, *yin* and *yang* (陰陽) as used by ancient Chinese people as a pair of abstract ideas can be applied to many concrete phenomena as instances of the pair, including female and male, night and day, death and life, and soft and strong (things). *Wu-xing* (五行, five elements, phases or agents) is another abstract scheme which can be exemplified as different things, including the five organs of the human body, the five-color scheme and the five-tastes classification. With respect to Gongsun Long's case, based on the two reasons mentioned above, I think it is difficult and unnatural to explain away the abstract references in his essays. Gongsun Long's idea of *zhi* is similar to but not exactly the same as the Platonic *Idea*. It is obvious that his two-world onto-cosmology cannot be properly explained without the commitment of abstract entities.

I think we can provide a similar interpretation to Fung Yu-lan's abstractions, and it is a new interpretation in the sense that we do not regard all (simple *and*

compound) terms as referring to an abstract entity and that we can provide arguments and philosophical explanations which are quite different from Fung's. With regard to the problem of abstract reference, I think only simple terms, such as 'white' (白 *bai*), 'horse' (馬 *ma*), 'hard' (堅 *jian*), and 'stone[-shape]' (石 *shi*), are used by Gongsun Long as referring to abstract entities; this is quite different from the view of Fung Yu-lan who treats all the terms in the 'Discourse' as names referring to Platonic universals. I regard the compound (referring) terms, such as 'white-horse' (白馬 *bai-ma*), 'yellow-horse' (黃馬 *huang-ma*), and 'hard-stone' (堅石 *jian-shi*), used by Gongsun Long as implicit expressions which have the same function as the phrases explicitly expressed in English which denote definite or indefinite individual objects. In the ancient Chinese language, for example, *bai-ma* ('white-horse') can be used in different contexts as having the same function as 'some (white-horse)', '*huang-ma*' as 'this (yellow-horse)', and '*jian-shi*' as 'that (hard-stone)'. These compound terms function like the demonstratives which refer directly to some kind of concrete object in the world. If we consider them as functioning in the same way as do Saul Kripke's rigid designators, they should not be understood as descriptions and their logical formulation should be as individual terms. According to the elaboration in my book on *Gong-Sun-Long-Zi*,[27] all formulations in descriptive form with predicate construction for the compound terms used by Gongsun Long are incapable of providing a coherent interpretation for the whole dialogue. But, if we interpret the debate between Gongsun Long and his opponent as a conflict between a use of language based on a direct theory of reference and one based on a descriptional theory of reference, the arguments provided by both sides would be understandable and can be judged as reasonable.

According to this new interpretation, which is based on the principle of charity, it is also reasonable for the opponent to say 'White horse is horse', because it is an analytic truth of the form: $(\forall x)[(Wx \cdot Hx) \rightarrow Hx]$. In other words, 'white' and 'horse' in the opponent's statement should be represented by the predicates 'W' and 'H'. However, if we formulate Gongsun Long's key words in his statement 'White-horse is not horse' by the same predicates, his statement would become wrong, i.e. analytically false. Based on the direct theory of reference, I think, Gongsun Long basically uses a referring term consistently to designate the same referent in all possible worlds if it does exist in each world. A simple term '(non-fixing) white', for example, can be understood as referring to the same simple and unchanged *zhi* in all possible worlds and cannot be regarded as referring to a class because a class of some entities in this world could be different from a class of the same kinds of entities in another possible world. Based on this consideration, I think his key words should be represented by individual letters, 'a', 'b', 'c', etc., or their referents could be understood as the value of individual variables 'x', 'y', 'z', etc. So, instead of formulating Gongsun Long's statement as '$(\forall x)[(Wx \cdot Hx) \rightarrow \sim Hx]$', we can have the form $\sim(a = b)$ which can be proved valid from his premises. Of course, Gongsun Long does not take much notice of the distinction between *use* and *mention* and thus sometimes uses words such as 'horse', 'white', and 'white-horse' not to refer to an entity but to refer to itself, i.e. to mention the name itself. However, his thesis can be proved to be valid from his premises whether 'White-horse is not horse' means 'White-horse is not the same [entity] as horse' or

'The name 'white-horse' is not [referring to] the same [thing] as the name 'horse'.' The consequence of this arrangement is that the arguments provided by both sides can be formulated in an intelligible way and nothing has to be explained away.

The following reasoning provided by Gongsun Long is another example to demonstrate this point:[28]

> Someone who seeks horse will be just as satisfied with yellow-horse or black-horse; someone who seeks white-horse will not be satisfied with yellow-horse or black-horse. Supposing that white-horse were after all horse, what they seek would be one and the same; that what they seek would be one and the same is because the white-thing would not be different from the horse. If what they seek is not different, why is it that yellow-horse or black-horse is admissible in the former case but not in the latter? Admissible and inadmissible are plainly contradictory. Therefore that yellow-horse and black-horse are one and the same in that they may answer to 'having horse' but not to 'having white-horse' is conclusive proof that white-horse is not horse.

It is obvious that the above paragraph expresses an argument which is based on *modus tollens*, including an application of 'Leibniz's Law'. The argument embedded in the paragraph can be naturally elaborated as follows:

1 If white-horse is/were horse, there would be no difference between white-horse and yellow-horse (or black-horse) in response to seeking white-horse and seeking horse.
2 There is such a difference.
3 Therefore, white-horse is not horse.

The structure of the argument can be formulated as follows:

1 $[(a = b) \rightarrow (Fa \leftrightarrow Fb)]$
2 $\sim(Fa \leftrightarrow Fb)$
3 Therefore $\sim(a = b)$

An argument with the above form is not only valid, but also sound if the two sides of the debate agree that (2) is empirically true. Since (1) is an instance of Leibniz's Law, (1) is also analytically true. Based on these two true premises, we can conclude that (3) is also true. However, if we do not formulate Gongsun Long's key terms into individual constants and interpret them as predicates, we cannot elaborate any valid argument from the above paragraph.

Elsewhere I have used first-order predicate logic to formulate and to prove all the arguments provided by both sides, but, for the purposes of this chapter, the discussion ends here.[29]

6 The Function of the Sophists' So-Called Paradoxical Expressions

Following this examination of the so-called paradoxical expressions used by the sophists, including those of Hui Shi and Gongsun Long, at least three questions need to be considered. The first question is about the classification of the sophists' theses: do they belong to one or other of the classes of paradox defined by Quine? If some theses can be recognized as paradoxes, my second question is: in comparison with the paradoxes of ancient Greece, are the Chinese theses similar to or different from them? My third question is: if they are different, what is the distinct function of the Chinese – so-called – 'paradoxes'? What are they used for?

With regard to the first question, I think it is obvious that there is no antinomy, such as Russell's set-theoretical paradox or the liar paradox, in the ancient Chinese philosophical texts. As is discussed in the Appendix, if we choose a narrow sense of 'veridical paradox', i.e. accepting that only the barber paradox but *not* the Frederic paradox can be classified as 'veridical', then most of the Chinese sophists' examples mentioned above are not veridical paradoxes. According to the analyses in the previous sections, if (H2)–(H4) and (H6)–(H9) are true, they are nothing other than truth-claims expressed in a tricky way. Theses (S9) and (S10) seem to provide some kind of metaphysical and subjectivist view, respectively, while (S20) appears to express a plain truth which does not violate common sense. The most interesting examples are those which are comparable to Zeno's paradoxes – (S16), (S17), and (S21). In comparison with Zeno's paradoxes, there is both similarity and difference between them. So, my answer to the second question is: (S21) could be interpreted as either a veridical or falsidical paradox, while (S16) looks like a plain truth. I think that (S17) holds the most theoretical interest: it seems to construct a dilemma to challenge ordinary people's common-sense view from a non-physical perspective. Just like Zeno's *arrow* paradox, which provides a philosophical view on the relation between the *continuity of motion* and the *division of space*, (S17) provides a philosophical view on the relation between the *continuity of motion* and the *division of time*. But unlike Zeno's arrow paradox, the sophists, in (S17), (S21), and other places, never claim that common sense and the views of the world and life other than their own are absolutely false. For Hui Shi and the other sophists who align themselves with him and the Daoists, the states of affairs in the world described by common sense are not illusory, but they consider that the empirical perspective is nothing but one of the views by which to see the world. To relativize all viewpoints is a strategy used by the sophists to lead people to a metaphysical vision of the world which is considered to be higher in terms of the hierarchy of truth. I think that by using their oddly expressed theses the sophists' intention is mainly not to refute but to free listeners from ordinary thinking. What they really want is to lead people to change their attitude towards the world and to promote their wisdom from a particular viewpoint to a universal vision, as Hui Shi may have done, or to transcend their views in the rational space to a Daoist or an aesthetic-cum-mystical view of the world and life. Thesis (S21) and some other theses of the sophists seem to play a role more or less akin to that of Zen's *koan*. The former is just like the latter in that the function of their expressions is basically performative:

they aim to provoke people to change their attitude towards the world and life or to transcend their mentality from operating solely on a rational level to operating at the level of an aesthetic-cum-mystical–spiritual realm. This is my answer to the third question posed above.

There is one more question which deserves consideration: why did the sophists wish to have a metaphysical viewpoint or the Daoists an aesthetic-cum-mystical standpoint? I think it needs an explanation from the perspective of intellectual history. A macro-explanation may be that most of the intellectuals in the period of the Warring States were bitterly disappointed with the political situation and social environment, and wished for a new way of life and to change the traditional view of life to an ideal one. They were not satisfied with the efforts made by the Confucians and the Mohists, who were the main representatives of revisionism in that period and before. The Daoists and most of the sophists, including Zhuang Zi's friend Hui Shi, did not believe in any of the revisionists' programmes; they desired to liberate people from what they considered an unfortunate situation. As we know from the history of humankind, if people cannot change their physical and social realities, the most plausible way for them to escape from the 'cage' is to fly into the 'air'. This is the way that the Daoists and most of the sophists chose. They wished to liberate people to an ideal place of spiritual reality which, they believe, is more real or much better than obaining the physical and social realities. It may explain in part why they chose a non-physical standpoint together with a relativist strategy.

In comparison with the Greek sophists' paradoxes, I think the Chinese sophists' theses are less theoretical and more pragmatic in terms of knowledge-seeking. Although some of the Chinese theses appear to be similar to the Greek ones, the former cannot, or do not in the main, play a role of promoting theoretical thinking in physics, mathematics or philosophy, in the way that the latter have contributed to those fields.

Unlike some of the sophists, who seem to have been in alignment with the Daoists in terms of relativism or mysticism, it is obvious that Gongsun Long and the later Mohists were much more interested in theoretical thinking. Gongsun Long constructed a realistic metaphysics which is counter to common sense; but there is no paradox in his theses (including (G1)–(G4)). Both Gongsun Long and the later Mohists really do provide thinking of theoretical significance; but their theses cannot be elaborated into a rigorous theory or systematic discourse. One of the main reasons is that these thinkers were unable to fully formalize their theses. They cannot fully use symbols, such as variables, predicates and quantifiers, to formulate the logical structure of their theses. They put too much emphasis on the surface structure of the language they use to construct their view and do not always seem to be aware that the surface structure may be misleading in understanding an argument. Although sometimes they do notice that the surface structure is misleading, what they provide is a practical solution to the problem in a particular case rather than a solution on a more general and theoretical level. It may be the reason why they choose what Rudolf Carnap calls the 'material mode of speech', instead of the 'formal mode of speech' to deal with theoretical problems.

As we know, Zhuang Zi does not consider all speech as perverse, nor all argumentative assertions as false. As a relativist, he does not need to refute all the viewpoints provided by others: what he needs to assert is that all viewpoints are not absolutely true. It seems to me that Hui Shi accepts a cognitive relativism as a strategy to lead people to change their minds from the state of exclusiveness to that of inclusiveness, while Zhuang Zi uses a relativist strategy to promote an aesthetic mysticism. Based on relativism, Hui Shi regards all viewpoints as coming from different particular perspectives and claims that the only way out of this particular mentality is to search for universal love. In this regard, Hui Shi does not have any non-rational stand though he chooses a relativist approach. On the other hand, Zhuang Zi thinks that all viewpoints are manmade, rationally constructed and subjective and thus none of them can be ascertained as absolute truth. For Zhuang Zi, only when people give up this rational mentality and transform their minds into a state of indifferent concern (無待 *wu-dai*) or enter into a state of harmony (和 *he*) can they transcend the relativist predicament. Zhuang Zi and the sophists, including Hui Shi, did interact with each other, but they are distinctive.

Appendix: Quine's Classification of Paradoxes

As we know, W.V. Quine divides paradoxes into three kinds:

1 veridical or truth-telling paradoxes;
2 falsidical paradoxes; and
3 antinomies.

Since to assume that there is a barber who shaves all and only those men in the village who do not shave themselves would deduce the absurdity that he shaves himself if and only if he does not, Bertrand Russell's barber paradox can be understood as a *reductio ad absurdum* to disprove the barber.[30] In this sense, according to Quine, we can identify this paradox as veridical, i.e., it indirectly tells the truth that there is no such barber in the village. Quine thinks that the Frederic paradox and the barber paradox are alike. His reason is this: 'The Frederic paradox is a veridical one if we take its proposition not as something about Frederic but as the abstract truth that a man can be $4n$ years old on his nth birthday. Similarly, the barber paradox is a veridical one if we take its proposition as being that no village contains such a barber.'[31] But, I think to construct a sentence to occasion mere surprise or apparent puzzlement is not sufficient to formulate a paradox: a tricky joke can produce the same effect. So, there should be a difference between the sentence about Frederic's birthday and that about the barber. The barber paradox as a veridical one shares with a falsidical paradox a characteristic that there is a real contradiction or seeming contradiction embedded in them which is used as a *reductio ad absurdum* to disprove something. In this sense, the Frederic sentence seems not qualified to be a veridical paradox because the mere surprise or apparent puzzlement occasioned by the sentence does not have the same kind of function as those of veridical or falsidical paradoxes. It just tells a plain truth in a tricky way.

Quine recognizes some of Zeno's paradoxes as belonging under the heading 'falsidical paradox'. For him, and for most mathematicians, to assert that Achilles can never overtake the tortoise is to commit the fallacy of confusing a convergent series with a divergent series. In other words, an infinite number of segments in a convergent series can add up to a finite segment, but those in a divergent series cannot. Or, from a philosophical viewpoint, some may think that Zeno confuses the concept of *physical divisibility* with that of *mathematical divisibility*, so that he cannot construct a *reductio ad absurdum* with validity to support his teacher Parmenides' monism. However, other philosophers think that Zeno may not have committed such an error, which is considered by many modern theorists as a simple mistake. On the contrary, they believe that Zeno's paradoxes provide sophisticated ideas which may challenge our preconception of the world. If we follow Quine to assert that Zeno commits a fallacy and to consider his paradoxes as some kind of invalid *reductio ad absurdum*, then these paradoxes can be identified as falsidical. If, on the other hand, we think that Zeno's paradoxes are sophisticated and well-constructed as successful arguments of indirect proof, then they should be identified as belonging to the class of veridical paradoxes. Nevertheless, whether they are falsidical or veridical, their truth-value can be ascertained. In other words, they are either false or true. Although we do not know Zeno's intention, it seems obvious that he would not intend to construct a sentence the truth-value of which is not determined.

These two kinds of paradoxes seem to expose absurdity or contradiction, but in reality they do not, because the truth-value of these paradoxes, whether veridical or falsidical, can be identified or ascertained. What cannot be identified or ascertained is the third kind that Quine calls 'antinomies'. It is the paradoxes of this kind that bring on the crises in thought, because the truth-value of the paradoxes cannot be determined and the absurdity or contradiction arising from them cannot be eliminated. In this sense, the liar paradox ('This sentence is false') and Russell's set-theoretical paradox ('The set of all sets which are not members of themselves is a member of itself') belong to this kind of 'troublemaker'.

Quine is quite optimistic that this kind of 'troublemaker' can be explained away in the long run by refuting or revising the conceptual scheme in which the paradox arises. Quine seems to claim that an antinomy can be reduced to a veridical or falsidical paradox:[32]

> A veridical paradox packs a surprise, but the surprise quickly dissipates itself as we ponder the proof. A falsidical paradox packs a surprise, but it is seen as a false alarm when we solve the underlying fallacy. An antinomy, however, packs a surprise that can be accommodated by nothing less than a repudiation of part of our conceptual heritage.

I wonder whether we can solve the problem in the liar paradox or in the set-theoretical paradox in such a natural way as we solve the problem in some of Zeno's paradoxes – by exposing a fallacy in it. If it is the case that, sooner or later, we can explain away all the antinomies, it means that all paradoxes of the third kind

can be reduced to those either of the first or the second kind, and thus their truth-value can be identified or ascertained. I am not sure that this is achievable. On the contrary, if it is the case that not all antinomies are thus reducible, it may reflect that a limitation of our formal thinking obtains right there.

To recognize a veridical paradox as including a *reductio ad absurdum* is to identify it as a self-refuting argument to disprove something; it can be expressed as the following formula:

(F1) [A→(B&~B)] /∴ ~A

Based on the absurdity that Achilles can never overtake the tortoise, Zeno seems to be able to prove that motion is impossible. If we accept Quine's view on the paradox, the formulation of this kind of falsidical paradox could be like this:

(F2) It seems that [A→(contradiction or absurdity)] and thus ~A; but after examination, it is not the case that [A→(contradiction or absurdity)] and thus ~A cannot be proved.

While a veridical paradox can be used to prove the truth of a relevant sentence, a falsidical paradox seems to do the same thing, but actually it is proved to be a fallacy on examination. Although these two kinds of paradoxes are different in their truth-values, both paradoxes' truth-value can be determined. On the other hand, an antinomy's truth-value cannot be determined. For example, if we assume that the very sentence 'This sentence is false' (L) of the liar paradox is true, 'This sentence is false' would be true and thus L is false; on the other hand, if we assume that it is false, 'This sentence is false' would be false and thus L is true. In other words, the paradox can be formulated as:

(F3) (L is true)↔(L is false)

Since L's truth-value cannot be obtained from (F3), the paradox cannot be explained away, i.e. it cannot be reduced to either a veridical or falsidical paradox.

Notes

1. This essay is included as Chapter 120 of Sima Qian's *The Record of the Grand Historian*. The English translation of the quoted paragraph is from Fung Yu-lan (1934), vol. I: 193–4.
2. Fung Yu-lan (1934), vol. I: 215.
3. Fung Yu-lan (1934), vol. I: 214–15.
4. The views of these scholars can be found in the following books: Fung Yu-lan (1934), Joseph Needham (1956), A.C. Graham (1978), and Joseph Needham (1998) (by Christoph Harbsmeier).
5. W.V. Quine divides paradoxes into three kinds: (1) veridical or truth-telling paradoxes, (2) falsidical paradoxes, and (3) antinomies. He identifies the barber paradox, some of the Zeno's paradoxes and the liar paradox as the example of each of these three kinds. See Quine 1966: 5.
6. The English translation of Hui Shi's ten theses and the other sophists' twenty-one theses is based on the following books, with my modification: Fung Yu-lan (1934), Joseph Needham (1956), A.C. Graham (1978), and Joseph Needham (1998) (by Christoph Harbsmeier).

7. Fung Yu-lan (1934), vol. I: 197–200.
8. The English translation of these paragraphs is based on Graham, with my modification: A.C. Graham (1978): 305–6, 310, 315–16.
9. Shen Youding (1992): 363.
10. A.C. Graham (1978): 305–6.
11. Fung Yu-lan (1934), vol. I: 215–17.
12. These four groups are: Group 1: (S13) and (S19); Group 2: (S8) and (S18); Group 3: (S1)–(S7), (S9)–(S12), (S14)–(S15), and (S20); and Group 4: (S16), (S17), and (S21).
13. The English translation of these paragraphs is based on the following books, with my modification: Fung Yu-lan (1934), vol. I: 252, 270, and A.C. Graham (1978): 415–17.
14. Shen Youding (1992): 305–6.
15. Here the terms 'ox' and 'sheep' are probably used by Gongsun Long as individual constants.
16. Cheng-yih Chen (1987): 8.
17. Robin Le Poidevin (2003): 103.
18. For the detailed argument on this point, see Yiu-ming Fung (2008).
19. Joseph Needham (1956): 187.
20. Chad Hansen (1983): 154, 163–4.
21. A.C. Graham (1986a): 93 and (1989): 83–4.
22. Joseph Needham (1998) (by Christoph Harbsmeier): 310.
23. Yiu-ming Fung (2007).
24. The views of these scholars can be found in the following books: Hu Shi (1922), Fung Yu-lan (1934), Januz Chmielewski (1962), and Chad Hansen (1983).
25. The constructive debate engaged in by Chung-ying Cheng, Chad Hansen, Bo Mou and Yiu-ming Fung can be found in a special issue ('Discourse on White-Horse') of the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 34.4 (December 2007).
26. A detailed discussion on these four interpretations can be seen in Yiu-ming Fung (2007).
27. Yiu-ming Fung (2000).
28. The English translation of this paragraph in 'Discourse on White-Horse' is based on Graham's, with minor revision: Graham (1986b): 125–215.
29. Yiu-ming Fung (2000).
30. The sentence 'There is someone who shaves all those and only those who don't shave themselves' can be formulated into the following:

$(\exists y)(\forall x)[(yRx) \leftrightarrow \sim(xRx)].$

This sentence can lead to a contradiction if we assume it is true. Suppose it were true, then there would have to be someone (b*) who was the mysterious barber:

$(\forall x)[(b*Rx) \leftrightarrow \sim(xRx)].$

But if the sentence holds for all things ($\forall x$), it holds for b* himself/herself. That is:

$[(b*Rb*) \leftrightarrow \sim(b*Rb*)].$

Obviously this is logically impossible. However, this contradiction cannot be followed if the sentence does not presuppose such a barber (b*). If we use Russell's *theory of definite descriptions* to deal with the sentence, no contradiction can be found. We can see that:

$(\exists y)(\forall x)\{[(yRx) \leftrightarrow \sim(xRx)] \& (y=x)\}$

is (contingently) false but not logically false (i.e. not self-contradictory). Hence, the barber paradox cannot be understood as an antinomy; it can be used only as an indirect proof of the non-existence of such a barber.
31. W.V. Quine (1966): 5.
32. W.V. Quine (1966): 11.

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Chapter 6
CLASSICAL CONFUCIANISM (II): MENG ZI AND XUN ZI

Kim-chong Chong

1 Introduction

Both Meng Zi (孟子 fourth century BCE), or Mencius as he is known in the West, and Xun Zi (荀子 third century BCE) belonged to the school of the *Ru*, or what is now generally referred to as the Confucian school. They defended and developed the ethical ideals first enunciated by Confucius (孔子 Kong Zi). This development took place against the background of the challenges provided by the school of Mo Zi (墨子) or the Mohists and others. However, Mencius and Xun Zi represent different traditions of the Confucian school, and this essay focuses on the relationship between their positions, especially regarding the status of human nature. In the popular mind, there is one statement that sums up Mencius' philosophy, namely: 'Human nature is good.' Xun Zi is said to have opposed this with the statement 'Human nature is bad.' But both statements, especially the second one, will have to be heavily qualified. Although the topic of human nature (*xing*) has been much discussed in the literature, there is still room for philosophical exploration of the different positions taken by Mencius and Xun Zi *vis-à-vis* one another. The philosophical relationship between the positions of these two thinkers is much more complex than is generally understood. Before discussing the two thinkers' positions, however, I need to say something about the relative status of Mencius and Xun Zi as traditionally perceived.

In the social and historical tradition of the Chinese, the views of Mencius have been extremely influential and have come to be regarded as representing the orthodox Confucian position. The sayings of Confucius in the *Lun-Yü* (論語 *Analects*) are short and cryptic, the contexts in which they appear are often missing, and that has left room for differing interpretations. Given this fact, how do we explain that Mencius, instead of Xun Zi, came to represent the orthodox position? In the Introduction to his translation of the *Mencius*, D.C. Lau noted that Mencius 'is without doubt second only to Confucius in importance in the Confucian tradition, a fact officially recognized in China for over a thousand years'. Further, Lau states: 'It is not an exaggeration to say

that what is called Confucianism in subsequent times contains as much of the thought of Mencius as of Confucius' (Lau 1984: ix).

Perhaps the fact that Mencius is believed to have been a disciple of Zi Si (子思), who was a grandson of Confucius, may have something to do with the orthodox position granted to Mencius. Mencius saw himself as transmitting the Confucian faith, which consisted in the mission of teaching and persuading rulers of the chaotic Warring States period to rule by the qualities of personal virtue. In the Song dynasty, Zhu Xi (朱熹) incorporated the text of the *Mencius* as one of the *Four Books* (四書 *Si-Shu*). It was from this period that the philosophy of Mencius became entrenched, while Xun Zi's philosophy was 'almost totally eclipsed'. The *Four Books* 'were read and memorized by every schoolboy in his first years at school' (Lau 1984: x). In other words, the *Four Books* came to form the core of a basic Confucian education and during the Yuan dynasty became basic texts for the civil service examinations. This continued until the early years of the twentieth century. Comparing their literary styles, Lau states: 'Mencius was probably the greatest writer amongst ancient philosophers, while Xun Zi was, at best, the possessor of an indifferent literary style. When in Tang times Han Yü raised the banner of the *gu-wen* (古文) movement,[1] he looked to Mencius as much for his superb style as for his sound philosophy' (Lau 1984: ix). This last judgment, made in the context of a comparison of Mencius with Xun Zi, implies that the latter's philosophy is (relatively) unsound. This has been the general impression of Xun Zi's philosophy, and later I examine some of the reasons that have been given for this impression.

The question of why and how Mencius, rather than Xun Zi, came to represent the orthodox position is both a sociological and a historical question, and therefore one that can be further explored. From a purely philosophical perspective, however, the supremacy of Mencius is difficult to justify. We can see this by noting that, even where the sayings of Confucius are open to interpretation, many have tended to read them in Mencian terms. For instance, we find only one remark made by Confucius in the *Lun-Yü* on human nature: 'Men are close to one another by nature. They drift apart through behavior that is constantly repeated' (*Lun-Yü*: 17.2). This has generally been taken to imply that human nature is originally good, and that people differ in the manifestation of this goodness because they have not equally developed this original quality or resource. However, nothing is actually said in the passage about whether human nature is originally good or bad, and it may even be too much to assume that Confucius was talking about the original nature of persons in *moral* terms. On the face of it, he may have meant that people share similar capacities to learn (even if this means moral learning), but that they diverge because of different effort put into practicing what they have learned. This reading would be compatible with Xun Zi's position.

The same interpretation of an original goodness has gone into the use of a term used by Confucius, namely, *zhi* (質). This appears, for instance, in the following passage: 'The gentleman has morality as his *zhi* and by observing the rites puts it into practice …' (*Lun-Yü*: 15.18). The term *zhi* is here translated by D.C. Lau as 'basic stuff'. In the Introduction to his translation, he also refers to it as a 'native substance'

(Lau 1992: xxxvi). Again, it is easy to see how this can be and indeed has been given a Mencian reading: people are born with a moral basic stuff or substance. However, *zhi* need not have any such connotation, since it can be read in other ways, such as being a *basis* or something that is basic to the character of the *jun-zi* (君子) or noble person (translated as 'gentleman' by Lau). Thus, in the above passage, Confucius could be interpreted as saying that the noble person acts on a moral basis which is instantiated in terms of behavior according to the rites. If we bear in mind that, according to Xun Zi, it is the development of ritual that allows for a refinement of character, the *basic stuff* of a person could be the result of such refinement, and it is therefore unnecessary to posit the original goodness of human nature.

Consciously or unconsciously, therefore, many commentators have given an interpretation of Confucius' sayings that reiterates the belief of Mencius about the original goodness of human nature. As we shall see, Mencius speaks of human nature in organic terms, as the germs or the sprouts of goodness that can be found in each person and that can flourish only if carefully nurtured and given the right environmental conditions. Xun Zi was critical of this view and, given the orthodox position of Mencius, his criticisms were not well received or at least were not given adequate attention. In this essay, I attempt to do justice to Xun Zi's philosophical arguments. But, first, it is necessary to describe Mencius' position.

2 Mencius

During a conversation with Mencius, his disciple Gongdu Zi (公都子) attributes to him the view that human nature is good (性善 *xing-shan*). Mencius elaborates on this by enunciating his belief that all persons possess a certain native endowment (才 *cai*), and if someone becomes bad, it is not the fault of this native endowment. This is to say that each person has a *xin* (心) or heart-mind in which reside the predispositions to feel compassion, shame, respect, right and wrong (惻隱之心 *ce-yin-zhi-xin*; 羞惡之心 *xiu-wu-zhi-xin*; 恭敬之心 *gong-jing-zhi-xin*; 是非之心 *shi-fei-zhi-xin*) (*Mencius*: 6A.6). In 2A.6, these predispositions of the heart-mind are described as the four 'germs' or 'sprouts' (四端 *si-duan*).[2] Mencius adds in 6A.6 that the four sprouts 'do not give me a luster from the outside, they are in me originally. It is only that I have not reflected upon this.' Evidently, the sprouts require the nurturance of reflective thought before they can be developed into the virtues of benevolence (or humanity), dutifulness (or righteousness), observance of the rites, and wisdom (仁, 義, 禮, 智 *ren, yi, li, zhi*). But what is the evidence for the existence of these sprouts? In a well-known passage, Mencius says:

> No man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of others … My reason … is this. Suppose a man were, all of a sudden, to see a young child on the verge of falling into a well. He would certainly be moved to compassion, not because he wanted to get in the good graces of the parents, nor because he wished to win the praise of his fellow villagers or friends, nor yet because he disliked the cry of the child. From this it can be seen that whoever is devoid

of the heart of compassion … shame … courtesy and modesty … right and wrong is not human. The heart of compassion is the [sprout] of benevolence; the heart of shame, of dutifulness; the heart of courtesy and modesty, of observance of the rites; the heart of right and wrong, of wisdom.

<div align="right">(Mencius: 2A.6)</div>

In a comment on this passage, D.C. Lau has stressed the following: the 'heart of right and wrong' is not just the disposition to distinguish theoretically between right and wrong, but at the same time brings with it approval of what is right and disapproval of what is wrong. This includes the feeling that what is right ought to be done and what is wrong ought not to be done (Lau 2000: 194). In other words, the cognition of right and wrong is not independent of the approval and disapproval, respectively, of right and wrong. This feature of Mencius' position is certainly interesting. In this regard, David Wong has made the following observation with reference to the heart of compassion. Unlike the mainstream Western ethical tradition of Hume and Kant, Mencius does not make a contrast between reason and emotion. According to Wong, the example of the child in danger of falling into a well

illustrates the characteristic intentional object of compassion. Compassion is distinguished from other sorts of emotion by certain perceived features of the situations to which it is directed. The intentional object of compassion makes salient that feature of the situation that is the suffering, actual or forthcoming, of a sentient being.

<div align="right">(Wong 1991: 32)</div>

Even if for some reason one is unable to act to save the child, the cognitive function of compassion is said, at the same time, to provide one with a reason to act to prevent suffering. Some doubt has been raised as to whether this is putting the case too strongly. Craig Ihara has asked, for instance, whether the alleged provision of a reason for action by the heart of compassion means building the concept of justification into the primitive affective responses (Ihara 1991: 48).

Perhaps there are two issues here which should be separated. One is whether Mencius distinguishes between the affections and reason. The answer is that he does not. In this regard Mencius provides a way of looking at the affections that does not oppose them to reason in the way that Kant does. For Mencius the *xin* is at the same time a reflective entity. For this reason, the word *xin* may perhaps be more appropriately referred to as the *heart-mind* instead of just the *heart*. Later I look at some examples (6A.10, 6A.15) in which the moral affective attitude of the heart-mind and its ability to reflect are closely integrated. The second issue is the exact nature of the four sprouts. It is largely agreed that Mencius does not say that they straightforwardly provide a reason to act, but rather that they constitute predispositions that need to be nurtured or developed. He laments that people lose these predispositions by not reflecting on them. The loss may also be due to inappropriate environmental conditions. (6A.7–8)

But this naturally brings up questions about the evidence for the existence of these predispositions, or primitive responses, and how they are to be understood. The example of the child in danger of falling into a well is supposed to show that each and every human being possesses the heart of compassion. But Mencius does not seem to have provided any example of the other dispositions. One possibility is that their primitive nature is such that they cannot be readily distinguished. The following example, for instance, is given by Mencius in 3A.5 as an expression of what is in the person's 'innermost heart' (中心 *zhong-xin*). Some people threw the bodies of their deceased parents into the gully. They later saw the bodies being eaten by creatures and flies, broke into a sweat, and hurried home for tools to bury them. Presumably, they instinctively felt that it was wrong to have left the bodies of their parents in the state described, and at the same time felt ashamed of themselves for having allowed this to happen. Thus, in this case, we can combine the feeling of wrongness with that of shame, although it would be inappropriate to describe this as manifesting the heart of compassion. The heart of modesty is more literally translated as 'the heart of keeping oneself back in order to make way for others' (Lau 2000: 194) and it is a Confucian virtue to give way to one's elders, especially from within the family, in many contexts.

Perhaps 'the heart of keeping oneself back in order to make way for others' and the feeling of shame and wrongness in failing to bury one's parents are primitive responses that are felt in the context of relations with members of one's family. This would be consistent with Confucius' belief that behavior within the family is the root of character (*Lun-Yü*: 1.2). Mencius does in fact argue against the Mohist doctrine of universal love by emphasizing the gradations of love, with love for family members and especially parents having first priority (3A.5). At the same time, he holds that this love should be extended (1A.7). There is some philosophical difficulty with how this extension is supposed to work, granted the priority given to love for one's parents. In his example of the child about to fall into a well, however, Mencius is saying that human beings possess a spontaneous, primitive, motivational resource that is not confined to one's parents, but extends to others as well. This example is mentioned again by Mencius in 3A.5, where he responds to the Mohist Yi Zi's (夷子) comment that the Confucians approved of the ancients for acting 'as if they were tending a new-born babe'. The implication is that the Confucians are contradicting themselves in emphasizing the priority of love for family members. Mencius replies: 'Does Yi Zi truly believe that a man loves his brother's son no more than his neighbor's new-born babe? He is singling out a special feature in a certain case: when the new-born babe crawls towards a well it is not its fault.' From the context, we understand Mencius to be saying that the motivation in saving the innocent baby is independent of any special affection that one may have for family. Thus, compassion is a motive distinct from affection for family members. In this sense, we may say that Mencius is a motivational pluralist. In other words, human beings possess more than one motivational source, and these sources may not be reducible to a single principle only. Thus, he criticized the Mohists and the Yangists (the egoistic school of 楊朱 Yang Zhu) for holding on to one motivational principle only. Referring to them, he says: 'One thing is singled out to the neglect of a hundred others' (7A.26).

Perhaps it is from this perspective of a range of motivational resources that we can make better sense of Mencius' theory of the four sprouts. His motivational pluralism is especially effective against Gao Zi (告子), who debated with Mencius on human nature (6A.1–5). To Gao Zi, human nature is morally neutral. In the debate, he resorts to an analogy with the directionless nature of water to illustrate this – it will flow in whichever direction it has been channeled. However, this moral neutrality of human nature is predicated on the belief that 'Appetite for food and sex is nature. Benevolence is internal, not external; rightness is external, not internal' (6A.2) Gao Zi seems to have believed that all there is to human nature are sensory and appetitive desires. He gives as an example of *ren* (benevolence, humanity) the love for one's own brother, as opposed to another's brother for whom one does not feel love. Thus, what he means by its being 'internal' is that it is no different from the sensory and appetitive desires – it is like a sensation that wells up within one's biological system. What constitutes *yi* (義 right or righteousness), on the other hand, is something 'external' in that it is constructed and imposed on the desires. Rightness is also external because something that is right, like paying respect, varies according to the circumstances. Mencius, through the proxy of his disciple Gongdu Zi, shows that there are absurdities in the way that Gao Zi and his disciple use the pair of terms 'internal' and 'external'. For instance, the fact that respect varies according to the circumstances does not show that it is 'external'. For, *per absurdum*, and using the same logic, it would mean that the desire to have a cold drink in summer but a warm drink in winter would mean that such a desire and its corresponding sensation are 'external' (Chong 2007). Mencius argues for a sense of 'internal' moral resources that go beyond the desires and are qualitatively and distinctly different. This is evident from several passages in the text.

In 6A.10, Mencius first gives the following two examples of choice and decision based on desires. If he has to make a choice between the delicacies of fish and bear's palm (and he cannot enjoy having both at the same time), he would settle for bear's palm. Also, there may be occasions when the desire to remain alive would be such that a person will resort to any means to stay alive. But in 6A.10 Mencius adds a third example:

> Yet there are ways of remaining alive and ways of avoiding death to which a man will not resort. In other words, there are things a man wants more than life and there are also things he loathes more than death. This is an attitude not confined to the moral man but common to all men. The moral man simply never loses it.

The kind of want or desire referred to in this third case must be different from the desire for a certain delicacy. It is also different from the desire to remain alive whatever the means required to do so. In other words, the want of not avoiding death at any cost forbids certain desires. Thus, Gao Zi's idea that the appetite for food and sex is definitive of human nature is too narrow, as it makes no distinction between human beings and other animals. Mencius is not denying that human beings share biological

motivations with other animals. However, he reminds us that human beings have other moral, motivational resources. In this regard, the heart, or heart-mind, spelled out in terms of the four sprouts, also has a reflective and autonomous function quite unlike the sensory organs. Mencius says:

> The organs of hearing and sight are unable to [reflect] and can be misled by external things. When one thing acts on another, all it does is to attract it. The organ of the heart can [reflect]. But it will find the answer only if it does [reflect]; otherwise, it will not find the answer. This is what Heaven has given me. If one makes one's stand on what is of greater importance in the first instance, what is of smaller importance cannot displace it. In this way, one cannot but be a great man.
>
> (*Mencius*: 6A.15)

The sensory organs are part of human nature. In themselves, however, they are passively attracted by or drawn toward objects. The heart-mind, on the other hand, has the ability to prioritize and to judge the moral suitability of these objects. Insofar as the virtues of *ren* and *yi* are developed from the sprouts of the heart-mind, they are, for Mencius, 'internal' in a moral sense that is essentially characteristic of human beings as distinguished from the biological functions and the sensory and appetitive desires shared with the other animals. This sense of internality involves a close integration between the affective moral dispositions and the capacity to reflect on their maintenance, since these are regarded as central to a person's heart-mind and his or her identity as a human being.

This internal moral sense is regarded as something that is given by *tian* (天 Heaven). Thus, Mencius speaks of Heaven as the source of the heart-mind's capacity to reflect (6A.15). If one fully realizes what is in one's heart-mind, one can then be said to know *xing* or human nature, and in this way, one knows and serves Heaven. Heaven endows one with moral potentialities. At same time, it provides a norm of what is properly decreed or *zheng-ming* (正命). This normative sense of what is decreed by Heaven enables one to have a steadfastness of purpose such that one would be indifferent to whether one is 'going to die young or to live to a ripe old age' (7A.1). It also contrasts with another, contingent, sense of what is *ming* (命 decreed). One should not, for instance, stand under a wall on the verge of collapse. This implies a cautious attitude to the contingency of events. However, if one dies 'after having done his best in following the Way', he would have followed what is properly decreed (7A.2). Kwong-loi Shun has described in detail the difference between what he calls the 'descriptive' (described above as 'contingent') and the 'normative' senses of *ming*, especially with reference to 7B.24 (Shun 1997: 203–5).

This belief in what is properly and normatively decreed by Heaven (*zheng ming*) reinforces Mencius' understanding of what is morally internal. The four sprouts are literally within each of our hearts-minds, and they are meant to be developed into the virtues of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. In developing the four sprouts, one is doing what has been properly decreed. As Mencius puts it: 'By retaining his heart and nurturing his

nature he is serving Heaven' (7A.1). To add to what was said earlier, there is a moral attitude here that can be described as 'internal' because it is autonomous and under one's control. As Mencius says: 'Seek and you will get it; let go and you will lose it. If this is the case, then seeking is of use to getting and what is sought is within yourself' (7A.3).

Thus, we can interpret Mencius to be stressing the potential for human relationships that are not (merely) relations of desire – for then they would not be *human* relationships. Instead, the motivational resources of the four sprouts enable those human relationships. We should not forget, however, that these are only beginnings. It is only through their development into the virtues that their distinctly human and moral worth can be fully and properly expressed. As we shall see, however, the organic structure of the four sprouts invites a tendency to think of them as sharing their structure with their fully developed moral products and it seems inevitable that, under the Mencian view, all human beings are said to possess the capacity to call on these products at will.

3 Xun Zi

Mencius' account of the heart-mind and its resources can be morally inspiring, and in fact has inspired many throughout Chinese history (Lo 2002). However, Xun Zi is critical of the account's organic assumptions. His criticism is mainly found in the 'Human Nature is Bad' (性惡 'Xing-E') chapter of the text under his name, the *Xun Zi*. The usual account of this criticism is as follows: Xun Zi asserts against Mencius that *xing* 'human nature' is bad and that goodness is a result of human artifice (偽 *wei*). Xun Zi defines *xing* as 'what cannot be learned, and what requires no application to master' (*Xun Zi*: 23.1c). In this regard, it is selfish desires and feelings like hate and envy that occur naturally. Notions of goodness and morality, on the other hand, require to be learned and mastered through cumulative effort.

Thus, there seems to be no real disagreement between the two philosophers, who are merely giving us different definitions of human nature. A.C. Graham, for instance, has argued that it is because of a 'shift' in the sense of *xing* in the 'Xing-E' chapter that, 'although its theory is as coherent in terms of its own definitions as Mencius' in terms of his, [it] never quite makes contact with the Mencian theory which it criticizes, as other scholars have noticed …' (Graham 1986: 56). Elsewhere, Graham says that Xun Zi's argument against Mencius is 'always a little off target' (Graham 1989: 246). D.C. Lau, in the Introduction to his translation of *Mencius*, comments on Xun Zi's definition of human nature as follows:

> In order for a characteristic to count as part of the nature of a thing, it must be inseparable from that thing, impossible to learn to do or to get to do better through application. An example would be the ability of the eye to see. This can be considered part of the nature of the eye, because it cannot be separated from the eye. An eye that cannot see is not, properly speaking, an eye at all. Further, seeing is not something we can learn and we do not improve our

ability to see through application. … We can see that Mencius and Xun Zi took a very different line in the matter of the definition of a thing. Mencius was looking for what is distinctive while Xun Zi was looking for what forms an inseparable part of it.

<div align="right">(Lau 1984: xx)</div>

Contrary to both Graham and Lau, Xun Zi does more than simply provide a different definition of *xing*. And, in fact, the analogy of the eye just mentioned is not used by Xun Zi to illustrate his own definition of *xing*. It is used, instead, as part of an argument against the organic and biological construal of human nature that Mencius presupposes.

Let me first make the following observations about Mencius' account of human nature. As we have seen, the account puts forward a claim for motivational pluralism and the moral relationships that human beings are capable of. In this respect, it is persuasive, especially when posed against the moral monism of the Mohists and the Yangists, as well as the narrow confines of biological desires in Gao Zi's account. This persuasiveness, however, is predicated more on metaphorical and rhetorical analogies of what human beings are capable of, rather than on argument in support of the theory of the heart-mind and the existence of the four sprouts.

Given the lack or paucity of argumentative support, it is not surprising that there are difficulties with this theory. One difficulty is how the example of the child about to fall into a well is supposed to be evidence for the theory. What exactly is the nature of the predisposition that is supposedly revealed when one happens on such a scene? Is it a predisposition to feel in a certain way or is it the feeling itself? The problem may be expressed in terms that are relevant to my discussion of Xun Zi. On the one hand, the four sprouts are said to be merely beginnings that need to be developed before they can be effective. On the other hand, Mencius also speaks of them as if they are fully developed moral resources that can be summoned at will. In other words, there is a tendency to conflate the *predispositions* with the *developed motivations* and reasons to act under circumstances that call for the appropriate moral action. For instance, Mencius informs King Xuan of Qi (齊宣王) that being a true king requires the practice of compassionate government. This is both a capacity (可以 *ke-yi*) and an ability (能 *neng*) that all persons have, and King Xuan's failure to act compassionately is simply his not doing so (不為 *bu-wei*) (*Mencius* 1A.7).

This problem is compounded by Mencius' use of organic and biological analogies to illustrate the moral resources. In the same conversation with King Xuan, Mencius likens his not benefiting the people to his not lifting a feather and not using his eyes. In other words, King Xuan's problem is that he is simply not doing what he is able (能 *neng*) to do. This ability is something that he organically possesses. We see Xun Zi querying the validity of this organic analogy as follows:

Now it belongs to the inborn nature of man that the eye is able to see and the ear to hear. The ability to see clearly cannot be separated from the eye, nor the ability to hear acutely from the ear. It is quite impossible to learn to be clear-sighted or keen of hearing. Mencius said:

<div align="center">197</div>

Now, the nature of man is good, so the cause [of evil] is that all men lose or destroy their original nature.

I say that portraying man's inborn nature like this transgresses the truth. Now, it is man's nature that, as soon as he is born, he begins to depart from his original simplicity and his childhood naiveté so that of necessity they are lost or destroyed. ... Those who say man's inborn nature is good admire what does not depart from his original simplicity and think beneficial what is not separated from his childhood naiveté. They treat these admirable qualities and the good that is in man's heart and thoughts as though they were inseparably linked to his inborn nature, just as seeing clearly is to the eye and hearing acutely is to the ear. Thus, inborn nature they say is 'like the clear sight of the eye and the acute hearing of the ear'.

(*Xun Zi*: 23.1d)

According to Xun Zi, Mencius assumes that goodness is inseparable from the heart-mind, in the way that eyesight is inseparable from the eye. By referring to this analogy, Xun Zi throws doubt on the idea of goodness as an organic resource (even if it is not fully developed). And in saying that, the moment one is born, one loses whatever 'original simplicity' there may have been, he is deflating the whole idea of there being any organic moral beginnings. At the same time, Xun Zi traces the idea of an original goodness to the belief in a morally pristine state at birth.

The points just made are expanded in relation to an assumption about the organic structure of moral goodness. The inseparability of eyesight from the eye also means that sight and eye are part of one and the same structure. Similarly, for Mencius, there would be no separation of structure between the heart-mind and its moral resources. Interestingly, this assumption is revealed when contemporary critics argue against Xun Zi that, in asserting that ritual and moral principles are created, he must in fact be committed to the idea that human nature is good. Thus, according to Graham, Xun Zi considers that man 'has the equipment by which he may become capable of benevolence and duty ... without noticing that ... this amounts to admitting that human nature is good' (1986: 56–7). Similarly, Lau remarks that, given Xun Zi's belief that morality is an invention, there 'is no reason why we should not extend the name human nature to cover the capacity of invention possessed by the mind which is part of it' (2000: 208). According to these critics, there is a difficulty in saying that morality is invented, since the very process of inventing morality *must* arise from some innate moral propensity. Xun Zi anticipated this criticism, however, and offered a reply:

Someone may ask: 'If man's nature is evil, how then are ritual principles and moral duty created?' The reply is that as a general rule ritual principles and moral duty are born of the acquired nature of the sage and are not the product of anything inherent in man's inborn nature. Thus, when the potter shapes the clay to create the vessel, this is the acquired nature of the potter and not the product of anything inherent in his nature.

(*Xun Zi*: 23.2a)

And later, a similar point is made:

> An inquirer says: Ritual principles, morality, accumulated effort, and acquired abilities are part of man's nature, which is why the sages were able to produce them. The reply is that this is not so. The potter molds clay to make an earthenware dish, but how could the dish be regarded as part of the potter's inborn nature? … The sage's relation to ritual principles is just like that of the potter molding his clay. This being so, how could ritual principles, morality, accumulated effort, and acquired abilities be part of man's original nature?
>
> (*Xun Zi* 23.4a)

In other words, Xun Zi argues that people do not assume that, before an object can be produced, its structure must have already been innately present in the producer. As such, it should also not be assumed that the processes, rules, and structures of ritual principles must already have been innately present before they can be produced.

This point is related to another important distinction that Xun Zi makes between *capacity* and *ability*. Xun Zi states that 'they are far from being the same, and it is clear that they are not interchangeable'. Thus, for Xun Zi, although everyone may have the capacity to be a sage, not everyone is able to. This contrasts with Mencius' belief that everyone has the ability to be a sage insofar as they have the capacity. But how are we to make sense of the distinction? It could, for instance, be interpreted to mean that although someone may have a certain capacity he or she might not succeed in manifesting this as an *ability* to do something. However, this interpretation can be accommodated by Mencius in terms of the lack of appropriate circumstances that would allow for this manifestation. Thus, it could be claimed that what prevents the capacity from being manifested as an ability is the interference of inappropriate circumstances or the absence of appropriate circumstances. Xun Zi's analogy of the potter, however, preempts this move by denying the assumption of a structural similarity between an innate capacity and its manifestation as an ability. As Xun Zi sees it, ritual and moral ability need not be structurally predetermined by some innate capacity.

Mencius' organic metaphor of the sprout of compassion encourages the idea that one is already compassionate, as he alleges in the case of King Xuan. Thus, his theory tends to slide between the idea that one has the beginnings of compassion and the possession of compassion itself. What encourages this tendency is the assumption of a structural similarity between the sprout and the fully grown plant. However, Xun Zi's potter analogy is aimed precisely at that assumption. It argues that ritual principles and morality are constituted products with structures different from the original capacities that may have given rise to them. Insofar as they have different structures, they cannot be said to have been inborn.

The capacity–ability distinction expands on this argument. In this regard, Xun Zi several times emphasizes what may be referred to as some kind of *species ability*. This is *yi* (義) – in this case, understood by Xun Zi to mean the ability to make social distinctions and to institute and apply ritual principles that constitute the general structure

of society and social relations. Note that John Knoblock's (1990: 9.16a) translation of *yi* as 'a sense of morality and justice' may have misleading Mencian connotations. Instead, the species ability of *yi* would involve language and associated ritual practices that empower human beings in ways that go beyond the strength possessed by other animal species. It also allows for relations that are qualitatively different from the biological relations and pecking order that other animals, too, recognize. Xun Zi refers, for example, to the *qin* (親) or affection between father and son (5.4). The word implies not just closeness and affection, but the relation of filial piety between father and son and all the ritual behavior thereby constituted, including the duties and obligations governing the relationship. Similarly, in the same passage, it is said that, although other animals recognize sexual differences, they lack *nan-nü-zhi-bie* (男女之別) or 'distinction between man and woman'. In other words, for human beings as a species, the differences between progenitor and offspring and between the sexes are not simply biological, but are socially constitutive. In this regard, it may be illuminating to read the term *wei* (偽) as 'constitutive activity' even though it has been translated as 'human artifice' (Lau 2000: 198), or 'conscious exertion' (Knoblock 1994: 23.1a).

As I have described it, Xun Zi's argument against Mencius is much more complex than has hitherto been recognized. So far, however, we seem to have merely a negative, critical argument. Does Xun Zi have a positive position of his own? In the rest of this essay, I indicate certain directions to pave the way for a more positive exploration of Xun Zi's philosophy.

In contrast to Mencius and others before him, Xun Zi rejected the belief that there is a moral Heaven. The idea of *tian* (Heaven) for Xun Zi was largely one of 'Nature' – the constant operations of natural events such as the four seasons. Following Knoblock, I use the capital 'N' to distinguish it from 'nature' or *xing* (Knoblock 1994: 3). As we have seen, Mencius speaks of Heaven as the source of the heart-mind and the realization of its moral potentialities means knowing and serving Heaven. Thus, Heaven endows one with moral potentialities, and provides a norm of what is properly decreed. For Xun Zi, however, Heaven–Nature is morally neutral. Human beings should try to avoid catastrophes by discerning patterns of Nature and acting in accordance with those patterns in their agricultural activities. Social and political affairs, however, are governed largely by ritual principles. In this regard, the *dao* or 'Way' has been worked out by the sages in terms of those principles, and they constitute 'markers':

> Those who govern the people mark out the Way, but if the markers are not clear, then the people will fall into disorder. Ritual principles are such markers. To condemn ritual principles is to blind the world; to blind the world is to produce the greatest of disorders. Hence, if nothing is left unclear about the Way, if the inner and outer have different markers, and if light and dark have regularity, the pitfalls that cause the people to drown can thereby be eliminated.
>
> (*Xun Zi* 17.11)

The provision of markers in terms of ritual principles will be aligned to certain human capacities and needs, some of which I shall indicate later. But given that the moral resources of human beings are not endowed by Heaven, there is no moral essence to speak of. As already mentioned, historically, Xun Zi's statement 'Human nature is bad' has been regarded as the opposite of Mencius' claim 'Human nature is good'. For Mencius, since this goodness is endowed by Heaven, it must be an inherent good. Given Xun Zi's opposition to Mencius, it has seemed natural to many to take him to mean that human nature is inherently bad. However, this is a mistake. In fact, Mencius' way of thinking about human nature remains deeply entrenched if we take Xun Zi to believe it is inherently bad. We have seen above how this has given rise to the misconceived criticism of Xun Zi, that morality and goodness cannot be created if human beings are inherently bad.

It should be emphasized that Xun Zi's critique of Mencius is aimed at undermining the whole idea of looking at *xing* in an inherent or essential sense. I refer to this sense of human nature as an *essentialist* sense. A.C. Graham has given us a definition of what this means with reference to Mencius. Mencius uses the term *qing* (情) in response to his disciple Gongdu Zi's question about what he means by man's *xing* being good: 'As far as what is genuinely in him is concerned (乃若其情 *nai-ruo-qi-qing*), a man is capable of becoming good. That is what I mean by good. As for his becoming bad, that is not the fault of his native endowment' (*Mencius* 6A.6). Referring to this passage, Graham gives the following philosophical definition of *qing*: 'The *qing* of X is what makes it a genuine X, what every X has and without which it would not be an X; in this usage *qing* is surprisingly close to the Aristotelian "essence"' (Graham 1986: 33). In other words, there is some essential characteristic of X that authenticates it as X, makes it what it is. And that characteristic is 'essential' in the sense that each and every member of the class X necessarily possesses it. Thus, an entity that lacks this characteristic is not X, and cannot be named, 'X'.

We can see how this essentialist mode of thinking about human nature indeed applies to Mencius (even though Graham's claim about the closeness to the Aristotelian notion of *essence* calls for some discussion). For Mencius, the resource of goodness in terms of the four sprouts is inborn. Possession of this moral resource is essential to a human being in the way just discussed. That this is indeed the way Mencius characterizes the human being (人 *ren*) can be seen in the example of the child about to fall into a well. After mentioning the example, he enumerates each of the four sprouts of the heart-mind and says that whoever is devoid of any of them is not a human being (非人也 *fei-ren-ye*). Thus, for Mencius, the possession of all of the four sprouts is *the* distinguishing feature of each and every person *qua* human being. As he says in 4B.19, 'Slight is the difference between man and the brutes. The common man loses this distinguishing feature, while the gentleman retains it.' Consistent with this way of regarding the distinguishing feature of a human being, Mencius would say of someone who fails to express any sign of the sprouts of goodness that he is not a human being.

The question now to be considered is: does Xun Zi think of human nature in this mode? What exactly does he mean by the statement that 'Human nature is bad'? A

close reading of the *Xun-Zi* would indicate that he does not mean human beings are bad in the essential sense described above, or as *the* distinguishing inborn feature of human beings. In this regard, translations of '*Xing-e*' (性惡) as 'Human nature is evil' may not be accurate, since the Western mind tends to associate 'evil' with something deep and substantial.

It would be convenient, at this stage, to structure the discussion in terms of three main features of Xun Zi's account of human nature that have been discussed by Antonio Cua in his essay, 'Philosophy of Human Nature' (Cua 2005a). These are:

1 The statement that 'Man's *xing* is bad' refers to the consequences of indulging its motivational structure of desires and feelings;
2 There is nothing inherently bad about *xing* – it is morally neutral.
3 It consists of a *raw material* that can be shaped or transformed.

The 'Human nature is bad' chapter begins (my translation):

> The *xing* of man is bad (*e*). His (expressions of) goodness is (the result of) constitutive activity (偽 *wei*). The *xing* of man is such that he is born with a liking of benefit. (Should this be allowed to be) indulged in (順是 *shun-shi*), strife will arise and ritual deference (辭讓 *ci-rang*) will be lost. (Man is) born with (the tendencies toward feelings of) envy and hate. (Should this be allowed to be) indulged in, violence and crime will arise and loyalty and trustworthiness will be lost. (Man is) born with the desires (欲 *yu*) of the ears and the eyes, having a liking for sounds and colors. (Should this be allowed to be) indulged in, dissoluteness and disorder will thus arise while ritual principles and cultural form will be lost. 'Thus (wantonly) following man's *xing* and indulging man's *qing* (情 emotions) will inevitably result in strife which amounts to transgression of social divisions (分 *fen*) and disorder, ultimately ending up in (a situation of) tyrannical violence.'

An analysis of this passage shows that Xun Zi mentions the loss of the rules of ritual as a conjecture about the consequences – what would happen if people do not conduct themselves on the basis of ritual and instead allow their desires and emotions or feelings (*qing*) to have free rein? The answer is that there will be disorder and, at the same time, the loss of the ritual principles and cultural form (文理 *wen-li*) that constitute social order. The passage concludes (my translation):

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

Xun Zi is careful to say that it is 'from this perspective' that *xing* is bad. What is this

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

The second feature of Xun Zi's account, the moral neutrality of human nature, can be briefly mentioned. For Xun Zi, *xing* is neither good nor bad. Just as there is nothing inherently good about the desires and feelings that a human being is born with, there is nothing inherently bad about them either. As we have seen, he argues against Mencius that human nature is inherently good. Ritual and moral principles have a certain constitutive structure that need to be worked on, and it would be mistaken to assume that such a structure is inborn. If the goodness brought about by these principles is the result of a constitutive structure, then badness must be the undesirable consequences of failing to establish/maintain such a structure.

The second feature can be supported and elaborated on by a discussion of the third feature, that *xing* consists of a basic 'raw material' that can be shaped or transformed. What is this raw material? In other words, what are the contents of *xing*, and in what sense can they be said to be transformed? Here, there is a tendency to think that if the contents of *xing* are *essential* to human beings, there must be a *prima facie* incoherence to the idea of their nature becoming transformed. In order to answer these questions there is a need to clarify the terms *qing* and *xing* and the relation between them.

Xun Zi often uses *qing* instead of *xing* when talking of human nature. There is also the binomial *qing-xing* (情性). This can sometimes be regarded as a more inclusive reference to 'emotional and sensory nature'. However, *qing-xing* seems also to be interchangeable with *xing*. In the first sentence of 23.1e, for instance, after referring to the contents of *xing* as the desires (*yu*) for: food (when hungry), warmth (when feeling cold), and rest (when feeling tired), Xun Zi says: 'These are man's *qing-xing*.' But it doesn't matter very much whether we take *xing* or *qing-xing* as interchangeable or not so long as we bear in mind that their contents include both the sensory desires and certain feelings/emotions.

However, unlike Knoblock, I hesitate to translate *xing* as 'essential nature' (Knoblock 1988: 3.8) or *qing-xing* as 'essential qualities inherent in his nature' (Knoblock 1994: 23.1e). These translations are fine if we remember that all Xun Zi has in mind when talking about *xing* or *qing-xing* is that the desires and feelings are what we are born with, and that these are morally neutral. But the terms 'essential' and 'inherent' tend to contribute to the idea that there is something deeply unchangeable and static about *xing* or *qing-xing*, and, generally speaking, this is not the case for Xun Zi. This is especially clear when Xun Zi refers to *qing* instead of *xing*. Thus while *xing*

and *qing-xing* may be interchangeable, we would need to be more cautious about the relation between *qing* and *xing*.

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

> But when [the wise and benevolent kings] Tang and Wu lived, the world followed them and order prevailed, and when [the cruel and tyrannical kings] Jie and Zhou Xin lived, the world followed them and was chaotic. How could this be if such were contrary to the [*qing* of man] (人之情 *ren zhi qing*) because certainly it is as possible for a man to be like the one as like the other.
>
> (*Xun Zi*: 4.10. The words within square brackets supplement or replace Knoblock's)

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

> It is the [*qing* of man] that for food he desires the meat of pastured and grain-fed animals, that he desires clothing decorated with patterns and brocades, that to travel he wants a horse and carriage, and even that he wants wealth in the form of surplus money and hoards of provisions so that even in lean periods stretching over years, he will not know insufficiency. Such is the [*qing* of man].
>
> (*Xun Zi* 4.11. The words within square brackets replace Knoblock's)

In mentioning the *qing* of man or human beings, Xun Zi refers to the desire for food, clothing and so on, and these seem to be the same as the sensory and appetitive desires of *xing*. However, note that the items referred to are luxurious refinements; and they are refinements that Xun Zi associates with the establishment of ritual principles. In addition, Xun Zi mentions the desire for surplus as motivated not by greed but by prudence. The continuation of the passage makes it clear that prudence is not a universal trait because there are extravagant individuals who fail to think long term and as a result impoverish themselves.

We can now summarize the relation between *xing* and *qing* with reference to Xun Zi's view of human nature. *Xing* is a biological concept in that it refers to what all humans are born with. That is, it refers to the basic sensory and appetitive desires. In conjunction with these desires, Xun Zi says that humans are born with a love of benefit, and in addition, have feelings of envy and hate, and are petty. (It has been questioned whether this is a correct reading, although this cannot be gone into here.[3]) The term *qing* could, as we have seen, refer to those desires and feelings. In this regard, Xun Zi might use the more inclusive *qing-xing*. However, 'the *qing* of man' also refers to other general facts about humans: they have wants and capacities that go beyond the basic sensory and appetitive desires and feelings. That is, people want the surplus items of wealth and luxury. These wants imply the need for security, and the capacities for prudence, refinement and, hence, for establishing ritual principles.

For Xun Zi, the contents of *xing* are *essential* only because they are basic to biological life and survival. As Xun Zi says in another context, without these desires we would be dead (*Xun Zi* 22.5a). They are not *essential* in the sense of being what is distinctive about the human being *qua* human being. This biological 'raw material' can be transformed because, in addition, the *qing* of man (in other words, what is generally a fact about human beings) is that he possesses the capacity for refinement. However, some people do not succeed in refining and cultivating themselves because of a lack of teachers and models, or because they do not work sufficiently hard and cumulatively. Nevertheless, there is no inherent or essential badness that would prevent them from transforming themselves.

This is where Xun Zi can be easily misunderstood if he is read in the essentialist mode. For instance, some writers have claimed that Xun Zi is inconsistent. He is alleged to have held, on the one hand, that nature is bad or that people have a 'lowly character' but, on the other hand, that people are born with 'an innate moral sense' (*yi* 義) (Munro 1996: 198). But we have seen that Xun Zi's statement 'Nature is bad' is to be taken in a consequential and not an inherent sense. Although Xun Zi does say that humans are born with a liking for benefit, pettiness, and feelings of envy and hate, there is nothing essential about these such that a person may not be transformed. The belief that Xun Zi is being inconsistent must be based in part on the tendency to think that the *badness* and the *lowly* aspects of character must be deeply essential such that it would be inconsistent to say that anyone can be transformed. Therefore, the charge of inconsistency would stick only if the essentialist mode of thought is granted. This charge of inconsistency is abetted by a mistaken reading of what Xun Zi means by *yi* in the present context. He does not think of it as an 'innate moral sense'.

Instead, as already mentioned, an important sense of *yi* for Xun Zi is an ability that the human species has in contrast to other animals – to make social distinctions and to institute and apply ritual principles that constitute the general structure of society and social relations.

I began this essay with the question why Confucius should be read in Mencian terms when certain remarks of his can justifiably be read in terms of the thinking of Xun Zi. In conclusion, I wish to indicate an important dimension of Confucius that is elaborated on in Xun Zi's work. This is the emphasis on the integration between emotion and form that we find in several passages in the *Lun-Yü*. (*Lun-Yü*, 3.3, 3.4) In the chapter entitled 'Ritual Principles' (禮論篇 'Li-Lun-Pian'), Xun Zi provides us with a philosophically interesting discussion of transformation of the individual through the nurture of feelings/emotions and balancing these with the form provided by ritual. In the chapter, Xun Zi is responding to Mo Zi's challenge that Confucian ritual practices are just as arbitrary as others, and they are simply a matter of convention.[4] There are two assumptions behind this argument from convention. One is that the moral values of *ren*, *yi* and *xiao* (孝 filial piety) can have genuine expression independently of the forms of ritual practice. Another is that these values reside in spontaneous feelings found in human nature. To Xun Zi, however, this claim of a separation between nature and convention, or between the feelings and the forms of ritual, is spurious. He says: 'Without nature there would be nothing for constitutive activity to act on, (but) without constitutive activity nature would be unable to beautify itself' (*Xun Zi* 19.6). Commenting on this, Antonio Cua says: 'When the natural expression of one's feeling, such as joy or sadness, love or hate, is subjected to the regulation of *li*, it can no longer be viewed as mere natural expression, for so regulated and transformed it acquires a significance beyond its original and spontaneous untutored expression' (2005b: 49–50). Xun Zi's elaboration of the balance between emotion and form is an area that can be further explored. It enables us to see that what constitutes actions that are *ren*, *yi*, or filial is not something self-evident, or simply based on some feeling independent of ritual forms. As Xun Zi says, you cannot have one without the other. Interesting and important philosophical questions arise here, for instance, about whether some emotions are universally shared or socially constituted.

Notes

1. As Lau states in a note, 'The movement was so called because it advocated a return to *gu wen*, i.e. the prose style of the ancient period. This came about through a growing dissatisfaction with the parallel prose that had been prevalent since the Six Dynasties' (Lau 1984 ix).
2. Note that in 2A.6, instead of 'the heart of respect' (恭敬之心 *gong-jing-zhi-xin*), we find 'the heart of courtesy and modesty' (辭讓之心 *ci-rang-zhi-xin*).
3. The Chinese word *ji-wu* (疾惡) has usually been read as 'feelings of envy and hatred' (Knoblock 1994: 23.1a). But another possible reading is 'the dislike of harm' (討厭害處 *tao-yan-hai-chu*) (Deng 2006). Thus, the supposed possession of these negative and bad feelings may be questioned. If this is right, then the term *qing* refers to desires and feelings that are morally neutral.
4. See the 1977 translation by Yi-pao Mei of *The Works of Motze* (Confucius Publishing Co., 文致出版社 bilingual edition, Taiwan: 264–6. This is in the chapter 'Simplicity in Funeral (III)' ('節葬下').

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Volume editor's appendix: Legalism

In consideration of the nature of this volume as an account of the history of Chinese philosophy (neither of Chinese thought nor of Chinese religion nor of Chinese politics) and of the organizational strategy and format (each chapter deals with one *major* movement of thought in Chinese philosophy, instead of the entry-by-entry encyclopedia format), some prominent schools or approaches that neither suggest separate *philosophical* doctrines nor constitute separate *philosophical* movements are thus not covered in separate chapters in this volume. Legalism is one case. Nevertheless, Legalism together with its leading figure Han Fei is worth briefly introducing for the sake of its connection with some pre-Han movements of thought (prominently with classical Confucianism). Its coverage is made in the form of the volume editor's appendix to this chapter whose partial focus is on Xun Zi, and it is a good place to identify a due connection between Legalism and classical Confucianism for the consideration to be mentioned below.

Legalism (*Fa-Jia* 法家) is the ideology of a particular group of intellectuals and statesmen (the Legalists) during the Warring States period (480–222 BCE) and the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) that emphasized the important and indispensable role played by *fa* (法 standards and laws) in governing states. In Legalism, these standards/laws include weights, measures, width of chariots etc. and derivatively include penal codes as explicit public formulations of punishments mechanically geared to named wrongs. One earlier leading figure of Legalism is Shang Yang (商鞅 with his real name 'Gong-sun Yang', died 338 BCE). He was a Chinese statesman responsible for the design of the imperial state of Qin which eventually unified China (221 BCE) and launched the dynastic cycle, which continued to 1911. He relied on publicized and objective standards (*fa*) to rationalize trade and official regulations. He was cruelly executed and probably left no actual writings, though there is a work written in his name.

Although Legalism is sometimes contrasted to Confucianism in terms of 'governing by law' versus 'governing by virtue', Legalism was more an art of rulership than a separate philosophical doctrine; the Legalists were 'more Machiavellian pragmatists than political philosophers' (Ames 1993). Philosophically speaking, Legalism might as well be viewed as emphasizing the law-governing dimension of the extension of Confucianism to statecraft, one dimension that is considered to be complementary with another dimension, i.e., governing by virtue. Many of the Legalists had a close ideological relationship with pre-Han classical Confucians. One good example in this connection is Han Fei (韓非 or Han Fei Zi, 280–233 BCE), who was a student of Xun Zi and was ideologically influenced by the pre-Han Confucianism through Xun Zi's teachings. Han Fei was also influenced by classical Daoism and endeavored to base his Legalist account on Daoist metaphysics. Han Fei was favorite of the First Emperor of the Qin dynasty but later executed by him. Han Fei's writings are the key source of Legalism in the Han. The work in his name, the *Han-Fei-Zi*, probably contains more of his actual writing than most other works bearing the name of a *zi* (master).

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Chapter 7
DAOISM (I):
LAO ZI AND THE
DAO-DE-JING

Xiaogan Liu

The *Lao-Zi*, also known as the *Dao-De-Jing*, is a short Chinese classic of about 5,000 characters traditionally considered Daoism's earliest scripture. It is one of the most important books of its genre, with numerous translations in the past 100 years and hundreds of commentaries over two millennia.

The title of the *Lao-Zi* text follows an early Chinese tradition (ca 722–207 BCE), suggesting that the book was authored by a figure known as Lao Zi. Later this work was revered as the *Dao*(道)-*De*(德)-*Jing*(經). *Jing* suggests a classic or scripture, while *Dao* comes from the path, road, or Way and was used by Lao Zi as a symbol for the ultimate origin and grounds of the universe. *De* is the character used in Confucian thought to refer to the notion of virtue, morality, or moral charisma, but here the meaning instead generally indicates the embodiment and function of *Dao* in individual things and the attractive quality of a Daoist sage (Ivanhoe 1999).

Although it is common knowledge that Lao Zi was the founder of the Daoist school and the *Dao-De-Jing* its first text, there was historically no institute or academy of Daoism, and so we have no clear record about its transmission from master to disciple, or from generation to generation. The expression *dao-jia* (道家) is a retrospective term first found in the Western Han dynasty (206 BCE–8 CE) work *Shi-Ji* (Records of the Historian), written at the beginning of the first century BCE by court historian Sima Qian. *Dao-jia* is usually translated as 'Daoism', or 'Daoist school', or 'Daoist philosophy', all of which denote similar meanings. Strictly speaking, however, the word 'Daoism' (or 'Taoism') is not a translation of any Chinese term, but a word coined in the nineteenth century by Westerners to denote both Daoist philosophy and the indigenous religious movements (*dao-jiao* 道教) that took shape at the end of the Eastern Han (25–220 CE). Being aware that early Daoist groups were not institutionalized helps us avoid the largely misguided assumption that struggles occurred between Confucianists and Daoists, a dramatic and appealing theory that has been broadly used as a framework for understanding Daoist thought and textual history.[1] The dozens of

period texts recently excavated by archeologists indicate no clear boundaries between the various *jia* (schools); still, most of them have been attributed to either Daoist or Confucian authorship.

The *Dao-De-Jing* is a fascinating, albeit elusive, work. Indeed, its themes and doctrines have been interpreted in radically different ways. Its ideas have been taken as treatments on social philosophy, political strategy, the arts of statesmanship, military strategy, the arts of *qigong* (vital force exercise), the origin of the religion of immortality, and even a theory of feminism. Recent books like the *Tao of Physics*, *Tao of Science*, *Tao of Love*, *Tao of Sex*, etc., though not necessarily serious interpretations of the *Lao-Zi* itself, also develop various, even opposed, notions and ideas, such as theism, atheism, and pantheism; idealism and materialism; rationalism and mysticism; humanism and non-humanism.

Can we accept all these divergent and conflicting renditions and impressions as equally valid readings of the text? If not, how should we think about them? There is certainly no straightforward approach to judging between different standards of interpretation. After all, texts can be interpreted in countless ways. But if we are interested in understanding how the text was viewed by Lao Zi and his contemporaries, we cannot assume that all interpretations are of the same accuracy and trustworthiness. It appears to me that on such a standard the most reliable interpretation of the *Dao-De-Jing* can be achieved only by approaching the text meticulously and comprehensively in its linguistic, social, and historical contexts.

1 Textual and Historical Issues

In approaching our study of the *Lao-Zi* or *Dao-De-Jing*, we must first question its authorship and dating: was there an author named or styled Lao Zi or Lao Dan? If yes, in which era did he live? When was the book completed? We have no conclusive answers to these questions, though there has been much speculation and many hypotheses forwarded. I begin with a close reading of the earliest biography of Lao Zi, which appears in Sima Qian's *Shi-Ji*. This reading has to be as detailed as possible, since many scholars have ignored or abandoned it; some even maintain that Sima Qian himself had no idea who Lao Zi was.

1.1 Rereading the earliest biography

According to Sima Qian, Lao Zi hailed originally from the Qu-ren-li neighborhood of Li Village, County of Ku, in the State of Chu.[2] His family name was Li and his given name was Er; he was styled Dan (聃). As an adult, he was in charge of the royal archives in Zhou.

Once, Confucius (551–479 BCE) went to Zhou and consulted with Lao Zi about the performance of rites. What did Lao Zi tell Confucius? It may be excerpted briefly here:

[A] good merchant hides his stores in a safe place and appears to be devoid

of possessions, while a gentleman, though endowed with great virtue, wears a foolish countenance. Rid yourself of your arrogance and your lustfulness, your ingratiating manners and your excessive ambition. These are all detrimental to your person.[3]

Upon leaving, Confucius told his disciples, 'Today I have seen Lao Zi, who is perhaps like a dragon.' Sima's tone in this narrative is unmistakably assertive, and he appears to have believed that the three names Lao-Zi, Li Er, and Lao Dan refer to the same figure, even if he did not regard the wording of this conversation as literally accurate. Sima then continues:

> Lao-Zi cultivated Dao and De. In his studies he strove to conceal himself and be unknown. He lived in Zhou for a long time, but seeing its decline, he decided to leave; when he reached the pass, the keeper there was pleased and said to him, 'Sir, you are about to retire. You must make an effort to write us a book.' So Lao Zi wrote a book in two *pian* (篇, volumes, parts) setting out the meaning of the Dao and De in some five thousand characters, and then he departed. None knew where he went to in the end.

Here Sima seems to have honestly recorded what he knew and what he did not know. Despite some of his uncertainties, Sima's statement about a book of two *pian* concerning *dao* and *de* in 5,000 characters perfectly matches the current *Lao-Zi*, which has then apparently been transmitted and circulated for 2,000 years. These passages make up the largest and most authentic parts of the biography, and they provide our main clues for discovering Sima Qian's understanding of the figure Lao-Zi.

Sima also recorded less reliable hearsay about Lao Zi and his text: 'Someone said there was a Lao Lai Zi who was also a native of the State of Chu. He wrote a book in fifteen *pian*, setting forth the applications of Daoist teachings, and was contemporary with Confucius.' Obviously, Lao Lai Zi's book of fifteen *pian* has nothing to do with the current *Dao-De-Jing* with its two parts. Sima clearly realized that Lao Lai Zi and Lao-Zi were not the same person. He wrote in the 'Bibliographies of Confucius' Disciples': 'Those whom Confucius regarded reverently as mentors: Lao-Zi in Chou, Qu Bo-yu in Wei, Yan Ping-zhong in Qi, Lao Lai Zi in Chu, Zi Chan in Zheng, and Meng Gong-chuo in Lu.'[4] As a historian, Sima Qian recorded information, including hearsay, and through this distinction we can see clearly his understanding that Lao Zi was not Lao Lai Zi.

Sima noted another instance of hearsay:

> One hundred and twenty-nine years after the death of Confucius,[5] as the scribes have recorded, Grand Historian Dan (儋) of Zhou had an audience with Duke Xian of Qin during which he said, 'In the first instance, Qin and Zhou were united, and after being united for five hundred years they separated, but seventy years after the separation a great feudal lord is going to be born.' Some say this Dan was actually Lao Zi; others say no. Nobody knows which side is right.

This Dan lived in the middle period of the Warring States (475–222 BCE) and could never have met Confucius. And his statement bears not the slightest resemblance to what Lao Zi says in the core part of his biography and from what we read in the current *Dao-De-Jing*. Thus, this Dan (儋) could not be Lao-Zi or Lao Dan (老聃). Obviously, Sima did not believe this rumor and ignored it when he arranged the biographies chronologically: Lao Zi's is the third chapter of *Lie-Zhuan* (列傳, 'General Biographies'), appearing among other figures from the late spring and autumn period (Chen and Bai 2001: 9). This is consistent with the key information presented in the Lao-Zi biography.

Sima then added: 'Lao Zi was a gentleman who lived in retirement from the world.' This is an echo of his earlier comment that 'None knew where he went to in the end'; it is also a fair explanation of why people knew so little about his personal life save for his official position as court curator of the state archive of Zhou and his meeting with Confucius. But it does not follow from this statement that Sima had no documents from which to compose the biography. In Sima's time, footnotes and bibliography were not required of a writer and historian.

Sima's statement and narrative are for the most part plain and decisive; he only becomes hesitant and indecisive in his recounting of additional stories and rumors. Here is another illustration from Sima's writings: 'Lao Zi probably lived to over 160 years of age – some even say to over 200 – as he cultivated the Way and was thus able to live to a great age.' The word 'probably' is a translation of the Chinese character *gai* (蓋), usually used to introduce a sentence and to suggest that what follows is conjecture or an inference. Sima clearly did not take it as historical fact.

As part of his narrative structure, Sima offered a concluding remark:

> Today followers of Lao Zi degrade Confucianism and students of Confucianism also degrade Lao Zi. This may be what is meant when it is said that 'people who follow different *dao* (ways) never have anything helpful to say to one another.' Li Er [holds that the Sage] 'does nothing and the people are transformed of their own accord' and 'remains limpid and still and the people are rectified of themselves'.

In the end, Sima's text refers back to the biography's opening paragraph and confirms that Lao Zi is also Li Er and Lao Dan. This last sentence, where Li Er and Chapter 57 of the *Dao-De-Jing* are explicitly linked, is no accident.

To sum up, Sima's biography of Lao-Zi can be characterized in the following way: of its 454 characters, three-fourths (340 characters) present an affirmative narrative that its author believed reports authentic facts, and one-fourth (114 characters) provides additional information that Sima seems to have felt is marginal. The additional part shows that Sima tried to make his account comprehensive and discerning. Arthur Waley once said that Sima Qian's biography of Lao Zi 'consists simply of a confession that for the writing of such a biography no materials existed at all' (Waley 1958: 108). Although Sima did not specifically cite his references, we should not therefore conclude that he had no textual sources whatsoever, and that his biography is fiction.

Archaeologists have found evidence which proves that records in Sima's history and other Han literature were indeed based on historical literature (Liu 2001: xx–xxiii; L. Li 2002a; X. Li 2002; Qiu 2004)

If we meticulously consider this biography and simultaneously consult other biographies and their sequences, we realize that Sima Qian did indeed have a position about just who Lao Zi was. We may not accept all the details of the biography, but we cannot say that Sima has no certain beliefs in the matter. We should not abandon his account, simply because it may not be perfectly accurate.[6] It is especially important, moreover, to recognize the differences Sima saw between the authentic account and the marginal hearsay from which speculation and hypotheses have subsequently developed, with no further documents or evidence.

1.2 Facing divergent speculation

Scholars have offered very different readings of Sima Qian's Lao Zi biography. In the twentieth century, serious debates have raged and opinions have proliferated about the authorship and dating of the *Lao-Zi*. For convenience of discussion, we may roughly classify the various opinions into three groups: the early or 'Lao Zi and Confucius' theory, the middle or 'before Zhuang Zi' theory, and the later or 'after Zhuang Zi' theory. The *Ma-wang-dui* (馬王堆) silk manuscripts of the *Lao-Zi* discovered in 1973 and the *Guo-dian* (郭店) bamboo slips edition excavated in 1993 generally seem to support the early 'Lao Zi and Confucius' theory, though not enough to overturn and sweep away the others.

The early or 'Lao Zi and Confucius' theory is based on both traditional literature and new investigations, suggesting that the essential part or the core of the *Lao-Zi* reflects the thought of Lao Zi, a senior contemporary of Confucius. Modern scholars Chen Guying (陳鼓應), Yan Lingfeng (嚴靈峰), Zhang Yangming (張揚明), and Bai Xi (白奚) can be taken as representatives of this theory. After a re-examination of the arguments and encouraged by archaeological discoveries, the leading scholars Zhang Dainian (張岱年) and Xu Fuguan (徐復觀) have also returned to this position. My reading of Sima Qian's biography of Lao Zi is generally favorable to this theory.

The late or 'after Zhuang Zi' theory claims that the *Lao-Zi* text followed the *Zhuang-Zi* text or was more recent than its core 'inner chapters'. Qian Mu (錢穆) and A.C. Graham are representatives of this position. Extremists once even contended that the *Lao Zi* was compiled in the early Han dynasty (206 BCE–8 CE). This argument is based on a comparison of and similarities between the *Lao-Zi* and *Huai-Nan-Zi* (淮南子). This extreme view needs no discussion after the discovery of the *Ma-wang-dui* silk editions, which have been confidently dated by archaeologists to before 195 BCE (Silk A) and 169 BCE (Silk B). The method behind this argument, a simple comparison that identifies similar language and ideas, is still widely used without reflection in textual studies and dating. The Qian and Graham views are not so extreme, but their position was also seriously challenged after the recovery of the bamboo versions. The tomb from which the bamboo slips were unearthed was dated to before 278 BCE, and it is thus reasonable to suppose that

the master copies of the bamboo versions existed before 300 BCE. Therefore the completion of the *Lao-Zi* is less likely to have come after Zhuang Zi, who is believed to have lived between 368 and 268 BCE (Cui 1992: 5).

The middle or 'before Zhuang Zi' theory insists that the text was composed in the middle of the Warring States period, but before the core *Zhuang-Zi* text was composed. This seems to be a synthesis of the early and late theories, a position represented by D.C. Lau, Fung Yu-lan, and Xu Kang-sheng (許抗生). For some, this position is just a compromise based on arguments that used to support the late theory. Since evidence that would negate historical records about Lao Zi in traditional literature has not been forthcoming, re-examination and reflection on this compromise position are needed to advance the quality of textual studies and text-dating.

Why have the *Guo-dian* materials not resolved the conflicts among these three theories? Because the proponents of each theory can find evidence in the slips to defend their own hypotheses and reject the others. Of course, much depends on how one evaluates the *Lao-Zi* bamboo slips. Archeologists and most scholars in Chinese philosophy assume that the *Guo-dian* versions are three excerpts from an earlier and relatively complete text. This supports the 'Lao Zi and Confucius' theory. Evidence for this position is that Bamboo A and Bamboo C each has a section easily seen to be the same as Chapter 64 in the received versions, except for slight differences in wording. These slight differences suggest that the two bamboo versions were inscribed from two different, earlier editions of the text, which in turn had an ancestral edition. If the content of the three bundles of slips is identical to chapters or passages of the received versions, their ancestral edition must be the text later known as *Dao-De-Jing* or the *Lao-Zi*. The theory agrees with, and is supported by, historical literature about Lao Dan, the reputed author of the *Lao Zi*. This argument fails to explain why the slips have no counterparts to Chapters 67 to 81, namely, the last fifteen chapters in the received versions. However, it seems plausible that the compilers of the slips selected just those chapters and passages that suited their needs and preferences.

Other scholars have assumed that the three bamboo slip bundles were the earliest complete text of the *Lao-Zi*. However, the difficulty with this assumption is how to explain the above-mentioned repetition and differences between the A and C versions of Chapter 64. Still other scholars assume that the bamboo versions represent the middle phase of a process carried out by compilers and editors over a long period of time. These assumptions might support either the 'before Zhuang Zi' or the 'after Zhuang Zi' theory. The argument behind these two claims is that only sixteen of the thirty-one chapters found in these slips are complete. This may suggest that later compilers and editors added other sayings. Yet, these claims are based on inferences from and speculation about the isolated texts, and do not take into account the historical literature and other records. Scholars making these claims typically have to devise a story to explain why the short coherent text took many people a long time to compose, and why all pre-Qin texts attributed the doctrines preserved in the received versions of the *Lao-Zi* to a person called Lao Dan, who some skeptics say never existed.

1.3 Reflections on method in textual studies

I turn now to the methods used to support arguments for the middle and later theories. My purpose is not to reach an exact conclusion, but to encourage rethinking the methods employed in textual studies. D.C. Lau is 'inclined to the hypothesis that some form of the *Lao-Zi* existed by the beginning of the third century B.C. at the latest' (2001: 140). Lau claims that Sima Qian 'had difficulty even with Lao Zi's identity. He explicitly suggests that [Lao Zi] was probably the same person as Dan the historian, though the latter lived more than a century after the death of Confucius' (2001: xi). Lau misreads Sima's biography: he neglects the distinction between the positive aspect of Sima's affirmative statements and uncertain rumors; and he takes the additional hearsay accounts seriously. His words 'explicitly suggests' are used to support his hypothesis, but they are not true. Lau omits the sentences 'Some say this Dan was actually Lao Zi; *others say no. Nobody knows which side is right.*' In addition, Lau ignores both the irrelevance of Dan's prognostication to the ideas in the *Dao-De-Jing* and the tenor of comments in the meeting between Lao Zi and Confucius, which have been repeatedly recorded and stated in pre-Qin and Han literature.

Lau shows admirable honesty when he says, '[I]ndeed my whole account of Lao Zi, *is speculative*, but when there is so little that is certain, there is not only room but a need for speculation' (2001: 132). Again, Lau feels there is little in the way of certain records because he does not consider the *Shi-Ji* comprehensively, and his skeptical position makes him hasten to abandon the major part of Sima's account. Unfortunately, some students take this speculation as a conclusion, and even as the foundation for further speculation.

One of the more important arguments for the mid- or late Warring States dating is also based on the 'absence of evidence'. This argument emphasizes the fact that no books prior to the *Zhuang-Zi* had quoted *Lao-Zi*, and so this constitutes evidence that the *Dao-De-Jing* probably appeared after the *Zhuang-Zi*. Graham claims: 'Since the 'Inner Chapters' [of the *Zhuang-Zi*] show no clear evidence of acquaintance with *Lao-Zi* the book is conveniently treated after Zhuang Zi, although there is no positive proof that it is later' (1987: 217–18). For this speculation to be true, the following must also be true:

1 All books must be hits such that they will be quoted by their contemporaries or next generations.
2 All books that quote a certain text must have survived for our examination, otherwise we should deny that text's existence despite its mention in historical records.
3 We indeed have available to us all the books that existed in history, thus we have sufficient material to prove that 'there had not been' certain texts.

Obviously none of these assumptions is true. A book may not be influential or may not be quoted broadly, but that does not mean it never existed.[7]

Archeologists have excavated dozens of texts of which we had no prior knowledge.

These discoveries reveal a simple truth: the extant texts we have today represent only a tiny part of the historical legacy of ancient China. The Bibliography (*yi-wen-zhi* 藝文志) of the *Han-Shu* (漢書, *History of the Western Han*) mentions fifty-seven Confucian books, only seven of which have survived; thirty-seven Daoist texts, with only five extant; and ten Legalist books, with only two extant. Obviously, historians in Han China saw many more texts and records that predated them than we can hope to do. Certainly they may have made mistakes, but they did not dream up historical figures and bibliographical matters. Newly excavated texts show that the histories and bibliographies from Han times have proved much more reliable than previously acknowledged. We simply do not have the resources and references to argue with them about the authenticity of ancient works.

A key piece of evidence to settle the dating of the *Lao-Zi* is the encounter between Lao Zi and Confucius, which suggests the two were contemporaries. This event is recorded repeatedly in various versions, in not only three of the biographies in the

Table 7.1 **General linguistic features**

Linguist features		Book of Songs 詩經 (%)	Lao-Zi 老子 (%)	Songs of Chu 楚辭 (%)
Rhyming patterns 韻式	*Consecutive rhyming sentences* 句句韻	27	47	–
	Mixed rhyming patterns 混合韻	48	35	–
	Rhyming alternately 偶句韻	25	18	100
Rhetoric 修辭	*Repetition* 迴環往復	90	94	–
Sentence patterns 句式	*Four-character sentences* 四言為主	94	50	14

Table 7.2 **Interchangeable rhyming**

Interchangeable rhyming 合韻	Book of Songs 詩經	Lao-Zi 老子	Songs of Chu 楚辭
Zhi and Yu 之魚	5	2	–
You and Hou 幽侯	3	1	–
Xiao and You 宵幽	4	1	–
Wu and Jue 屋覺	2	1	–
Yue and Zhi 月質	8	1	–
Zhen and Yuan 真元	1	5	–

Shi-Ji, but also in the eclectic *Za-Jia*'s (雜家) book *Lü-Shi-Chun-Qiu* (呂氏春秋), and Confucian works such as *Li-Ji* (禮記), *Han-Shi-Wai-Zhuan* (韓詩外傳), *Kong-Zi-Jia-Yu* (孔子家語), and *Shuo-Yuan* (說苑).[8] (We can leave out the *Zhuang-Zi*, which also records this event, because it is written in a literary style and its account may not be suitable to take as historical fact.) Given the multiple records of this event, it is difficult to ignore it completely and simply place Lao Zi in a later era sometime after Confucius. Lau and Graham, however, insist on the mid- or late Warring States dating by explaining away this very encounter. They contend that this event was probably created in the service of the struggle between Confucians and Daoists. Intriguingly, Lau presumes that Daoists created the story to make a mockery of Confucius, while Graham proposes that it was the Confucians who invented the legend to praise Confucius (Lau 2001: 130; Graham 1990: 124). Confucian records of the encounter, however, are merely plain statements or narratives with no signs of admiration or contempt for either Confucius or Lao Zi.

In addition to traditional literature, some linguistic features in the *Lao-Zi* text may help us understand the plausible date of the text. We know that the *Shi-Jing* (詩經 Book of Songs) dates to before the sixth century BCE, while *Chu-Ci* (楚辭 Songs of Chu) is from the fourth and third centuries BCE. One way to take advantage of these literary works is to compare the verse parts of the *Lao-Zi* with the *Shi-Jing* and *Chu-Ci*, looking for indirect evidence for possible dating decisions. The results are summed up in Tables 7.1 and 7.2.

Evidently all the statistical data indicate that the *Lao-Zi* has greater similarity to the *Shi-Jing* than to *Chu-Ci*, which suggests that the core of the *Lao-Zi* was completed when the *Shi-Jing* style was still prevalent. Some may raise objections, for example, by claiming that:

1 people subsequently had imitated the *Shi-Jing* style and worked on the *Lao-Zi* text accordingly; and
2 differences between the *Shi-Jing* and *Chu-Ci* are geographical rather than chronological.

We can respond to these objections briefly by noting that there are no known examples of, and we can see no motivation for, someone of a later era writing a text in imitation of the *Shi-Jing* style. In fact, there is no single distinctive pattern and regulation to imitate. The verse and non-verse parts, the various sentence and rhyming patterns, and their varied portion of the whole text emerge only as a result of our analyses in the light of modern linguistic knowledge. All these different and various elements in the *Lao-Zi* merge perfectly into a whole body. It is also common knowledge that during the *Shi-Jing* era envoys from the southern state of Chu fluently used *Shi-Jing* poems in their diplomatic debates and communications, and extant Chu poems from the *Spring and Autumn* era carry those same styles and patterns. Moreover, middle Warring States songs from the northern states of Yan (燕) and Zhao (趙) share the same sentence and rhyming patterns with the *Songs of Chu* (Liu 2004: 172–86; 2005: 7–65).

My tentative conclusion is that Sima Qian's biography of Lao Zi was based on historical documents and records (to many of which we may never have access), which may have contained legendary and vague passages. Still, the biography itself was not based on fiction or fantasy, but rather contains essential historical truths, and Sima Qian made clear which parts of his account are to be taken as fact and which are more speculation or hearsay. It seems prudent to take this position in the absence of clear evidence to the contrary: a person who was Confucius' contemporary completed the core, or major, part of *Dao-De-Jing*, much of which has survived in current versions. This position is supported both by the traditional literature and by linguistic analysis and archeological discoveries.

2 Dao: Ground and Source

2.1 Methodological issues

Many people accept the *Lao-Zi* or *Dao-De-Jing* as a philosophical text – or at least concede that it contains philosophical ideas – while others remain skeptical. Some argue that there is no such thing as 'Chinese philosophy', since the term 'philosophy' is derived entirely from the Western tradition. We do not find in Chinese tradition arguments or systems similar to the Kantian, Quinian, or Wittgensteinian versions of Western philosophy. This particular controversy is not the main issue of this volume, but it is nevertheless relevant to the question of how we should conduct research on and interpret the *Lao-Zi* and Daoism. Should we apply a Western philosophical framework and its concepts to reconstruct and reinterpret the *Lao-Zi*? Or should we try not to 'pollute' the *Lao-Zi*'s special perspective on human experience and ideas about the universe with our Anglo-American expectations? Certainly, the answer from scholars of Chinese history and culture will be dramatically different from that of scholars trained in Anglo-American philosophy. Some scholars argue that study of the *Lao-Zi* can have no actual philosophical significance unless it is conducted from a *philosophical* perspective. Others have criticized this claim, arguing that such an approach would yield not a fair consideration of Daoist philosophy but another expression of Western thought camouflaged by the terms and themes of the *Lao-Zi*.[9]

My position on this dispute can be briefly explained as follows:

1 To identify philosophy solely with contemporary Anglo-American thought is too narrow a view. If we consider 'philosophy' in its original ancient sense, as a love of wisdom and teachings on ways of life (Hadot 2002: 6), then the *Lao-Zi*'s thought can be seen as philosophical without reference to the Western tradition.

2 Borrowing various theories as points of reference for studying the *Lao-Zi* can be inspirational and constructive for the field of Chinese philosophy and for modern society. Scholars have already begun to creatively engage with the *Lao-Zi* with reference and comparisons to Kant (Zhu 2002), Spinoza (Fu 1973), Heidegger (Fu 1976), Dewey (Ames and Hall 2003), and Davidson (Mou 2006), to name just a few.

3 Whether or not we use Western philosophy in our study of the *Lao-Zi*, it is most important that we are aware of our method, purpose, and standards so that we produce more quality academic work.

A related methodological issue arises from the tension between the culture and historical backgrounds of modern readers and interpreters, and the *Lao-Zi* text itself. Gadamer has insightfully pointed out: '[T]he horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. Rather, understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves' (1989: 306). Ontologically speaking, this is absolutely correct. Nevertheless, this observation should not be used as a general rationale or standard of investigation, let alone a defense of perverse and distorted interpretations. Serious scholars should be aware of and clear about their purpose, whether it is to understand a text faithfully or to produce personal ideas in the course of the interpretative exercise. However, to clearly distinguish these two orientations and purposes is not a straightforward job; hence, it requires our serious attention and consideration.

Based on traditional and philosophical hermeneutics, the ideal strategy for approaching a text would consist of four strata. These are:

1 a detailed reading of the primary texts;
2 close interpretation of the works in historical context;
3 creative personal interpretation; and
4 creative philosophical construction.

The first two strata belong to textual and historical orientation, and are the backbone of traditional humanities research and investigation; the latter two are creative and constructive in orientation and emphasize contemporary rather than historical concerns. In the humanities, a faithful reading is always the primary approach and a prerequisite for academic study and interpretation; thus, it is actually a critical preparation for research and interpretation. This technique provides a foundation of close familiarity with the text, which in turn lays the groundwork for creative interpretation and philosophical construction. In this chapter, I concentrate on close reading and contextual understanding, leaving creative interpretation and construction for other works. I consider the *Lao-Zi* text as closely as possible and investigate its basic meaning, so that we may have a better foundation for comparison, reconstruction, and application of its ideas to the modern world. With regard to the varying versions of the *Lao-Zi*, I consult and compare the bamboo slips, silk manuscripts, and received versions, with the aim of staying as close as possible to the ancient versions and identifying the most plausible meanings of the text.[10]

2.2 Varying interpretations

'Dao' is the key critical term or concept in the *Lao-Zi*,[11] where it is commonly described as invisible, inaudible, subtle, formless, infinite, vague, mysterious, oneness, and so on. We are bound to fail, however, to find agreement in academic discussions that try to define and interpret the Way. There is no single word or term, even in modern Chinese, let alone English, to adequately gloss Dao.

Hu Shih might have been the first to try to interpret Dao in modern Western terms. Hu thought that *Tian-Dao* (天道 the Way of heaven) is tantamount to the Law of Nature, and Dao is the origin of the world (Hu Shih 1926: 56, 64). This is the root of *cosmological*[12] interpretations of Dao. Hu was followed by Fung Yu-lan, who pointed out that before Lao-Zi, the meaning of the Way 'was always restricted to human affairs, whereas when we come to the *Lao-Zi*, we find the word *Dao* being given a metaphysical meaning. That is to say, the assumption is made that for the universe to have come into being, there must exist an all-embracing first principle, which is called *Dao*' (Fung 1952: 177). Here Fung declared the Way is the 'all-embracing *first principle*' with metaphysical meaning. He proposed that Dao is an ontological rather than cosmological concept, claiming that Dao 'is Non-being, and is that by which all things come to be. Therefore, before the being of Being, there must be Non-being, from which Being comes into being. What is said here belongs to *ontology*, not to cosmology. It has nothing to do with time and actuality. For in time and actuality, there is no Being; there are only beings' (Fung 1948: 96).

Hu and Fung should be remembered for setting out the direction of modern interpretations of Dao in Western terminology. Following on their work, countless interpretations and controversies about Dao have mushroomed in China, most of them employing Western philosophical terms, such as cosmology, ontology, matter, ideas, principle, reality, substance, metaphysics, laws of nature, and so on. None of these terms can encompass the meaning of Dao, thus divergent understandings and interpretations will never end. Some pre-eminent scholars, T'ang Chun-I (唐君毅), Yen Lingfeng (嚴靈峰), Chen Guying (陳鼓應), and Chen Chung-hwan (陳忠寰 [陳康]), have laid out a spectrum of possible meanings ranging from metaphysics to human life. Of these, Chen Chung-hwan's interpretation creates discussion and deserves our attention.

Chen demonstrates three static and three dynamic senses of Lao Zi's Dao. In the static senses, it is the ultimate source from which the myriad things come, the storehouse of the myriad things, and the ultimate model of things, non-human, and human beings. On the dynamic side, Dao is the agent or the efficient cause of phenomena and the principle under which the myriad things are produced and sustained; it is also something active and its activity is reversion. To sum up, the Way is, Chen claims, a unique and universal *binding principle* (Chen 1964: 150-3). When we read 'the Dao once declined' in Chapter 18, we may wonder: how can the constant Dao decline? How can the Dao, when declining, still be universally binding? Chen answers that 'there is no self-contradiction here, for the Dao is so in relation to two different spheres, that of human actions and that of non-human actions'. Thus the Dao, the universally binding principle in the sphere of non-human actions, is that to which

everything conforms and from which nothing is able to deviate, but the Dao as the principle of human actions is different. Here it has a normative character: it is something to which human actions ought to conform. Dao is, Chen concludes, both axiomatic principle (*sollensprinzip*) and ontic principle (*seinsprinzip*) (Chen 1964: 154, 157). Chen believes 'there is no self-contradiction' when he claims that Dao is both normative and ontic because Dao's function covers both spheres of *ought to be* and *is*. This seems to be a functional dual interpretation.

Unlike the above-mentioned scholars who focus specifically on the *Lao-Zi*, one representative scholar of the contemporary Confucian movement, Mou Tsung-san (牟宗三), presents a new theory. He seems to solve Chen's dualist problem by claiming that the Dao is not a concept of 'metaphysics in the line of being' but 'metaphysics in the line of vision'. Hence Mou's interpretation or definition of Dao in his own philosophical system refocuses on its 'practical ontology', viewing the ontic world and issues through 'practical mind-vision' (*shi-jian-ti-zheng* 實踐體証). Thus Dao is by no means the objective origin of the universe; on the contrary, it is a *subjective vision* (*zhu-guan-jing-jie* 主觀境界), a kind of empty mind of practical subjectivity (Mou 1985: 160–2). This view comes not from a close reading of the *Lao-Zi* itself but belongs to a great construction that subsumes Daoism and Buddhism into a new Confucian metaphysical system. Mou's interpretation of Dao from the perspective of practical and self-cultivational experience is unique, although it is followed by his disciples.

One of Mou's students, Yuan Pao-hsin (袁保新), not satisfied with Chen and Mou's interpretations, presents a new theory asserting that Dao is the *metaphysical foundation of the realm of values*. Yuan believes that this avoids Mou's subjectivized definition of Dao and bridges the gap between the ontic and axiomatic spheres in Chen's interpretation (Yuan 1991). Whether or not we agree with Chen or Yuan, the issue remains: why may human actions deviate from the principle or course of Dao?

Charles Fu presents a complicated interpretation of Lao Zi's metaphysics of Dao by employing a method that combines linguistic and philosophical analyses, and by comparing Lao Zi with Spinoza, Heidegger, and Buddhism. Fu assumes that the *Lao-Zi* 'creates a naturalist metaphysics of Dao *sub specie aeternitatis*' (Fu 1973: 368). He further argues:

> As in the case of Spinoza, Lao Zi's metaphysical attention is essentially focused on Nature as such or (the totality of) things-as-they-are, without positing or speculating upon what possibly exists behind or beyond Nature. Unlike Spinoza, however, Lao Zi's metaphysics of Dao is not merely non-dualistic, it is also non-conceptual: It is not structured in any kind of conceptual or propositional framework such as has characterized the Western philosophical tradition since Parmenides and Plato. For Dao is not an entity, substance, God, abstract notion, Hegelian *Weltgeist*, or anything hypostatized or conceptualized. Dao is, if you like, no more than a metaphysical symbol Lao Zi uses to denote, without any distortion, *Nature itself* in terms of the spontaneous self-so-ness (*zi-ran*) of the world and man.
>
> (Fu 1973: 369)

Fu's philosophical explication of Lao Zi's conception of Dao explores six dimensions: Dao as

1 reality
2 origin
3 principle
4 function
5 virtue and
6 technique.

Numbers (2) to (6) can be subsumed under Dao as 'manifestation to us' (Fu 1973: 367). *Reality* and *manifestation* are two perspectives or aspects of 'Dao', which is merely a symbol reflecting Lao Zi's metaphysical way of understanding the totality of things-as-they-are (Fu 1973: 373-4). 'These six dimensions are not 'categories' or 'attributes' in the Western (conceptual) sense, but are inseparable aspects of Dao reconstructed from the *Lao-Zi* in order to show the best possible way of understanding Lao Zi's metaphysical thinking' (Fu 1973: 367).

Fu's deep thinking and the broad associations between Lao Zi and Western thought contribute many provocative insights that deserve our admiration. While I appreciate and accept some of his ideas and approaches, I think his interpretation is overly influenced by Spinoza, and in the end is more modern and creative than historical and textual. However, since his purpose is 'reconstruction' or creative interpretation, rather than close textual interpretation, this may be discounted. Little wonder that he would later publish an essay officially advocating *creative hermeneutics* (Fu 1976). Given his goals and approach, we may say he contributed a representative model of creative hermeneutical work for our examination and discussion.

There have been many brief interpretations of Dao: it is mysterious 'ineffable reality' (Schwartz 1985: 194); 'the source of all things' (Graham 1987: 219); and a 'metaphysical monistic absolute – the Chinese equivalent of Parmeniedean being' (Hansen 1992: 13). Ivanhoe's summary presents a brief yet comprehensive under-standing: 'The *dao* is the source, sustenance, and ideal pattern for all things in the world. It is hidden and difficult to grasp but not metaphysically transcendent. In the apt metaphor of the text, it is the "root" of all things' (2002: xxii). This characterization has ample textual support.

2.3 A close textual interpretation

After briefly reviewing various modern understandings and interpretations of Dao, we find countless divergent theories. This raises many questions: Is Dao metaphysical in the traditional sense? Is it cosmic or ontic? Transcendent or immanent? Substance or principle? Matter or idea? Objective or normative? Mysterious or natural? Entity or symbol? Reality or vision? Humanistic or naturalist? Religious or philosophical? Among all these different and opposing positions, each side has its supporters. This fact suggests that none of our modern Western philosophical concepts is a good match

for Lao Zi's Dao, though each one may be apt or suitable for specific aspects – and that to certain degrees. To borrow A.C. Graham's observation, the trouble with our terms 'is not that they do not fit at all but that they always fit imperfectly; they can help us towards Dao, but only if each formulation in its inadequacy is balanced by the opposite which diverges in the other direction' (Graham 1987: 219).

To try to understand Dao as precisely as possible, we have to read the text closely and carefully, not only word by word and sentence by sentence, but also paying attention to a possible whole picture, that is, the relatively consistent meaning of the text. The expression 'relatively consistent' assumes that the *Lao-Zi* contains systematic and consistent theories. It is consistent and coherent, if in a weak or slack sense, it is not in accordance with the strict criteria of modern logic. Thus I disagree with the claim that 'there is no topic that the *Lao-Zi* systematically addresses' (Moeller 2006: 3), which may come from the expectation that the *Lao-Zi* as a treatise must proceed in line with modern logic and argumentation. After the fashion of ancient Chinese exposition, the text does indeed exhibit persistent interest in certain themes.

In Chapter 42, the *Lao-Zi* reads: 'Dao produced the One (*sheng-yi* 生一), the One produced the two, the two produced the three, and the three produced the ten thousand things.'[13] This is akin to a process of universal temporal evolution. The meaning of 'produce' (*sheng*) is simple if we read it straightforwardly, but this easy passage has produced conflicting readings and arguments. This probably started with the Wang Bi (226–49) commentary. Its exegesis on this passage says:

> Although the myriad things exist in a myriad forms, they all revert to the One (*qi-gui-yi-ye* 其歸一也). Why do they all ultimately become One (*he-you-zhi-yi* 何由致一)? It is due to nothingness. Because One comes from nothingness, can One be still called 'nothingness'? Because we already call it 'One,' how can there not be a word for it? Because we have this word and because we have the One, how can there not be two? Because we have the One and have these two, this consequently gives birth to three …[14]

Wang's expressions *gui-yi* (歸一 revert to the One, reduced or return to the One) and *zhi-yi* (致一 become One) are apparently different from Lao Zi's *sheng-yi*. According to Wang, Lao Zi's claim that Dao produced the One, two, and three does not necessarily describe a physical process of universal evolution. Wang's explanation is more like an intellectual inference and language game influenced by the logic school (*ming-jia*) in the late Warring States period. Wang's exegesis is closer to ontological theory than cosmological hypothesis. Thus Tang Yongtong (湯用彤) has suggested that Lao Zi's philosophy is cosmological and it was Wang Bi who formulated Chinese ontological theories, taking *wu* or non-being as ontic (Tang 1983: 195, 214)

Tang's argument has been carried on, ignored, and challenged. Much depends on how one reads the word *sheng*. Mou Zongsan proceeds from Wang Bi's idea and proclaims that the word *sheng* in the *Lao-Zi* refers only to a *gesture*, not actually production, and so reduces the meaning of Dao to a subjective vision. After reviewing the cosmological understanding, Fu claims:

> Philosophically speaking … the ontological interpretation under the form of eternity, is far more acceptable. And the passage about 'Dao produces One' should be re-rendered philosophically as 'Dao (metaphysically) comes before One … Three (metaphysically) comes before all things'. Taking the ontological version of Lao Zi's cosmological thinking, I would maintain that Dao is the ontological ground of all things in the non-conceptual, symbolic sense; and One, Two, and Three can be regarded simply as the ontological symbols pointing to the truth that what is non-differentiated is that upon which what is differentiated is metaphysically dependent.
>
> (Fu 1973: 378)

Both Fu and Mou try to explain away the cosmological meaning of Chapter 42 in order to practice creative interpretation and build a new metaphysical system. Their aim is philosophical construction; this is different from my job here, which is to pursue a primary textual reading and close contextual interpretation.

Actually we can just read *sheng* plainly as *produce* or *bring about*. As for the One, two, three, there are also many conjectures, such as ultimate reality, *yin* and *yang*, the harmony of *yin* and *yang*, etc. I think, however, that these are not necessary; they cannot be tested, although they may represent the best guesses. The problem is simple. Why doesn't Lao Zi try to identify that which is One, two, and three? The answer could well be that identification is beyond the author's attention and focus. Essentially Chapter 42's passage is just a description of a hypothesis about how the *wan-wu* or ten-thousand things happen to evolve from nothing to something, from the sole to the multiple, and from the simple to the complicated. This is a kind of abstract scientific formula about the origin and evolution of the universe. We do not need to read external terms into it. If you suppose the world comes from fire, then the questions would be why? How to prove it? And what came before it? If we understand Dao, One, two, and three as tokens without any specific content, it is easier to avoid challenges that specific answers would have to confront, and easier to accommodate other theories and new discoveries.

One consistent interest is the question of whether or not Dao is *wu* (無 nothing, non-being). Lao Zi never answers this question explicitly, but Chapter 40 presents an implicit answer in the discussion of *you* (有) and *wu* (無). Different translations of this passage represent various understandings about Dao and *wu*. Chan's translation is conceptual: 'All things in the world come from *being* (*you* 有), and being comes from *non-being* (*wu* 無)' (1963: 173). Lau has: 'The myriad creatures in the world are born from *Something* (*you*), and Something from *Nothing* (*wu*)' (2001: 61). Ivanhoe tries to avoid using a technical term: 'The world and all its creatures arise from *what is there* (*you*); What is there arises from *what is not there* (*wu*).' The 10,000 things (*wan-wu* 萬物) come from *you*, and *you* in turn comes from *wu*, thus *you* and *wu* represent two phases in a sequence, not a pair at the same meaning level. Obviously, *wu* is the ultimate origin. Since according to Chapter 42 Dao produces 10,000 things, it is easy to infer from Chapters 40 and 42 that Dao is equal to *wu*. But Lao Zi does not make this conclusion; that step was left to Wang Bi, who came seven centuries later. Wang Bi takes Dao to be *wu* and makes *wu* the ground of all beings, instead of their ultimate

source. Therefore, *wu* in Wang Bi's philosophy can be rendered as non-being, while in Lao Zi's text, it can be better understood as simply 'nothing' or 'what is not there'.

When Lao Zi discusses Dao's features or characteristics, Dao embodies features of both *you* and *wu*. Chapter 1 of the silk manuscript version can be rendered as 'Nameless (*wu-ming* 無名), it (Dao) is the beginning of ten-thousand things (*wan-wu*); Named (*you-ming* 有名), it is mother of ten-thousand things (*wan-wu* 萬物).' Different from received versions, this couplet repeats 'ten-thousand' things in association with both *wu-ming* and *you-ming*, which suggests that *wu-ming* and *you-ming* are equally features of Dao. *Wu-ming* reflects Dao's feature as *wu* or nothing, while *you-ming* represents Dao's feature as *you* or something. In this context, *you* and *wu* are equals in a pair, as distinct from their relationship in the cosmic process. *You* and *wu* as features of Dao should not be confused with *you* and *wu* in the physical world and human life. What Chapter 2 says – 'What there is (*you* 有) and what there is not (*wu* 無) generate each other' – by no means applies to Dao, nor to the general relationship of *you* and *wu*. *Wu* seems to be a critical concept here, but this theory is not verified by textual analyses. We find 130 references to *wu* in most versions, but most of these are in the form of negative adjectives and adverbs; the term is not used as a technical concept to discuss philosophical issues. In only three cases is *wu* used as a philosophical term: one is in Chapter 40, about the ultimate source, one is Chapter 2, about the mutual independence of *wu* and *you* in actual life, and the third is in Chapter 11, about the advantages and utility *wu* presents for real-world situations. The *Lao-Zi* never explicitly claims that Dao is *wu* or non-being.

Dao is not only the source, but also the ground, sustenance, and sustaining power of all beings. This function is usually associated with and embodied by *de* (德), which is difficult to render, though it is usually translated 'virtue' or 'power'. *De* essentially denotes Dao's function, feature, and principle in individual beings. In Chapter 51 of the silk versions:

> Dao produces [10,000 things], and *de* rears them. Things take shape, and vessels are formed. This is why the ten-thousand things all revere Dao and honor *de*. Dao is revered and *de* honored not because they are bestowed with nobility but because this is an ongoing and natural thing to do. Dao produces and rears them, brings them up and accomplishes them, brings them to fruition and maturity, feeds and shelters them. It produces them without claiming to possess them; it benefits them yet exacts no gratitude for this; it is the steward yet exercises no authority over them. Such is called *xuan-de* (玄德 profound and secret virtue).

Xuan-de is a feature character of Dao, and serves as the bridge between Dao and the human world. It is embodied by the sage who is a model in practicing the values, ways, and principles represented and promoted by Dao.

Dao is an indefinite and ambiguous term with a core meaning that seems a serious disadvantage, especially to modern philosophers who are used to defining concepts and propositions clearly. But in Lao Zi's case, in the context of cosmic and ontic

issues that have eluded resolution by the measurements of science and mathematics, this might well be reckoned an advantage and a strength. We should pay attention to Lao Zi's naming of Dao. Bamboo slip version of Chapter 25 reads: 'There was some shape (*zhuang* 狀) undifferentiated and yet complete, which arose before Heaven and Earth. Still and indistinct, it stands alone and unchanging.'[15] This is speculation on the primordial origin of the universe, which is shapeless, formless, alone, and still. The more significant claim follows: 'It can be regarded as the mother of the universe. Not yet knowing its name, I have styled it Dao; forced to give it a proper name, I would call it Great.' This reluctant attitude and ambiguous statement must derive from foresight and discretion. Lao Zi seems to know that he has no grounds to suppose anything specific about the origin and basis of the universe. The concrete things human beings know, such as fire, water, wind, earth, and even the gods, could not produce the whole universe. This sounds logical and in accord with scientific discoveries. What Lao Zi is sure about is that there must be a beginning stage and state from which the universe evolved, but he could not know exactly what it might have been. For him, Dao was simply a compromise, a symbol for that stage and state, and we are not supposed to attempt a precise or specific definition for it.

3 *Zi-Ran* and *Wu-Wei*: Daoist Value and Approach

3.1 *Humanistic naturalness as a central value*

While everyone knows the essential position of Dao in Lao Zi's philosophy, not many pay enough attention to *zi-ran* and its significance in Lao Zi's thought. *Zi* (自) denotes 'self', *ran* (然) denotes 'so'; thus, *zi-ran* literally indicates 'self-so' or 'so-of-itself', suggesting that something or some state of affairs develops naturally. In this discussion, I sometimes use 'naturalness' as a stand-in for *zi-ran*.

Zi-ran is often translated as 'nature', which causes various misunderstandings. Raymond Williams has asserted that 'nature is perhaps the most complex word in the language' (1985: 219). 'Nature' or 'natural' is often used in a shifting way, indicating or suggesting the material world, natural forces, natural things, structures, and process, natural selection, human nature, inherent characteristics, etc. There are varied oppositions to nature, such as nature vs. culture, nature vs. nurture, natural vs. artificial, and natural vs. romantic. Furthermore, 'A "state of nature" could be contrasted – sometimes pessimistically but more often optimistically and even programmatically – with an existing state of society.' Williams thus contends: 'since nature is a word which carries, over a very long period, many of the major variations of human thought – often, in any particular use, only implicitly yet with powerful effect on the character of the argument – it is necessary to be especially aware of its difficulty' (1985: 223–4). This analysis is roughly suitable for modern Chinese. The word *zi-ran* in modern China carries nearly all the complex meanings and variations of the English word 'nature'. Thus, many read divergent modern meanings of the word 'nature' into *zi-ran*, and so even in its classical usage, it is often mistakenly taken to refer to the natural world, biological nature, the state of primitive societies, and doing

nothing to let nature take its course, and the word is even associated with Hobbes's 'state of nature'.

To understand Lao Zi's *zi-ran*, we might go to the last passage of Chapter 25, which says: 'People model themselves on the earth (*ren-fa-di* 人法地), the earth models itself on Heaven (*di-fa-tian* 地法天), Heaven models itself on Dao (*tian-fa-dao* 天法道), and Dao models itself on *zi-ran* (*dao-fa-zi-ran* 道法自然).' Obviously, the four sentences follow the 'subject–predicate–object' structure, so that 'man', 'earth', 'Heaven', 'Dao', separated into four sentences, act as subject, 'models' is the common verb, and 'earth', 'Heaven', 'Dao', and *zi-ran* are the four objects of the verb *fa* (法). The meaning here is that human beings should imitate the principles of Heaven, Heaven in turn should operate in accordance with the principles of Dao, and Dao should operate according to the principles of *zi-ran*. Grammatically *zi-ran* is a noun, as object, though its meaning is natural or a situation developing naturally. *Zi-ran* here should not be translated as 'nature': it does not denote the natural world or natural forces. In ancient China, the natural world is often referred as *tian* (天), *tian-di* (天地), or *wan-wu* (萬物). *Zi-ran* does not, until modern China, indicate the physical world. Thus, we translate it as 'naturalness' to show that its meaning is adjectival, while grammatically it is nominative. This reading accords with syntactic analyses, admits no redundancy, and unfolds step by step from human to Dao. Therefore this is a correct and better reading than the others.[16]

Dao is the ultimate source and the grounds of Heaven, earth, and people; thus, the claim that *zi-ran* is the object on which Dao models itself promotes *zi-ran* to the very highest status as a positive value and central principle for human beings. In this context, Heaven and Earth do not merely evoke the natural world. Their characteristics and features are also colored by *naturalness* – a highly charged positive value. This is to say that when Lao Zi advocates people modeling themselves on Heaven and Earth, episodic natural disasters, such as earthquake, tsunami, hurricane, and volcanic eruption, are excluded. The fact of the matter is that natural disasters occur in violation of the meanings and significance of *zi-ran* or naturalness. Lao Zi's naturalness suggests the harmony of human societies and of the universe, without conflicts, oppression, and chaos. In short, Dao not only has universal force and function, it also embodies the highest values for human societies. The model for Dao itself, naturalness here is promoted as the central value in the highest and holistic stratum.[17] Following are the middle and foundational strata.

Naturalness penetrates all aspects of human life. For instance, in Chapter 17 the *Lao-Zi* advocates naturalness in the relationship between a ruler and the people. The silk version reads:

> The best of all rulers is but a shadowy presence to subjects;
> Next comes the ruler they love and praise;
> Next comes one they fear;
> Next comes one whom they insult.
> […]
> (1) Hesitant, [I (voice of the sage)] do not utter words lightly

(*You hu qi gui yan ye* 猶乎其貴言也),

(2) When [I] have accomplished my task and done my work,
    (*cheng shi sui gong* 成事遂功)

(3) Then the common people all say I [practice] naturalness.
    (*er bai xing yue wo zi-ran ye* 而百姓曰我自然也)

Here the best ruler does not force people to do anything and makes no display of his own kindness or virtue – the people only know of his existence and have no need to pay attention to him. This is the 'empty throne' ruler of the Daoist ideal. The next best ruler acts in ways that excite the admiration and affection of the people; this is the sagely ruler of the Confucian ideal. The next best ruler instills fear in his subjects; this is what is commonly referred to as a benighted ruler. Even worse is the ruler who inflicts hardships on his subjects and earns himself nothing but insults and abuse. This is what is referred to as a violent ruler. The sage, the Daoist ideal of leadership, is unhurried and at ease, a person of few words. He has accomplished tasks to his satisfaction, and yet the people do not realize that he has done anything, but believe he is practicing the principle of naturalness.

There is a problem of interpretation with regard to Chapter 17. Most scholars have been of the opinion that *zi-ran* here does not indicate that the ruler did nothing, but rather that his actions were accomplished imperceptibly, without the people being aware of them, or that his actions were accepted as something that had developed of their own accord. This raises an important issue: whether or not the value of *naturalness* can allow for the effect of external force. According to traditional commentaries, the application of external force counts as natural as long as people are not directly aware of it. If one accepts this interpretation, then naturalness would not preclude the exertion of external force or acquiescence to the influence of such force, it just precludes the use of external force in a *coercive* manner.

Another problem affecting the interpretation of this passage concerns who it is that is speaking. My reading, which is based on the bamboo and silk versions, is different from those of the popular commentaries. There is no subject in lines (1) and (2). I assume the subject is 'I', the author and the representative speaker for the sage. This pattern is also seen in Chapter 43: 'Thus *I* know the advantages of non-action. *The teaching that is without words*, the advantages of non-action, few in the world attain these.' Here 'I' practice teaching without words, similar to line (1): '[I] do not utter words lightly.' A passage in Chapter 2 similarly reads: '[The] *sage* abides in the business of non-action and *practices the teaching that is without words*'. Thus we can assume that 'I' is used for the voice of the sage. This is common and more examples could be found in Chapters 20, 57, 67, and 70. Line (3), 'Then the common people all say I [practice] naturalness', is similar to 'The whole world says that I am great' (silk version, Ch. 67).[18] In this sentence, the subject 'I' cannot be changed by 'people in the world' (Liu 2006: 207–10). According to my reading, naturalness is a concept to promote sagely principles in the treatment of people and the world. Chapter 17 discusses the relationship of the sage and the community, covering the significance of naturalness at the middle level, namely the community stratum.[19]

Now I move on to the foundational and individual stratum of the principle of naturalness. Chapter 64 develops the concept of naturalness from the perspective of the relationship between the sage and myriad things:

> Therefore the sage desires not to desire,
> And does not value goods that are hard to come by;
> He studies what is not studied,
> And makes good the mistakes of the multitude.
> He just assists ten-thousand things' naturalness and dare not to act.
> (Yi-fu-wan-wu-zhi-zi-ran er-bu-gan-wei 以輔萬物之自然, 而不敢為)

According to the last sentence, the sage helps the myriad of creatures to realize their natural prosperity, but dares not to act generally in the manner of the common people.[20] This point is stated more clearly and forcefully in the bamboo versions A and C.[21] Bamboo A is earlier, the sentence is more complete, and its meaning is more readily comprehensible:

> And so the sage is *able* to assist the naturalness of the ten-thousand things,
> but is *unable* to act [in the manner of most people].
> (*Shi-gu-sheng-ren-neng-fu-wan-wu-zhi-zi-ran er-fu-neng-wei*
> 是故聖人能輔萬物之自然, 而弗能為)[22]

Evidently, the sage is able to help the myriad of creatures, but unable to proceed with regular work. What one is able to do and what one is unable to do constitute two aspects of the comprehensive understanding of Lao Zi's theory of *wu-wei* (無為, non-action) and general principles of action.

Literally speaking, 'able' and 'unable' may refer either to capability or to obligations due to one's rank, knowledge, or morals. The sagely role should include a level of capability and the authority necessary to accomplish major works, but here 'unable' clearly indicates that the position and duties of a Daoist sage preclude him from indulging in the desires of the common folk, or that his moral standards restrict his behavior and methods. Regardless, these all represent a subjectivity making active decisions. Other well-known versions feature a different take on this phrase 'does not dare to act', suggesting an outward-looking configuration, a passive and imposed-upon attitude and method produced by a fear of consequences. Bamboo A presents a positive and active attitude, while other editions markedly dampen this tone. What we are left with is the possibility that the sage's role is not a too passive one, and *wu-wei* or non-action is in fact an assertive attitude in a certain sense, rather than an excuse for behavior based on 'not daring'. This reading is not in conflict with the suggestion that the sage actually supports the natural inclinations of the multitude, but he has no need to *force* them to be natural.

Here, the terms 'assist' and 'act' also deserve special attention. Today we take the Chinese word *wei* (為, act) as typically including all kinds of behavior, so 'assisting' is a type of 'action'. 'Non-action' thus negates all behavior, so the sage is someone who

does nothing at all. But this obviously was not the specific meaning in this context of the *Lao-Zi*. Lao Zi clearly did not mean 'assist' to be a subcategory of 'acting' and so all actions are negated by the phrase 'cannot act.' This suggests that the *wu-wei* concept is not meant to negate all action. 'Assisting the myriad things' naturalness' is the sage's particular way of behaving, not something that just anyone can do, or a normal form of behavior. This special agency suggests that naturalness does not mean doing nothing, and that neither does it indicate a primordial state lacking human civilization.

The 'myriad things' that the sage helps can be taken as a collective or as individual entities. So the sage's assistance must fall to each individual thing within the collective or else this assertion is a boast and a falsehood. When Lao Zi makes naturalness a value and principle, it must include respect, concern, and loving care for all living things. Not only does the sage's role include nurture and concern with overall development, it means allowing each blade of grass, tree, household, family, village, town, territory, and nation to enjoy the environment and space each needs to develop normally. This is the foundation and condition of overall naturalness and harmony. 'Assisting', then, involves creating a healthy environment and providing necessities, as well as care and protection from interference and control.

The values of the Daoist sage are quite distinct from those of the Confucian sage and from those of the common people. The Daoist sage seeks no personal merit. When this conception of value is put into practice it manifests itself as fostering and preserving the ideal state of all things and by actively avoiding schemes to impose changes according to some external standard. Whoever is not satisfied to simply assist and preserve the myriad things' naturalness, and instead uses knowledge, privileged position, or power to improve and transform it, may inadvertently ruin it. The attitude of the sage toward naturalness exemplifies the early Daoist theory of value. It is the key value in matters such as relationships between the ruler and the common people, the sage and the myriad things; the interrelation of people, Heaven, Earth, and Dao; and it even extends to the proper principles of administration.

The idea of naturalness specific to human beings and society is expressed in somewhat different terms, such as self-transformation (*zi-hua* 自化), self-correction (*zi-zheng* 自正), self-prosperity (*zi-fu* 自富), self-simplicity (*zi-pu* 自樸), self-equilibrium (*zi-jun* 自均), self-obedience (*zi-bin* 自賓), and self-stabilization (*zi-ding* 自定). All of these present an ideal way in which to approach the problem of achieving harmony in the universe, in communities, and between and within individuals without recourse to external schemes, coercion, and oppression. Passages in which the idea of naturalness is described indirectly without explicit mention of the term can be found throughout the text.

Constituting holistic, middle, and foundational strata, naturalness as a value and a principle span all relationships and engagements between people and the cosmos as a whole, sages and people, people and people, and people as individual beings in the world. We can thus without reservation view naturalness as universal and fundamental to Lao Zi's philosophical system.[23]

3.2 A principled approach to humanistic naturalness

Wu-wei (無為) is an important technical term in Lao Zi's thought. It is often translated as 'non-action'. This translation is not perfectly precise, but we may take it as a token of the term's Chinese meaning so long as we keep in mind that its true meaning goes beyond the literal. *Wu-wei* has also been rendered as 'effortless action' (Slingerland 2003), 'acting naturally', and 'non-purposive action', each of which reflects an aspect of the term's connotations. Additional interpretations include 'never overdoing', 'no conscious effort', 'no set purpose', 'non-dual action', and 'utilitarian principle that serves the social purpose of winning the world' (Zhu 2002: 53).

Wu-wei presents special challenges because it combines two extremely general words, *wu* (無), a particle that negates the meaning of the word that follows it, and *wei* (為), which denotes any kind of act and behavior, whether good or bad, active or passive, etc. This combination seems to signal the cancellation of all acts and behaviors with no discrimination made among them. Obviously, this literal interpretation cannot be its true meaning: anyone who just advocates doing nothing would hardly become an influential thinker or philosopher. In fact, according to a comprehensive reading and analysis of the text, *wu-wei* suggests an exceptional approach to action and behavior that has extraordinary outcomes.

Pang Pu finds that *wu* had three meanings in ancient times:

1 The state of 'there is not' that exists before and after 'there is'. This is the term's most general denotation in everyday life.
2 Something that is there but we cannot find or perceive it, for example, a spirit or ghost that people believe exists and communicates via a medium or shaman.
3 The concept of absolute nothingness, like Wang Bi's term 'non-being' (Pang 1986).

According to Pang's analyses, the *wu* in *wu-wei* should carry the second meaning; thus *wu-wei* suggests that some action and behavior are influential and effectual, but they are sufficiently unobtrusive as to be not felt or noticed by people.

Wu-wei as a technical term has a specific agent in Lao Zi's thought. On examining the twelve references to *wu-wei* in ten chapters, we find that the sage is specified as its agent in five of those chapters. For example: 'The sage says, "I conduct non-action and the people transform themselves"' (Ch. 57); 'Thus the sage abides in the business of non-action and practices the teaching that is without words' (Ch. 2).[24] In four chapters, we can easily infer that the agent of non-action is also a sage; for example, Chapter 43 says: 'That is why I know the benefit to taking non-action, the teaching that is without words …' Obviously, here 'I' must refer to same agent specified in Chapter 2, since the wording is otherwise the same; so we know that the 'I' who knows the advantage of non-action is also a sage.[25] The only exception, where the agent is not a sage, occurs in Chapter 37: 'Dao consistently conducts non-action, but nothing is left undone.' Here, Dao is the formal and anthropomorphic agent of non-action. Because the sage is an embodiment of Dao in the human world, we can conclude that

Dao-as-agent is in accordance with the sage as agent of non-action. Therefore, we can safely assert that the sage is the essential agent of non-action.

Why should we have to argue that it is the sage who is the agent of *wu-wei* or non-action? There are two points. First, this is proof that the *Lao-Zi* is not a book treating the practical art of government for rulers in power (*jun-ren-nan-mian-zhi-shu* 君人南面之術); this strain of thinking was in fact introduced as a feature of the much later Han Daoism or the art of 'Huang-Lao school' (黃老之學). Second, *wu-wei* is the ideal practice the sage uses to treat and take care of the people, societies, and the world. It is geared to realize the ideal condition of naturalness, and is not a regular craft or method for people in everyday life, though the folk should learn the principle of non-action from the sage and imitate this practice. This ideal is neither utopian plan nor idealistic dream; it is not a matter of practical strategies and techniques, let alone of conspiracy and trickery.

Wu-wei or non-action is just the most general negative term and it is thus representative of a cluster of dozens of 'no/not-something' phrases, such as no-action (*bu-wei* 不為), no-struggle (*bu-zheng* 不爭), no-business (*wu-shi* 無事), no-desire (*wu-yu* 無欲, *bu-yu* 不欲), no-possession (*bu-you* 不有), no-dependence (*bu-shi* 不恃), no-authority (*bu-zai* 不宰), no-knowledge (*wu-zhi* 無知), no-selfishness (*wu-si* 無私), no-body (*wu-shen* 無身), etc. All these phrases imply an attitude that apparently runs contrary to common knowledge, customs, values, and methods, but motivates one toward higher values and better results that can be approached only through an extraordinary manner and method.

Wu-wei suggests the cancellation and reduction of regular actions and behaviors toward ideal social and universal effects: 'The sage succeeds in *becoming great* because he makes *no attempt to be great*. It is for this reason that he is able to perfect greatness' (Ch. 34, silk edition). Not attempting to be great is the way to realize the true greatness. Similar claims in Chapter 47:

> By not setting foot outside the door,
> One knows the whole world;
> By not looking out of the window,
> One knows the way of heaven …
> Hence the sage knows without having to stir,
> Identifies without having to see,
> Accomplishes without having to do
>
> (Lau 2001: 205)

Lao Zi's non-action is the embodiment of the Way of Heaven (*Tian-dao* 天道), which is contrasted with regular activity practiced by the multitudes. Chapter 73 reads: 'The Way of Heaven does not compete, and yet it skillfully achieves victory' (Chan 1963: 228). Lao Zi promotes non-action because he believes that in following the Way of Heaven, non-competition is the right and better way to realize one's aspiration, namely, realizing and sustaining social harmony and keeping the world peaceful. The sage should practice the Way of Heaven, as is further stated in Chapter

81: 'The way of heaven is to benefit others and not to injure. The way of the sage is to act but not to compete' (Chan 1963: 240). All these doctrines can be summarized as one formula: avoiding and devaluing regular action leads both to a higher spiritual vision and better practical outcomes. *Wu-wei* does not simply mean to negate action, for it is a positive idea and means by which to reach perfection. It is a dialectic and transcending concept in light of purpose and aspiration.

The same theoretical pattern may be discerned in the famous saying: 'Doing nothing, yet nothing is left undone' (*wu-wei-er-wu-bu-wei* 無爲而無不為). Some scholars follow Han Fei Zi (韓非子) in rendering this saying and employ it as a tactic in battles and political struggles. In this case, *wu-wei* or non-action camouflages one's true purpose, and *wu-bu-wei* or nothing is left undone suggests that a personal goal is achieved in an underhanded way. This *maneuver interpretation* and its application to political and military struggles is hardly rare, but this interpretation does not derive from a close textual reading. In the *Lao-Zi*, the sage is wholeheartedly devoted to assisting the myriad creatures with no personal interest, thus it is repeated that '[the sage] produces things but does not take possession of them … he accomplishes his task but does not claim credit for it' (Ch. 2). Furthermore, the silk version of chapter 49 says:

> The sage is consistently without a mind of his own.
> He takes as his own the mind of the people.
> Treat as good those who are good.
> Treat as good also those who are not good …
> Have faith in those who are of good faith.
> Have faith also in those who lack good faith
>
> (Lau 2001: 207)

If the sage consistently takes the people's mind as his own, he needs no secret scheme by which to proceed, and the phrase 'nothing is left undone' then suggests that people gain the opportunity and conditions in which they can develop their *naturalness*. The people enjoy these benefits and do not need to thank anyone for them.

I have briefly discussed the core meanings of three key technical concepts in the *Dao-De-Jing,* namely Dao, naturalness, and non-action. These three aspects of Lao Zi's thought should not be understood as separate and isolated. They are associated in a roughly coherent system in which they support and interpenetrate each other. Dao provides a quasi-metaphysical ground for naturalness and non-action, and these two in turn embody the principles and values of Dao. While naturalness represents Dao's core value, non-action provides a principle of approach that will bring about naturalness; at the same time, naturalness sets the direction and goals of non-action. A more comprehensive picture must also take into greater account *de* (德) and the theory of reversion or dialectics, but even so the brief analyses presented above already demonstrate that the *Dao-De-Jing* deserves more serious academic investigation and discussion. Based on a detailed reading of the primary text and close textual interpretation, we may uncover and present significant new theories for the modern world through creative interpretation of the *Lao-Zi:* this though is not the primary task of this essay.

Notes

1. About the invention of the term Daoism, see Smith 2003.
2. The county of Ku originally belonged to the state of Chen, which was taken over by the state of Chu in 478 BCE. The romanization of the place names is based on modern Mandarin pronunciation.
3. The 'Biography of Lao Zi' is from *Shi-Ji*, vol. 63 (Sima 1975: 2139-43). The translation is adapted from Chan (1963: 36–7), Henricks (2000: 133–4), and Lau (2001: x–xi).
4. *Shi-Ji*, vol. 67 (Sima 1975: 2186).
5. 129 years should be 105 (Wang 199: 48).
6. Some scholars think the *Shi-Ji* is not a reliable history, but a literary work. This view obviously exaggerates the literary element of this work and is neither comprehensive nor objective. Archeological discoveries have repeatedly proved that Sima Qian's records have historical worth. To a certain degree literary skill and imagination are helpful in understanding and writing to record and reveal historical truth. Even modern academics write history relying on certain literary techniques. For example, the books Jonathan D. Spence and Ray Huang wrote on Chinese history became bestsellers partly thanks to their storytelling skills and literary talents, which strengthened their historical interpretation, rather than weakened its trustworthiness.
7. Due to limited space, I cannot discuss these issues in details. I intend to write more about this argument later.
8. *Kong-Zi-Jia-Yu* and *Shuo Yuan* were traditionally considered 'false books'. However, numerous bamboo slips from an early Han tomb unearthed in 1973 at Ding Xian (定縣), Hebei, contain passages identical to those in both those works. This suggests that the contents of the two books were collected from pre-Qin or early Han sources.
9. See discussion in *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy*, 4.2 (2005): 321–52.
10. This comparison of the various versions becomes easy and convenient with the publication of *Lao-Zi-Gu-Jin* (老子古今) (Liu 2006).
11. We find seventy-one references to Dao in the silk versions and seventy-six in the Wang version (Liu 2003: 369).
12. This and the following italics are mine to emphasize and compare key points among the various interpretations of Dao.
13. All translations of the *Lao-Zi* are adapted from Chan (1963), Henricks (1991; 2000), Ivanhoe (2002), and Lau (2001).
14. Translation of Wang Bi is adapted from Lynn (1999: 135).
15. Major differences between the bamboo and the received versions include: shape (*zhuang* 狀) is thing (*wu* 物) in received versions, and the latter has one more sentence: 'It operates everywhere and is free from danger' (Henricks 2000: 55; Li 2002a: 3; Qiu 2004: 208).
16. For two other ways in which this passage has been read, see Liu (2006: 288–9) and Wang (2003: 229).
17. In Chapter 51 *zi-ran* is also invoked at this level, described as the key feature of Dao.
18. The sentence in the received version is 'The whole world says that my Dao is great.'
19. Chapter 23, 'To be sparing with words is in accordance with naturalness' also belongs to this community stratum.
20. This sentence in the received versions was once misunderstood as 'The sage takes a number of steps in order to help the myriad creatures both to be natural and to refrain from daring to act' (Lau 2001: 164).
21. For these differences and analysis of the various versions, see Liu (2006: 621–2).
22. The words '*Bu-gan-wei* 不敢為' in received versions are replaced by *fu-neng-wei* (弗能為) or *Fu-gan-wei* (弗敢為) in the bamboo and silk versions. Although both *bu* (不) and *fu* (弗) are negative adverbs, *fu* (弗) usually suggests an omitted objective *zhi* (之) after the verb negated by *fu* (弗). Therefore, *fu-neng-wei* (弗能為) could read as *fu-neng-wei-zhi* (弗能為之). Lau asserts that 之 indicates *fu-wan-wu-zhi-zi-ran* (輔萬物之自然), and the sentence is rendered as: 'The sage is able to help the myriad creatures to be natural but he dare not do it' (Lau 2001: 164), and translated as '[The sage] is able to

help the ten thousand things to be what they are in themselves, and yet he cannot do it' (Henricks 2000: 42). These are misreadings. First, Lau dogmatically applies the grammatical rule in this reading and neglects the fact that there are a lot of exceptions for any grammatical regulation. Second, Lau seems to believe that *Lao-Zi*'s sage would do nothing, even 'to assist ten-thousand things'. In what follows I argue that *wu-wei* does not mean doing nothing, but doing in a more effectual way for the harmony of society.

23. It is obvious but easily forgotten that *zi-ran* in the *Lao-Zi* is quite different from that in *Zhuang-Zi* or other Daoist works. Philip J. Ivanhoe suggests that we read the sentence in this way: 'And so the sage is able to assist the naturalness of the ten thousand things, but cannot *make* them (natural).' The idea seems quite consistent with the text, and recognizes the pronoun object *zhi* that is fused with the negative.

24. The other three chapters are 3, 63, and 64.

25. More samples are in Chapters 10, 38, and 48.

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Chapter 8
DAOISM (II): ZHUANG ZI AND THE *ZHUANG-ZI*

Vincent Shen

1 Introduction

The proper name 'Zhuang Zi' refers both to the philosopher with the family name 'Zhuang' (莊) and the given name 'Zhou' (周), who lived arguably in the period 375–300 BCE and who represented the second phase of the development of classical Daoism,[1] and to the major work produced during this phase of Daoism, the *Zhuang-Zi* (莊子), which is attributed to his name, even if some of its contents might not be his own work. The *Zhuang-Zi*, though attributed to Zhuang Zi, has always been beset by the problems of authorship and authenticity. Most historians and scholars would agree that the 'Seven Inner Chapters' are his work, but the rest may be the work of his followers and other Daoists, including the Huanglao (黃老) Daoists.

Historically, there is a lot to debate concerning which belongs to whom, but philosophy should always be based on the reading of the entire text, in this case that of the *Zhuang-Zi*. For all Chinese literati it has always been an excitingly inspiring experience to read the *Zhuang-Zi*, especially in the form of its received version under the editorship of Guo Xiang (郭象; 252?–312 CE). This is also the approach I take. My discussion in this chapter focuses on the philosophical meaning that can be drawn out of the reading of the entire contents of the *Zhuang-Zi*, rather than limiting ourselves to only the 'Inner Chapters' ('*Nei-Qi-Pian*' 內七篇) in looking for thoughts proper to Zhuang Zi and thereby getting ourselves trapped in the unceasing debate about which parts belong authentically to him.

The earliest historical record that we possess concerning the life of Zhuang Zi is to be found in Sima Qian's (司馬遷; 145?–89? BCE) *Shi-Ji* (史記 *Records of the Grand Historian*). Here I quote only a few lines:

> Zhuang Zi, whose name was Zhou, was a native of Meng 蒙. He once served as an official in the lacquer garden, and lived at the same time as King Hui of Liang 梁惠王 and King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王. His learning was so broad to the point of leaving nothing unseen, but essentially its fundamental ideas were

based upon the words of Lao Zi. He wrote a work in 100,000 words or more which was mostly in the nature of fable.

(Sima Qian: 678)

These texts, though not historically sure and not without counter-arguments, furnish us at least with three historical facts:

1 Zhuang Zi, named Zhou, though without precise dates for his birth and death, lived at the same time as the reigns of King Hui (370–319 BCE) of Liang and King Xuan (320–302 BCE) of Qi.
2 He once served as a lowly official in a lacquer garden, giving him, arguably, a chance to live close to nature and to observe both natural and technical processes.
3 Although he inherited basically the philosophy of Lao Zi, he had a very broad learning and was, arguably, the author of a work in 100,000 words, even if our received version today has only around 70,000 words.

Concerning the third point, today, unlike Sima Qian, we would be more hesitant about attributing the entire 100,000 words of content to Zhuang Zi himself. But we know that, in the *Han-Shu-Yi-Wen-Zhi* (漢書藝文誌 *Record of Arts and Literature in the History of the Former Han Dynasty*), it was said that the *Zhuang-Zi* was a work in fifty-two chapters (Ban Gu 443). Probably it was this version that had 100,000 words when Sima Qian saw it. However, when Guo Xiang compiled the work, it had thirty-three chapters, altogether about 70,000 words, divided into three parts, the 'Seven Inner Chapters', the 'Outer Chapters' (15), and the 'Miscellaneous Chapters' (11), among which only the *Seven Inner Chapters* could coherently be seen, though still with some dubious paragraphs, as to have been written by Zhuang Zi. This is also the edition that we receive today. Although not all 70,000 words may be attributed to Zhuang Zi himself, what Zhuang Zi has indeed written must be more than those written by Lao Zi.

2 Zhuang Zi and His Interlocutor(s)

One recurrent question we ask about early Daoist philosophy is why philosophers such as Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, in denying the adequacy of language, as human construction, in conveying the true knowledge of Reality Itself nevertheless still appeal to language to express their philosophical ideas? Lao Zi, in his famous saying, 'Dao could be told of, but the Dao told is not the constant Dao', made the distinction between Reality Itself (the constant Dao) and Constructed Reality (the Dao told or articulated), yet he still used linguistic construction and wrote 5,000 words that have fascinated intellectuals worldwide.

As to Zhuang Zi, who sustained even more firmly the eloquence of silence and was vehemently critical of the use of language and argumentation, he had written much more than Lao Zi. Among the extant thirty-three chapters of the *Zhuang-Zi*, even if we count only the 'Seven Inner Chapters', when compared with the *Lao-Zi*, all these

were already overly loquacious and wordy for a philosopher critical of the inadequacy of language to the point even of denying it. Mere appeal to the indispensability of using language, even against language itself, is not enough to explain this generous use of words and literal eloquence on the part of Zhuang Zi. One possible explanation is Zhuang Zi's rival friendship with Hui Shi (惠施; 370–330 BCE), eminent member of *ming-jia* (名家) (the school of Names), who emphasized very much the use of language as well as Zhuang Zi's critical dialogue with him.

This is to point out that Zhuang Zi's philosophy should be understood in contrast to that of Hui Shi and the school of Names in general. A philosopher faces always many other philosophers, as his or her multiple others,[2] among whom might be some of his main interlocutor(s). This has been the case with Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism, Mohism, and the Debaters (or members of the school of Names), etc. As to the Daoists, we find explicit or hidden interlocutors in the *Lao-Zi* and the *Zhuang-Zi*. Even if the *Lao-Zi* seems to have been written in the form of a monologue, we may still presume, for example, those critiques of Confucian virtues such as *ren* (仁), *yi* (義), *zhong* (忠), *xiao* (孝) in Chapters 18 and 19, and Chapter 38 that demonstrated critically the degeneration from *ren* to *yi*, from *yi* to *li* (禮) when deprived of *dao* (道) and *de* (德), so that we can tell for sure Confucianism was its hidden interlocutor.

We may assume, by reading the text of the *Zhuang-Zi*, that among Confucianism, Mohism and the school of Names as his multiple others, Zhuang Zi had the latter as his main counterpart in dialogue. The members of the school of Names, known as the 'debaters' (*bian-ze* 辯者), argued with linguistic and logical devices without explicit interest in transcendental/ontological discourse. For example, in the chapter 'Qiu-Shui' (秋水) *Autumn Flood*, Gongsun Long (公孫龍), one of eminent leaders of this School, was reported as feeling confused when listening to words of Zhuang Zi and said:

> When I was young I studied the Way of the former kings, and when I grew older I came to understand the practice of humanness and righteousness. I reconciled sameness and difference, distinguished hardness and whiteness, and proved that not-so was so, and affirmed what others denied. I confounded the knowledge of the hundred schools, and demolished the arguments of a host of speakers. I believed I had attained the highest degree of achievements. But now I have heard the words of Zhuang Zi and am bewildered by their strangeness, I don't know whether my arguments are not as good as his, or whether I am no match for him in understanding. I find now I cannot even open my mouth.
>
> (Watson: 185–6, with my corrections[3])

This text presumes that Gongsun Long, as leader of the school of Names, had been in the early days of his formation under the influence of Confucian political and moral philosophy. It shows also that Gongsun Long argued, by means of formal and semantic devices, the reconciliation of sameness with difference and the relation between different kinds of attributes, such as hardness (from the sense of touch) and whiteness

(from the sense of sight), and challenged ruthlessly the propositions of other schools. However, in facing Zhuang Zi, his belligerent mouth was silenced in starting to doubt the limitation of his own arguments and his powers of comprehension.

The debaters' belligerent, argumentative attitude, its reliance on formal and semantic devices, and its tendency to make all kinds of distinctions and differentiations were fundamental to the school of Names as a whole. Members of the school entertained a confrontational and competitive relation with others, and a reliance on external criteria rather than the interiority and self-understanding to solve the situation of conflict.

For the purpose of understanding the philosophy of Zhuang Zi and his followers, it is most interesting to consider Zhuang Zi's relations with Hui Shi, his best friend, and the school of Names in general. Zhuang Zi and Hui Shi discussed and disputed one with another. Hui Shi was considered by Zhuang Zi as a counterpart in dialogue and a worthy 'opponent', and the *Zhuang-Zi* recorded many of the issues discussed by Zhuang Zi and Hui Shi. In all these dialogues, Zhuang Zi criticized the difficulties of Hui Shi's position and thereby made clear his own stance. These texts must be the primary evidence that indeed Zhuang Zi and his followers had well understood their relations with debaters as interlocutors in rival friendship. Most vividly it is recorded in the chapter entitled 'Xu-Wu-Gui' (徐無鬼) that Zhuang Zi himself grieved so much on the death of Hui Shi, even to the point of willing himself to hold his tongue ever since, because following the demise of Hui Shi, there was no other worthy interlocutor. The story goes that Zhuang Zi, in passing by Hui Shi's grave during a funeral procession, said to his followers that, 'Since you died, Master Hui, I have no counterpart for discussion. There's no one I can talk to any more' (Watson: 269, with my corrections). These words were indeed very sad when they came out of the mouth of an old philosopher, without anyone to talk to or worthy of talking with.

The relationship obtaining between Zhuang Zi and Hui Shi is also interesting for comparative and intercultural philosophy, for discussing the relationship between philosophy and science, and for peering through a Chinese looking-glass at philosophy East and West. Western philosophy, starting in ancient Greece, has also been a matter of discussion and debate among friends, who never engaged in philosophizing purely loving friendship, but somehow friendship in rivalry. Socrates and his younger friends never agreed upon anything proposed as definitions of concepts such as friendship, justice, knowledge, beauty, etc. The common love, the *philos*, they had for wisdom (*sophia*), different from *eros* and *agape*, was never a harmonious love without further competition and challenge. It came out always that no definition was acceptable as absolute and complete.

It was more or less the same with Zhuang Zi and Hui Shi, for whom philosophy was also an enjoyable play of discourse between intimate yet somehow friendly rivals, friends never totally harmonized by their friendship and their common love of truth. On the contrary, they fought each other with words, inflamed always with zeal in the search for further truth.

Hui Shi was a natural scientist, a logical debater, and a prime minister of the State of Liang. Zhuang Zi was the guardian of a lacquer garden, a man of letters, and

a philosopher. In the texts of the *Zhuang-Zi*, we read stories about their enjoyment of scholarly conversations, real or fictional, in which they exchanged critical views about life and death, relations among things, about whether ideas should have any practical use or their knowing or not what a fish enjoyed in darting around, etc. Zhuang Zi, in all these debates, used metaphors, parables, historical or fictional narratives or deconstructional criticisms instead of conceptual construction or logical argumentation to rebut Hui Shi. For example, in the chapter 'De-Chong-Fu' (德充符 'The Sign of Virtue Complete'), their different views on human feelings, body and life are revealed:

> Hui Zi said to Zhuang Zi, 'Can a human being really be without feelings?'
> Zhuang Zi: 'Yes.'
> Hui Zi: 'But a human being who has no feelings – how can you call him human?'
> Zhuang Zi: 'Dao gave him an outer appearance, Heaven gave him a body-form, why can't you call him human?'
> Hui Zi: 'But if you've really called him human, how can he be without feelings?'
> Zhuang Zi: 'That's not what I mean by feelings. By "without feelings", I mean that a human being doesn't allow his likes or dislikes to get in and harm himself. He just lets things be the way they are and doesn't try to add them upon his life.'
> Hui Zi: 'If he does not add them upon to his life, then how can he possess his own body?'
> Zhuang Zi: 'Dao gave him his appearance, Heaven gave him his body-form. He doesn't let his likes or dislikes to get in and harm his own self. But you, you live outside of your own spirit and wear out your own energy, leaning on a tree arguing until tired and sleeping round a dead *wu-tong* (梧桐 dryandra) tree. Heaven picked out a body for you and you use it to gibber about "hard" and "white"!'
> (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi*: 100–1; my retranslation based on Watson: 75–6)

It would be going too far to say that Hui Shi sustained an emotionalist position on human nature, but at least we can tell for sure that for him it was human to have feelings and strong emotional preferences, for example, in his own case, that for winning a debate. This was an anthropocentric vision of human nature and a pragmatic vision of human feelings. However, for Zhuang Zi, those strong emotional preferences and dislikes that Hui Shi experienced in winning or losing a debate, like those over the doctrine of 'hard' and 'white', were against the natural way of the *dao* and Heaven. Being against the natural rhythms of things, they were harmful to human spiritual life. For Zhuang Zi, human life should serve spiritual purposes other than merely those of debating.

Another famous dialogue between Zhuang Zi and Hui Shi was narrated in the chapter 'Autumn Flood', a dialogue that happened on the bridge over the River Hao, on the subject of whether or not they knew what fish enjoyed:

> Zhuang Zi and Hui Zi were strolling along the bridge of the Hao River. Zhuang Zi said, 'See how the minnows come out and dart around where they please! That's what fish really enjoy.'
>
> Hui Zi said, 'You are not a fish, how do you know what fish enjoy?'
>
> Zhuang Zi said, 'You're not I, so how do you know that I do not know what fish enjoy?'
>
> Hui Zi said, 'I am not you, so it's certain that I don't know what you know. But you are certainly not a fish, so it's sound to say that you don't know what the fish enjoys.'
>
> Zhuang Zi, 'Let's go back to your original question. You asked me how I know what fish enjoy, so you already knew I knew it when you asked the question. I know it by standing on the River Hao.'
>
> (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi*: 267–8; my retranslation based on Watson: 188–9)

This famous text has been analyzed many times by many scholars. I would read it here only through the eyes of friendly rivalry. From this perspective, it is clear that Zhuang Zi and Hui Shi, in strolling together and doing nothing but dialoguing on seeing the fish in the river, were very intimate friends, nevertheless engaging in frequent argument with one another. It was a kind of friendly rivalry, in other words, they were friends who argued always against one another. If Greek philosophy emerged among friends competing one with another in defining truth and concepts, Zhuang Zi's philosophy could also be said to have emerged in friendly yet critical dialogue with Hui Shi, although the target, if there was one, of their philosophical arguing was not so much the definition of concepts but rather the enjoyment of a fish darting around in the river. To Zhuang Zi's intuitive affirmation of the joy of the fish, Hui Shi enquired about the possibility of his knowing how the fish felt, foreign and external to the fish. Instead of the empiricist and logical questioning in the style of Hui Shi, Zhuang Zi appealed to his ontological insight and intuitive knowledge of what the fish enjoyed by standing on the River Hao's bridge. This insight resulted from the supposed relatedness and responsiveness of himself with other beings, either human or animal.

Zhuang Zi not only looked on Hui Shi as a match for arguing, he knew also quite well Hui Shi's position and its real difficulties. It is indeed through the record in the *Zhuang-Zi* that we have the most detailed record of Hui Shi's philosophy.

3 Zhuang Zi's Critique of Hui Shi's Philosophy

The philosophical works of Hui Shi were lost but fortunately we find some major texts about him in the *Zhuang-Zi*'s final chapter titled 'Tian-Xia-Pian' (天下篇 'Under Heaven') together with Zhuang Zi's critiques of him. Among all schools recorded there, the text about Hui Shi was the longest, so much so that some scholars even suggested it constituted an independent chapter, to be entitled the 'Hui-Shi-Pian' (惠施篇).[4] The chapter 'Under Heaven' deals with philosophical schools in ancient China, and could be seen itself as the early masterpiece of Chinese intellectual history. It showed its author to be a better intellectual historian than Confucians such as

Mencius, who vehemently attached Mohism and Yang Zhu for their espousal of an ideology that sounded very much like an engaged apologetics.[5] Mencius may be a very powerful critic of ideology, but surely not a very good intellectual historian in giving an unfair account of the thoughts of Mohism and Yang Zhu. On the contrary, a Daoist like Zhuang Zi, with his sense of distanciation and letting-be that allowed multiple others to be themselves without losing his own position, was better equipped to be an intellectual historian who presented others' thoughts, even if with his own critique.

In the *Zhuang-Zi*, Hui Shi was said to be 'versatile in his knowledge, and his books filled five carts' (Lin Yutang 78). Here we're dealing with someone of erudition who was curious about everything and who ventured to explore things by studying empirically the physical universe before pronouncing relevant propositions about them. So it seems that Hui Shi emphasized first the empirical data about the natural world, and then proceeded to search for the causes of natural phenomena. That is why he could answer all questions about the causes of various kinds of natural phenomena without giving a second thought.

> Once there was a man from the south by the name of Huang Liao, who asked Hui Shi why the sky did not fall down and the earth did not drop off, and who questioned him on the reasons for the wind and the rain and thunder, and Hui Shi was able to respond without hesitating, to answer him without a moment's thinking. He talks about everything in the universe without end and without limit, and yet he thinks he has not talked enough, but continued saying stranger and stranger things.
>
> (Lin Yutang: 80)

Hui Shi possessed the curiosity of a natural scientist. He observed and accumulated empirical data about natural phenomena, that is, the astronomical, geographical, and meteorological phenomena mentioned here, then tried to explain these phenomena by appealing to their causality before he pronounced propositions about them. If living during our times, Hui Shi would be an expert in the natural sciences.

On the other hand, Hui Shi was also a man of discourse and a great debater. He enjoyed discourse for its own sake and liked to undertake formal and logical analysis of language; in this way he won over others in debates. Most of his propositions recorded in the chapter 'Under Heaven' were of a formal and semantic character. The formal character of these propositions consists in the way Hui Shi defined and determined the meaning of a term or a proposition without referring to the real objects of their application. For example, in the first proposition, 'The biggest is that which has nothing without; it is called the biggest unit. The smallest is that which has nothing within; it is called the small unit.' Here 'the biggest' was defined as 'that which has no without', and 'the smallest' as 'that which has no within'. This kind of definition was formal and logical, without taking into account the existence or non-existence of the biggest and the smallest. In the second proposition, 'That which has no thickness cannot have any volume, and yet in extent it may cover a thousand *li*', the so called 'that which has no thickness cannot have any volume' could be seen as something

similar to the definition of 'dimension' in geometry. The third proposition, 'Heaven is as low as the earth; mountains and marshes are on the same level', and the fourth, 'When the sun is at noon, it is setting; when there is life, there is death', implied that terms such as 'high', 'low', 'up', 'down', etc., were defined linguistically as conventional and relational terms, not as properties belonging to things in nature. The fifth proposition, 'The differences and similarities between sub-classes in a class are called the lesser differences and similarities. All things differ yet all are alike; these are called the greater differences and similarities', could be seen as a discussion about the logical difference and similarity of classes and subclasses. The rest of propositions concern themselves more with the relativity and circularity of time, space, life, and ethics.[6]

According to the *Zhuang-Zi*, Hui Shi often indulged himself in formal, logical, and semantic debates, without any reference to social reality, and had no explicit transcendental and ontological concerns. Concerning social reality, Xun Zi (fl. 298–38 BCE) criticized Hui Shi in saying, 'Hui Shi indulged in language without knowing the reality' (*Xun-Zi-Ji-Shi* 478). For Xun Zi, the so-called reality referred to social institutions and cultural traditions. His criticism of Hui Shi was correct in the sense that Hui Shi indulged himself in the formal analysis of discourse without paying attention to human language's foundation in social institutions and cultural traditions. Zhuang Zi, too, criticized Hui Shi, not from a social and cultural point of view, but rather from his vision of the transcendental constitution of language, the praxis of life, and his critique of instrumental mentality.

4 Externality/Interiority of Experience, Knowledge, and Language

The philosophy of Hui Shi had two presuppositions. First, our knowledge of the external world depends exclusively on empirical data given as constituted content of sensible experience in terms of which it was possible to infer causal relationships between phenomena. Second, the language people use for expression is also a constituted system of signs and symbols that may be submitted to logical definition, formal analysis and conventional reference.

Now, we should make the distinction between 'the constituted' and 'the constituting'. For Zhuang Zi, in contrast to Hui Shi, experience and language were not only given constituted, but they resulted from a constituting process transcendentally founded in human subjectivity. The deeper one traced back to the origin of this constituting process, the closer to the origin would be his or her point of departure for the constitution of his or her experience. The more original it was, the more authentic would be one's experience and language. On the contrary, the more superficial one's reflection was, the more derivative would be one's point of departure in the constitution of experience. The more derivative it was, the less authentic would be one's experience and language. For Zhuang Zi, this was the case with Hui Shi's emphasis on sensible experience and formal maneuver in language.

For Hui Shi, 'experience' was comprised of sensible data collected from natural things outside of oneself and empirical knowledge attained by way of establishing causal relations between natural phenomena. For him, the meaning of language was

limited to the dictionary meaning or conventional meaning of terms, based on which he operated his formal analysis and semantic manipulation. In comparison, Zhuang Zi also had great erudition. We are amazed quite often by his knowledge of plants, animals, and cultural practices. He talked about deer eating grass, centipedes finding baby snakes tasty, and hawks and falcons relishing mice, snakes moving by scales, etc. Nevertheless, he emphasized, as did Lao Zi, the process of reducing superficial knowledge without self-awareness or superficial levels of human constitution. For Zhuang Zi, both human subjectivity and its world were in the process of making. They come from a long way to where they are in our presence. Human knowledge and language vary according to their difference in constituting what they are. Zhuang Zi used the following parable in the chapter 'Qi-Wu-Lun' (齊物論 'Equalizing Things Discourses')[7] to tell this truth:

> Caves and dells of hills and forest, hollows in a huge tree of many a span in girth – some are like nostrils, and some like mouths, and others like ears, beam sockets, pools and poodles. And the wind goes rushing through them, like swirling torrents or singing arrows, blowing, sousing, trilling, wailing, roaring, purling, whistling in front and echoing behind.
>
> (Lin Yutang: 12)

As shown in this parable, different sounds come out of different caves, dells and hollows. This tells us vividly, through the use of a series of metaphors, the vision according to which different kinds of experience, language, and knowledge depend on different forms or ways of constitution. 'Great knowledge is broad and full, little knowledge is detailed and minute; great words are elegant and powerful, little words are talkative and garrulous' (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi* 25; my translation). Human experience, be it sensational, psychological, or transcendental, and languages, be they ordinary, scientific, or philosophical, reveal to us, to varying degrees, truth in proportion to their authenticity in the constituting process. Truth is manifested through the constituting process of experience. It is not to be verified (as for R. Carnap) or falsified (K. Popper) in accordance with its correspondence or not to the empirical data.

For Zhuang Zi, language, unlike what Roscellinus called *flatus vocis*, was different from a mere blowing of breath because it was purposeful: 'For speech is not merely blowing of breath. It is intended to say something, only what is intended to say cannot be determined.' (Lin Yutang 14) The meaning of language did not consist in the relation of correspondence between signifier (*signifiant*) and signified (*signifié*), as F. de Saussure would say, or in Zhuang Zi's terms, the relation between 'to say' (*yan* 言) and 'what it is intended to say' (*shuo-yan-ze* 所言者). Zhuang Zi denied such a correspondence. For him, even if language had something to say (significance), what it was intended to say, or the signified, was not yet determined, because its determination depended on the transcendental constitution of human experience.

The solution to the problem of whether language says something or not depended, for Zhuang Zi, on the authenticity and originality of the constitution of our experience. As the analysis in the chapter 'Qi-Wu-Lun' ('Equalizing Things Discourse') makes

clear, the authenticity and originality of the constitution of our experience depends on whether or not it could manifest the *dao*, since the human authentic self or true lord was for Zhuang Zi the *dao*. Without the authenticity and originality of experience, any formal and logical argumentation operated on language could not manifest truth. Zhuang Zi said, 'Speech that argues falls short of its aim' (Lin Yutang 17–18). The true aim of language was for him to manifest *dao*. What we call 'reality' was for him informed by the manifestation of *dao* together with the transcendental constitution process of our experience. Under Zhuang Zi's criticism, Hui Shi, by his running after things for empirical knowledge and so alienating himself always among external things without self-awareness, had totally neglected this and therefore the sensible experience and logical analysis he appealed to could not attain the truly real.

5 A Praxis of Life for Self-understanding

Zhuang Zi's friendly yet challenging critique of Hui Shi consisted therefore in the fact that Hui Shi indulged himself in running after things external to his own life, to search for the external world without self-understanding of his own spiritual life. And the debates Hui Shi conducted with the strategy of formalist operation could outtalk others but would never convince their hearts. This criticism was meant to apply to all debaters/logicians of the time. Zhuang Zi said:

> Such were the sayings which the debaters used in answer to Hui Shi, rambling on without stop till the end of their days. Huan Tuan and Gong-sun Long were among such debaters. Dazzling men's minds, unsettling their views, they could outdo others in talking, but could not make them submit in their minds – such were the limitations of the debaters.
>
> (Watson: 376, with my corrections)

Hui Shi's emphasis on empirical data and causality led his research to unceasingly go outside of himself and to run after external things, and his indulgence in the formal use of language for debate led him to the habit of playing with words, or linguistic construction, without understanding either himself or the hearts and the true intent of other people. The reason was that his philosophy deliberately neglected the transcendental aspect of human experience. If there were no reflection on the transcendental constitution of experience, knowledge and language, all research on empirical data and logical argumentation would not allow one to return to the *dao* by retracing one's constituting process back to its innermost union with the *dao* in one's authentic self. This was what Zhuang Zi meant when he criticized Hui Shih as follows:

> Weak in inner virtue, strong in his concern for external things, he walks a road that was crooked indeed! If we examine Hui Shi's accomplishments from the point of view of the Way of Heaven and earth, they seems like the exertions of a mosquito or a gnat – of what use are they to things themselves? True, he has well expanded one natural talent, though I say, if he had only

shown greater respect for the *dao*, he would have come nearer to being right. Hui Shi, however, could not seem to find any tranquility for himself in such an approach, but scatters his mind over physical things without ever getting tired, and ends up with a reputation as a good debater. What a pity – that Hui Shi abused and dissipated his talents without really achieving anything. Chasing after the ten thousand things, never turning back, he was like one who tries to shout an echo into silence or prove that form can outrun shadow. How sad!

<div align="right">(Watson: 377, with my corrections)</div>

Moreover, debaters argued about discerning what is from what is not, what is right from what is wrong. For Zhuang Zi, this kind of discernment was but the consequence of *dao* forgetfulness and thereby limited to lower and superficial levels of constitution. 'By what is the *dao* concealed so that there should be true and false? By what are words concealed that there be right and wrong? … [T]he dao is concealed by small achievements and the words are concealed by flowery rhetoric' (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi* 30–1; my translation). This means for Zhuang Zi the ontological *dao* was concealed by ontic things which were only concretizations, therefore small achievements, of the *dao*. Words that revealed true meaning were concealed by superficially elegant rhetoric. The concealment hides the *dao* and words with true meaning and thereby leads to *dao* forgetfulness. For Zhuang Zi, Hui Shi's accumulation of natural knowledge and his discernment of right from wrong, true from false, in following formal and empirical criteria, if without further self-aware retracing exploration of one's constituting process back to its origin in one's true self, that is, in the *dao*, would have the effect of limiting human existence on the lower levels of its constituting process. Without understanding the transcendental constituting process of oneself and that of multiple others, the intellectual effort of going outside of oneself to external things on sensible and logical levels was judged by Zhuang Zi as incapable of true understanding and affecting the reality itself.

6 The Danger of Instrumental Mentality

In the *Zhuang-Zi* there was a strong critique of Hui Shi's philosophical discourse because of the assumption that it was produced by somewhat mechanistic operation of instrumental mentality. This so-called 'instrumental mentality', or *ji-xin* (機心) to use Zhuang Zi's term, tends to determine what is feasible in the limit of efficient instrument–end relationship. It considers as rationally worthy of doing only those acts which utilize the most efficacious instruments to attain its corresponding ends. Zhuang Zi described the existential situation of one who lived within the enclosure of instrumental mentality as follows:

> Now the mind flies forth mechanically like an arrow from a cross-bow, to be the arbiter of right and wrong. Now it stays behind as if sworn to an oath, to hold on to what it has secured. Then, as under autumn and winter's blight,

comes gradual decay, and submerged in its own occupations, it keeps on running its course, never to return. Finally, worn out and imprisoned, it is choked up like an old drain, and the failing shall not see light again.

(Lin Yutang: 13, with my corrections)

For Zhuang Zi, our five senses' interaction with the physical world and the mechanistic operation of our formal intellect (as the arbiter of right and wrong), if indulged in self-enclosure, were doomed to darkness and death, without hope for spiritual freedom and unable to live a life with the *dao*. The mind operated there with an instrumental mentality that 'flew forth mechanically like an arrow from a cross-bow, to be the arbiter of right and wrong'. For Zhuang Zi, self-enclosure within an instrumental mentality subjected our existence to decay, to become worn-out and imprisoned, not to see light again.

The accumulation of empirical knowledge in interaction with structural intellect is indispensable for the progress of science and technology. Zhuang Zi's critique is inspiring even for us today. Science and technology, as based on instrumental rationality, if not promoted to the level of *dao* (*ji-jin-yu-dao* 技進於道), would be judged by Zhuang Zi as unworthy of the *dao*, and their abuse might lead finally to a loss of support from the *dao*, and bring about the decay of human existence. Zhuang Zi said,

Wherever there were machines, there were bound to be mechanical acts, and when there were mechanical acts, there was bound to be a machine heart. With a machine's heart in your breast, you've spoiled what was pure and simple; and without the pure and simple, the life of spirit knows no rest. Where the life of spirit knows no rest, the *dao* will cease to buoy you up.

(Watson: 134, with my corrections)

It is obvious that Zhuang Zi looked on human mechanistic acts as rooted in the instrumental mentality (*ji-xin* 機心 machine heart), which led to the loss of one's own authenticity and the support of the *dao*, and therefore was doomed to consume away one's life (existence) on *passions inutiles*, useless passions, to use the words of J.P. Sartre.

Instrumental mentality is dominant not only in the minds of scientists and debaters but also in those of politicians. We have no record of Hui Shi's political philosophy. Without great political ideals, Hui Shi could be a mere politician whose task was the maintenance and management of power. Hui Shi was a scientist, a debater at the service of political power who achieved domination with his instrumentalist skills. Not only did the instrumental mentality prompt Hui Shi to scatter himself insatiably over the natural world without knowing how to return to his own spiritual life – the transcendental dynamics of his mind–heart; not only did it make Hui Shi indulge in the quest to win all debates by logical argumentation without knowing other people's heart; but it determined also Hui Shi's life – his running after power and fame and using every means to conserve power without caring about other, more meaningful, things in life such as friendship, wisdom and personality. In the chapter 'Qiu-Shui'

(秋水 'Autumn Flood'), one political consequence of instrumental mentality is vividly described in a story about how Hui Shi treated Zhuang Zi after having possessed the power of a prime minister:

> When Hui Zi was Prime Minister of Liang State, Zhuang Zi set off to visit him. Someone said to Hui Zi, 'Zhuang Zi is coming because he wants to replace you as prime minister.' With this Hui Zi was filled with alarm and searched all over the state for three days and three nights trying to find Zhuang Zi. Zhuang Zi then came to see him and said, 'In the south there is a bird called the *yuan-chu* (鵷鶵). I wonder if you've ever heard of it? The *yuan-chu* rises from the South Sea and flies to the North Sea, and it will rest on nothing but the *wu-tong* (dryandra) tree, eats nothing but the fruit of the bamboo, drinks only from the spring of sweet water. Once there was an owl who had gotten hold of a half-rotten old rat, and when the *yuan-chu* passed by, [the rat] raised its head, looked up at the *yuan-chu*, and said, "Shoo!" Now that you have this Liang state of yours, are you trying to shoo me?'
>
> (Watson: 188, with my corrections)

This story shows how Hui Shi, in trying to keep his own power, misunderstood Zhuang Zi's personality and intent, and made effort to capture him despite their longstanding friendship and their common pleasure in intellectual discourse. In contrast to Hui Shi, Zhuang Zi expressed his attitude toward political power in the following story:

> Once, when Zhuang Zi was fishing in the Pu River, the king of Chu sent two officials to go and announce to him: 'I would like to trouble you with the administration of my realm.'
>
> Zhuang Zi held on to the fishing pole and, without turning his head, said, 'I have heard that there is a sacred tortoise in Chu that has been dead for three thousand years. The king keeps it wrapped in cloth and boxed, and stores it in the ancestral temple. Now would this tortoise rather be dead and have its bones left behind and honoured, or would it rather be alive and dragging its tail in the mud?'
>
> 'It would rather be alive, and dragging its tail in the mud,' said the two officials. Zhuang Zi said, 'Go away! I'll drag my tail in the mud!'
>
> (Watson: 188, with my corrections)

It is clear then that Zhuang Zi valued his life and freedom higher than political power. That is also why, in the chapter 'Xiao-Yao-You' (逍遙遊 'A Free and Happy Excursion'), he likened his spiritual ambition to a big bird, *peng*, and mocked Hui Shi's by likening it to a little sparrow. The *peng*, with a back like Mount Tai and wings like cloud hanging across the sky, could beat the whirlwind, leap into the air, and rise up 90,000 *li*. By contrast, the little sparrow, laughing at the *peng*, would give a great leap and fly upward, but never get above 30 or so feet before coming down fluttering among the weeds and brambles. And that, anyway, is the best kind of flying for him. Zhuang

Zi, saw Hui Shi as a man who had wisdom enough to fill his office effectually, conduct himself well enough to impress his community and with sufficient virtue to please his ruler, talented enough to be called into service in one state, and that 'his opinion of himself will be much the same as that lake sparrow's having' (Lin Yutang: 9).

According to Zhuang Zi, instrumental mentality was often used in serving desires of power, fame and benefit, to the negligence of life-long values such as friendship and intellectual dialogue. This is the real menace to philosophical dialogue in a friendly rivalry, as shown in Hui Shi's use of military power or the police force to capture Zhuang Zi against the latter's possible usurping of his power, and Zhuang Zi's mocking rebuttal against Hui Shi with a sense of despair, even if after Hui Shi's death Zhuang Zi still kept the warm memory of their philosophical friendship, lamenting over the loss of his only counterpart in philosophical dialogue.

As may be seen from the above, Hui Shi went always outside of himself to natural phenomena, yet without any effort of self-understanding this did not help him in any sense to enrich his 'self in the making', as I would term it.[8] Zhuang Zi's criticism of Hui Shi revealed to us his own position as a transcendental and ontological philosopher. Instead of running after empirical data and searching for their causal relations, instead of arguing with others through formalist semantic operation, Zhuang Zi would consider these merely as superficially constituted unless accompanied by a tracing back to the constituting process of human experience. He would prefer to work on the retracing process of self-awareness, even to the point of meeting the *dao*, the origin of all origins. Zhuang Zi would try to enlarge human experience by appealing to the function of the imagination and the metaphorical use of language.

Again, instead of indulging in self-alienation into the external world, Zhuang Zi would put his emphasis on self-understanding in the process of life praxis. Life praxis is a practical process in time. Zhuang Zi would appeal to the hermeneutic function of reason, that, through the creative interpretation of traditional texts, the words and deeds of a paradigmatic individual human mind could awaken in itself a profound self-understanding.

Third, instead of indulging oneself in the instrumental mentality that menaces our life of authenticity, Zhuang Zi would appeal to the deconstructional function of human discourse in order to liberate the human mind from all instrumental mental tendencies and determinate finite achievements.

In order to free the human mind from the imprisonment of sensibility and structural constraint, Zhuang Zi would use fables, narratives and metaphorical discourse (*yu-yan* 寓言) to guide the imagination to the realm of possibilities and to deliver the mind from all realistic attachments. In order to awake from the unending enquiry in the external world leading to self-alienation, Zhuang Zi used hermeneutic or interpretative discourse (*chong-yan* 重言) to attain self-understanding by dialogue with tradition consisting of texts, deeds, and words of the elders. In order to disengage the mind from all dangers of instrumental tendencies, Zhuang Zi used a kind of deconstructional discourse (*zhi-yan* 卮言) so as to detach the mind from all situated, finite accomplishments and to be open again to the infinite creativity of the *dao*.[9]

7 Zhuangzi's Concept of *Dao* and His Cosmogony

On the metaphysical level, Zhuang Zi continued Lao Zi's legacy of taking the *dao* as unfathomable and unnamable, yet at the same time attributing to the *dao* certain characteristics so as to help people understand it. This could be said to be summed up in the Chapter *Xu-Wu-Gui* as '*bu-dao-zhi-dao*' (不道之道 speaking the unspeakable *dao*) (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi*: 369). For Lao Zi, the *dao*, as the ultimate reality, was said to be an undifferentiated whole, inaudible, invisible, independent of all beings, self-subsisting, boundless, great, departing from all boundaries, far off and turning back (the latter four attributes tell of a circular cosmic process). For Zhuang Zi, the *dao* was, negatively speaking, invisible, inaudible, without action, without form, and inappropriable. Positively speaking, the *dao* was real, credible, self-dependent, prior in existence, the ultimate cause of all things, infinite in space and time, and pervaded all existent things. But Zhuang Zi's concept of *dao* differed from that of Lao Zi in that, for Lao Zi, the *dao*, though boundless in space, was nevertheless asymmetrically finite and infinite in time, which meant that the future was infinite yet the past was somehow finite (there must be some beginning in time), whereas for Zhuang Zi the *dao* was infinite in both space and time, so that it could unfold its possibilities infinitely richly. Zhuang Zi's philosophy of infinity, according to which both space and time were infinite, could be considered a real philosophical advance. But we should always keep in mind that, for both Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, all these attributes were given reluctantly and were merely instrumental for human understanding.

As to how the *dao* manifested itself and thereby created the world, Zhuang Zi also continued Lao Zi's legacy, modifying it through the angle of his philosophy of language. For Lao Zi, the *dao* manifested itself first as possibilities, in its first moment of manifesting itself as *wu*, non-being; then, among all possibilities, some were realized as beings. It was said: 'The *dao* gave birth to one, one gave birth to two and two gave birth to three, and three gave birth to ten thousand things. Ten thousand things carry the *yin* and embrace the *yang*, and through the blending of *qi*, they achieve harmony' (Lao Zi Ch. 42: my translation). It is clear that the whole process of cosmogony was expounded by Lao Zi as one of the manifestations of the *dao* by way of self-differentiation and complexification, that of the *dao* self-manifesting into opposites, such as being and non-being, *yin* and *yang*, movement and rest, and so forth. Then, from the dialectical interaction of these opposites were produced all things.

Zhuang Zi, though accepting in principle this cosmogony, set some limit on it through his philosophical reflections on language. Since the philosophical competence of human beings to talk about cosmogony was for Zhuang Zi intimately related to their linguistic competence, the problem of the origin of the universe was dealt with in reference to the origin of language:

> Since myriad things are one, how can there be anything to say? Since I said myriad things are one, how can there be nothing said? One and saying make two, two and one make three. Going on in this way, even the cleverest mathematicians couldn't get it, how much less an ordinary person. Therefore,

if from non-being to being we proceed to three, how much farther shall we reach when we proceed from being to beings?

<div style="text-align: right">(Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi: 39–40)</div>

This text could be read as Zhuang Zi's interpretation of Lao Zi's idea of the origin of the universe through the origin of language, which implies that our competence to talk about the origin of myriad things is related to and therefore limited by our competence to say anything. This idea was developed further in the chapter 'Ze-Yang' (則陽):

> That there is some first cause (of the universe), or that no first cause would make it, these are the ultimate questions our doubt could arrive at. When I look for its origin, the past is without limit; when I look for its end, the future is without stop. Without limit and stop, it is the absence of words, because words share the same principle as things. That there is some first cause (of the universe), or that no first cause would make it, all these were rooted in words, which begins and ends with things … *Dao* as a name is borrowed as an expedient for practice. To presuppose either a first cause or no first cause is but one limited corner of things, what do they have to do with the great *dao*?

<div style="text-align: right">(Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi: 396)</div>

Here we can see proposed a cosmological antinomy, proposed some 2,000 years earlier than those of Kant, between a theory of the first cause (of the universe) and that of no first cause. The solution proposed in the *Zhuang-Zi* consists in the argument that the *dao* is infinite and it transcends myriad things; our language can talk only about things but not about the *dao*; the theories about the *dao* as first cause or no first cause are beyond the capacity of our language and therefore are limited and biased by it.

8 Problems of the Self and the Perfect Man

Concerning Zhuang Zi's philosophy of man, there are two most important topics: the problem of the self and that of the Perfect Man. According to him, the self is constituted by the empirical ego and the authentic self, the latter being our *de* or the *dao* in us. Human spiritual adventure consisted in returning from our empirical ego to our authentic self.

As my analysis of the *Qi-Wu-Lun* goes, the empirical ego was constituted of three successive levels: the bodily ego, the psychological ego, and the *ji-xin* (機心 mechanistic or instrumental mind). First, sensible experiences constitute the bodily ego by virtue of which one interacted with the physical world. It offered all sensible information about the physical world, and that information lured us to all sorts of gain and enjoyment. On this level, one was dependent on the external world. But there was no true *self* or *subject* on this level, or there was no part of our body that we could take as our subject/self, either one part which is dominant over other parts or which is one served as the subject/self successively after the other (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi* 25, 27–8)

Second, psychological experience constitutes the psychic ego in the form of distinct empirical states of consciousness, described by Zhuang Zi as 'joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, anxiety and regret, fickleness and fears, now slowly, now suddenly, unfolding in us'.[10] All these psychic states come and go, without one being oneself or being a subject of my activities. As Zhuang Zi said, they 'come upon us by turns, with ever-changing moods, like music from the hollows, or mushrooms from damp. Day and night they alternate within us, but we cannot tell from whence they spring' (Lin Yutang 13). The function of these psychological states is to respond to and interpret the psycho-physical environment, yet in them Zhuang Zi found no origin, no real cause, no abiding self or real subject.

Third, the *ji-xin* (機心 mechanistic or instrumental mind), usually seen as the center of one's empirical ego, from which one arbitrates between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, success and failure, from the point of view of one's own interest in a calculative way. It was on this level that Hui Shi gathered his empirical knowledge, debated with others in order to win, and sought to retain his own political power. Although this level of mundane and calculative self was frequently taken by people for their own true ego, it was vehemently criticized by Zhuang Zi as doomed to an existence of no hope, and much ado for nothing in a life of self-enclosure.

For Zhuang Zi, the empirical ego has two aspects: first, it depends on the external world for its own satisfaction; nevertheless, and this is its second aspect, it had its viewpoint in selecting empirical data. Zhuang Zi summarized these by saying: 'Were there no external world, there would be no empirical ego. Were there no empirical ego, then [there would be] no selection of empirical data' (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi* 27). The empirical ego is therefore both relative and selective. Its origin, dynamism, and cause may be rooted in the authentic self, but without self-awareness usually people had no idea of the latter. 'The empirical ego must be very close [to the authentic self]. But we do not know by whose order they come into play' (ibid.).

The authentic self is, in Zhuang Zi's eyes, the *dao* in us as our true self, called by Zhuang Zi as our *zhen-jun* (真君 authentic master) or *zhen-zai* (真宰 authentic lord). It is our innermost self where we are in communion with the *dao*. Comparatively speaking, Zhuang Zi's authentic self is different from Husserl's transcendental self because of its ontological affirmation of the *dao* and its working in us as our true self. Still, it is similar to Husserl's transcendental ego in the sense that it never appears in the order of phenomena. As Zhuang Zi said, 'It would seem that there was an authentic master; but the clue to its existence is wanting. That it functions (through other manifestations) is credible enough, though we cannot see its form. Perhaps it has inner reality without outward form' (Lin Yutang 13, with my corrections). Transcendental ego in Husserl's sense shows itself through all kinds of noesis-noematic psychic phenomena but never itself appears as visible (Husserl 70). Also it is similar to what Wittgenstein says in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, that the eyes see things without being able to see themselves and can show themselves only in the very act of seeing (Wittgenstein 117).

For Zhuang Zi, our spiritual adventure consisted in returning from our empirical ego to our transcendental ego. Unless our empirical ego on the first three levels was

forsaken and lost in the returning process, the authentic self would never be obtained. This was exactly what Nan-Guo Zi-Qi (南郭子綦) said in the beginning of the chapter 'Qi-Wu-Lun' that he has lost his paired (relative) self. According to Zhuang Zi, one had to lose and transcend the belittled self in order to discover and regain the greater self, that is, the *de* or *dao* in him or her as his or her authentic self.

For Zhuang Zi, the authentic self as the *zhen-jun* or *zhen-zai* in us, is the ontological and transcendent ground on which was based the equaliy of myriad things. Even if we people had no awareness of it in us, this did not affect its existence at all. Zhuang Zi said, 'But whether or not we ascertain what is the true nature of this authentic master, it matters but little to the authentic master itself'(Lin Yutang: 13–14, with my correction). For Zhuang Zi, it was more important to attain one's authentic self with self-awareness and to manifest the great function of it through life praxis to reconstitute our empirical ego on the bodily, psychic, and social levels. This is to say that, after the effort or reduction or returning to the authentic self, there should be another process of reconstitution or manifestation to the empirical world. This is exactly the achievement of an authentic person, the ideal or perfect person in Zhuang Zi's Philosophy of Man.

Let's discuss now the ideal of the Perfect Man. Zhuang Zi set up, as did Lao Zi, a philosophical image of the perfect man, but one with more names and richer meanings attaching to it than the latter's. For Lao Zi, it concerned simply the sage (*sheng-ren* 聖人), who had unfolded fully his own virtue, or in other words who had attained the highest virtue and achieved a total union with the *dao* in sharing its spontaneous creativity and also in giving generously to others. The sage's virtues were characterized by Lao Zi as all-embracing innocence, simplicity, originality, generosity, and selflessness. The sage was therefore not only an ethical and moral achievement, as in the case of the Confucian sage; he was, so to speak, the incarnation of the *dao*, and thereby became the rescuer of things and persons by restoring them back to the primordial union with the *dao*.

As for Zhuang Zi, the perfect man, the ideal human being, took various names, such as *zhi-ren* (至人 supreme person), *shen-ren* (神人 marvelous person), *sheng-ren* (聖人 sagely person) and *zhen-ren* (真人 authentic person). Of those names the first three were negatively characterized, as we read: 'The *zhi-ren* is without self; *shen-ren* is without merit; the *sheng-ren* is without name' (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi* 11). Therefore, *zhi-ren* (supreme person) was defined negatively with regard to self; *shen-ren* (marvelous person) was defined negatively with regard to particular achievements; *sheng-ren* (sagely person) was defined negatively with regard to name. They were paradig- matic individuals defined negatively with regard to those paradigmatic qualities of Confucianism, Mohism and the school of Names. Yet in *zhen-ren* (authentic person), we find Zhuang Zi's positive descriptions of a paradigmatic individual.

In the chapter 'Da-Zong-Shi' (大宗師 'The Great Master'), Zhuang Zi described the authentic person by reference to the relation between *dao* and man in saying that there existed a hermeneutic circle between them, somewhat as Heidegger did for *Dasein* and *Sein* in his famous *Sein and Zeit* (*Being and Time*). Zhuang Zi differed from Heidegger in his concrete descriptions of the authentic person's spiritual achievement, both in his social behavior and in his self-cultivation:

The authentic men of old did not override the weak, did not attain their ends by brute strength, and did not gather around them counselors. Thus failing had no cause for regret; succeeding, no cause for self-satisfaction. And thus they could soar to heights without trembling, enter water without becoming wet, and go through fire without feeling hot. This is the kind of knowledge which reaches to the depth of *dao*.

(Lin Yutang: 34, with my corrections)

This is a description of an authentic person's spiritual achievement both in his social behavior and in his self-cultivation that attains the level of the *dao* and thereby is ultimately free despite changes in his environment, such as heights, or the presence of water and fire. Then the text proceeds to describe the authentic person in terms of his self-control through the praxis of breathing, thereby reducing his desires even to the point of being able to master it in the state of unconsciousness:

Authentic persons of old slept without dreams and awoke without worries. They ate without indulging in the flavor. They breathed deep and deep. For authentic persons drew breath from their heels … when men's indulgence in lustful desires are deep, their sensibility to Heaven's working are shallow.

(Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi: 103)

The text goes on to show the authentic person's attitude towards life and death. In transcending all the constraints of this finite existence and its demise, the authentic person could really be free in mind and calm in demeanor. Unlike for Heidegger, there is no need for the individual to face his own unique death with anxiety in order to become aware of his own authenticity: for Zhuang Zi, an authentic person only followed the natural rhythm of birth and death in his completely spiritual freedom.

The authentic person of old did not know what it was to love life or to hate death. He did not rejoice in birth, nor strive to put off dissolution. Unconcerned he came and unconcerned he went. That was all.

(Lin Yutang: 34, with my corrections)

The authentic person, in achieving all these on the corporeal, mental and social levels, could indeed unify in himself the human and the natural in a creative tension. Zhuang Zi said: 'In that which is one, the authentic person belongs to Nature; in that which is not one, he belongs to Man. There is no competition of the one to win over the other between the human and the natural. This was to be an authentic person' (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi* 108–9). In thus achieving a creative harmony between the human and the natural, and transcending all finitude in playing with the infinite, an authentic person really could manifest the *dao* and enjoy a profound sense of beauty.

9 Zhuang Zi's Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art and Technique

The beautiful and the sense of beauty were essential to Zhuang Zi's philosophy, because for him it was through retracing the beauty of Heaven and earth that man could understand the truth of all things. We read, in the chapter 'Zhi-Bei-You' (知北遊 'Knowledge Wondering North'):

> Heaven and earth have their great beauties but do not speak of them; the four seasons have their clear-marked regularity but do not discuss it; the myriad things have their principles of construction but do not expound it. The sage appeals to the beauty of Heaven and earth and through this he understands the truth of myriad things.
>
> <div align="right">(Watson: 236, with my corrections)</div>

Beauty thus became the key to wisdom. Even if any discourse on beauty had to be eventually deconstructed, the beauty in nature itself was real yet unfathomable. Through the apprehension of nature's beauty, people could attain truth as manifestations of the *dao* in myriad things. This ontology of the beautiful was different from Heidegger's ontology of works of art. For Zhuang Zi, all works of art were manmade and the truth of the whole universe was too big to be manifested through finite human artistic creation. Even if philosophers could decipher certain ontological significance in a work of art, it is still quite difficult to get rid of the sensual, ontic and subjective elements in art appreciation. Developing Lao Zi's thesis that 'The five colors cause one's eyes to be blind. The five tons cause one's ears to be deaf. The five flavors cause one's palate to be spoiled' (Wing-tsit Chan 145), Zhuang Zi criticized all sensuous and ontic elements as unworthy of the *dao*:

> There are five conditions under which the inborn nature is lost. One, when the five colors confuse the eyes and cause the eyesight to be unclear. Two, when the five notes confuse the ear and cause the hearing to be unclear. Three, when the five odors stimulate the nose and produce weariness and congestion in the forehead. Four, when the five flavors dull the mouth, causing the sense of taste to be impaired and lifeless. Five, when likes and dislikes unsettle the mind and cause the inborn nature to become volatile and flighty. These five are all a danger to life.
>
> <div align="right">(Watson: 141)</div>

Thereby, Zhuang Zi's critique of the five senses dissociated the sensible (*aesthesis*) from the apprehension of beauty. Five senses were criticized because they were troubling to the human spirit and therefore dangerous to the individual's life praxis. A person's spiritual life had to liberate itself from all indulgence in the sensible in order to grasp the beauty of Heaven and Earth in the free and easy way of playfulness. Zhuang Zi's critique of *aesthesis* was also related to art and technique:

> Discard and confuse the six tones, smash and unstring the pipes and lutes,

stop up the ears of the blind musician Kuang, and for the first time the people of the world will be able to hold on to their hearing. Wipe out patterns and designs, scatter the five colors, give up the eyes of Li Zhu, and for the first time the people of the world will be able to hold on to their eyesight. Destroy and cut to pieces the curve and plumb line, throw away the compass and square, shackle the fingers of Artisan Chui, and for the first time the people of the world will possess the true technique.

<div align="right">(Watson: 111, with my corrections)</div>

This critique of art and technique moreover was philosophically related to the Daoist critique of instrumental rationality that we have discussed previously in relation to Hui Shi. The machine mind with its mechanistic operations was judged by Zhuang Zi as unworthy of the *dao*, and the abuse of instrumental rationality could lead finally to losing support from the *dao*, which in turn would lead to the deterioration of human existence.

However, even if Zhuang Zi criticized art and technique as involving instrumental rationality, he still cherished an ideal of art. For Zhuang Zi, the ideal of art was to proceed from technique to *dao*, and thereby to play technique spontaneously, like Butcher Ding who, in splitting an ox, moved his body in perfect rhythm, like the dance of the Mulberry Grove and the harmonious chords of Jing-shou. Once a work of art had been well done, it had to be transcended by the act of deconstruction. For him, a fish trap was a means for catching the fish, but once we got the fish, the trap was forgotten; the snare was a means for catching hares, but once we got the hare, the snare was forgotten. Similarly, words were means for catching ideas, but when ideas had been grasped, words were forgotten (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi* 407).

The same could be said of works of art. In Zhuang Zi's eyes, works of art are means of playfully embodying the *dao*. But this did not mean Zhuang Zi held an instrumentalist view of language and art. It means rather that all words and works, once pronounced or produced, have to be deconstructed; in other words, to be hushed once pronounced, to be erased once written, to be deconstructed once performed.

Zhuang Zi's concept of *beauty* did not belong to the category of value. His aesthetic perception of reality was not an evaluation in the axiological sense, but was seen by him as the enhancement of our nature to the point of being authentic in total freedom. For Zhuang Zi, all values were relative and anthropocentric:

Men claim that Mao Qiang and Lady Li are beautiful, but if fish saw them they would dive to the bottom of the stream; if birds saw them they would fly away; and if deer saw them they would break into a run. Of these four, which knows how to fix the standard of beauty for the world?

<div align="right">(Watson: 46, with my corrections)</div>

Beauty and ugliness were therefore human qualifications of ontic beings. On the ontic level, things were different among themselves and their qualifications oppositional

one to another; whereas on the ontological level all differences and oppositions were unified and synthesized by the *dao* that begot them all.

For Zhuang Zi, all axiological opposites were to be unified ultimately in the *dao*. All ontic differentiations were to be resolved in the *dao* that self-manifested into myriad things. The manifestation of the *dao* was truth/authenticity. For Zhuang Zi, beauty is truth, *kallos* is *aletheia*. The authenticity of existence as a spontaneous way of manifesting the *dao* is itself beautiful. Beauty is truth and truth is the manifestation of the *dao* itself.

The second meaning of beauty as truth/authenticity is the spontaneous manifestation of each thing's nature or virtue, seen by Zhuang Zi as the incarnated *dao* in each thing. Truth/authenticity means here the natural in contrast to the artificial. Zhuang Zi said: 'The swam pheasant has to walk ten paces for one peck and a hundred paces for one drink, but it doesn't want to be kept in a cage. Though you treat it like a king, its spirit won't be content' (Watson 52). The beautiful as truth/authenticity means here the natural, not the artificial, metaphorically expressed here by the image of a cage. In all things artificial, spirit wouldn't be joyful. It is *natural* for horses and oxen to have four feet, whereas it is artificial to put a halter on the horse's head and to pierce the ox's nose. 'So I say, do not let what is human wipe out what is heavenly; do not let what is purposeful wipe out what is fated. ... Be cautious, guard it and do not lose it ... this is what I mean by returning to the authentic' (Watson 183). To be beautiful is to be true, to be seen as the spontaneous expression of one's heavenly nature.

The third meaning of truth/authenticity in Zhuang Zi's thought was the concentration of one's spirit to the highest degree of its purity and sincerity. In the chapter 'Yu-Fu' (漁父 'The Old Fisherman'), it is narrated that Confucius once addressed a stranger: 'Please, may I ask what you mean by truth?' The stranger said,

> By the 'Truth' I mean purity and sincerity in their highest degree. He who lacks purity and sincerity cannot move others. Therefore he who forces himself to lament, though he may sound sad, will awaken no grief. He who forces himself to be angry, though he may sound fierce, will arouse no awe. And he who forces himself to be affectionate, though he may smile, will create no air of harmony. True sadness makes no sound to awaken grief; true anger need not show itself to arouse awe; true affection need not smile to create harmony. When a man has the Truth within himself, his spirit may move among external things. But how could one arrive at this authentic state of one's spirit? Only by keeping one's will undivided and concentrating thus one's spirit.
>
> (Watson: 349)

In short, in the *Zhuang-Zi*, to be beautiful is to be true/authentic. In its *ontological* sense, it is to be the manifestation of the *dao*. In its *cosmologicaI* sense, it is to manifest spontaneously the innate nature (*de*) of each thing. In its *anthropological* sense, it is to be pure and sincere through the unification and concentration of the human spirit.

10 The Road to Freedom, the Transformation of Things, and Union with the *dao*

To achieve purity and sincerity, to manifest spontaneously one's nature, and to manifest the *dao*, all these three meanings are telling one thing: to be free. And to be free for Zhuang Zi means keeping a certain distance from the secular world, and in thus distancing oneself from that world, one could penetrate into the essence of the world. In letting oneself be free, one could also let other things be free and be themselves. In comparison with Kant, we could say that distanciation could also be seen as the truth of Kant's 'disinterestedness', that is the purification of one's intention to the point of letting things be themselves in one's pure consideration, without being dominated by one's interest.

Differing from Kant's, Zhuang Zi's distanciation concerned not so much the purification of one's intention, but rather a way of transforming one's existence; it was not a pure consideration of the form of a particular aesthetic object, but rather the letting be manifested the *dao* itself and the *de* of things. To be able to appreciate the beauty of Heaven and Earth, one had to exalt one's existence to the highest degree of freedom. Zhuang Zi communicated this message to us right from the start of his writings. In the *Xiao-Yao-You* (逍遙遊 *A Free and Easy Wandering*), he communicated his vision of human existence and life in general, in talking about the movement and transformation of the fish (*kun* 鯤) and the bird (*peng* 鵬) exalting and transforming to the height of the sky to grasp the beauty of Heaven and Earth. This parabolic discourse allows us to transform our way of thinking and to give a free rein to our imagination.

The *kun* is a living being free in the water, originally a small fish. Zhuang Zi says that it is so large that he does not know how many thousand *li* it is in size. By this Zhuang Zi is telling us that our life is born free, but under certain conditions, and it could be transformed through creative imagination from small to large. Then, this fish transforms into *peng*, a living being free in the air. From *kun* to *peng*, there is a transformation of species and levels of existence. This means that life could transform itself from not only small to big, but also from low (water) to high (air). Being bestirred to fly, mounting up on a great wind to a height of 90,000 *li* – all these tell us that life should rise up with great effort and heighten itself to its utmost realization. The question is, both the fish's freedom in the water and the bird's freedom in the air are conditional, depending on the accumulated extent of water and air. Indeed, Zhuang Zi emphasizes the accumulation of favorable conditions. On this point he is similar to the Confucians. But what the Confucians accumulate, such as moral virtues and good deeds, are considered by Zhuang Zi as conditional or dependent. For Zhuang Zi, only when one is free in the infinite *dao* and goes with the being and becoming of myriad things is one unconditionally free: 'If he had only mounted on the upright being of Heaven and earth, and follow the becoming of myriad things, and wondering together with the Infinite, upon what then would such a one have to depend?' (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi* 10). At this point, one is free and unconditional. And it is also here that one enjoys the free and easy playing.

For Zhuang Zi, the spiritual adventure of life was to proceed from finite and conditional freedom to infinite and unconditional freedom. For Zhuang Zi, the *dao* is infinite

in both space and time. The infinitude of space and time was not merely physical or mathematical. It had been already transformed by Zhuang Zi's ontological speculation and poetic imagination into the infinite realm for the manifestation of the *dao*, as well as the infinite realm for human spiritual exaltation. In a word, the ontology of Zhuang Zi was an elaboration of the Great *dao*, projected into infinite space and time, into infinite adventure of spiritual life. Space and time therefore constituted a realm of existence imported with ontological meaning and poetic imagination. To play freely and easily in that infinite realm of existence was to enjoy the beauty of Heaven and Earth. Ugliness arrived when the individual limited himself or herself in the pettiness and triviality of everyday life, like *he-bo* (河伯 lord of the river), who believed that all beauty in the world belonged to him alone. It was in this unaware self-enclosedness that lies the origin of ugliness.

For Zhuang Zi, the ontological beauty was the spiritual state of being in communion with *dao* the Infinite, not the awesome feeling in facing the infinite as in the case of Kant's concept of the sublime. It is wrong to consider Zhuang Zi's concept of beauty in terms of the Kantian concept: 'The sublime is that in comparison with which everything else is small' (Kant 88). Feeling small before the infinite is not enough for seeing the Beauty of Heaven and Earth in terms of Zhuang Zi. Not even the post-modern concept of the sublime, characterized by J.F. Lyotard as resistance to the sensible, negative presentation, enthusiasm and simplicity (Lyotard 183–93), would suffice to characterize Zhuang Zi's experience of the sublime. The latter was more a kind of positive experience of entering into communion with the infinite and playing carelessly therewith.

To attain the infinite freedom, one has to undergo a process of metamorphosis, as in the parable of *kun* and *peng*. The ultimate achievement of this process of metamorphosis is the unconditional freedom in the infinite *dao*. This was described by Zhuang Zi as *wu-hua* (物化 transformation of things), which actually was a transformation into a state of existence in which there was mutual sharing of the human with the natural in the breast of *dao*, as best expressed metaphorically by Zhuang Zi's dreaming of becoming a butterfly:

> Once Zhuang Zhou dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering round, happy with himself and doing as he pleased … but he didn't know if he was Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou. Between Zhuang Zhou and a butterfly there must be some distinction! This is called the transformation of things.
>
> (Watson: 49, with my corrections)

The idea of 'transformation' is everywhere in the *Zhuang-Zi*. For example, in the chapter 'Xiao-Yao-You' ('Free and Easy Wandering'), the transformation of the fish into the bird symbolizes the transformation of the state of being free in the water into the state of being free in air. At the start of the chapter 'Qi-Wu-Lun' ('Equalizing Things Discourse'), the transformation of wind into different kinds of sounds symbolizes the act of mind in transforming into different kinds of language

and knowledge. At the end of this chapter there is the mutual transformation of Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly that symbolizes the Golden Age of the human and the natural in union, something like the *unum mysticum* of all things in the *dao*, dissolving all differences and divisions between nature and man. On the ontic level, between Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly there must be some distinction. On the ontological level, 'He didn't know if he was Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou' (ibid.).

A butterfly is a being that is free and beautiful. That is why Zhuang Zi's story of self-transformation into a butterfly is different from Kafka's *Die Verwandlung*, in which a man is transformed into an ugly animal, signifying the condition of dehumanization in which people care only for their own work and their own, and sadly dies incapable of communicating. In Zhuang Zi's transformation into a butterfly, he becomes rather a being that is free and beautiful in the golden age of union of the human with the natural.

What is at stake here is the ultimate communion with the *dao*, the joyful state of being in union with the *dao*, and playing with the *dao*. In the chapter 'Zhi-Bei-You' (知北遊 'Knowledge Wandering North'), we read:

> Straighten up your body, unify your vision and the Harmony of Heaven will come to you. Call in your knowledge, unify your bearing, and the spirit will come to dwell in you. *De*, the *dao*, will be your home, stupid as the newborn calf, you will not try to find out the reason why.
>
> (Watson: 237, with my corrections)

When one is living in the bosom of the *dao*, one could take one's *de* (virtue) as one's beauty. Being in union and in play with the *dao*, one lives in the infinite realm of the *dao*'s manifestation as one's home. Enjoying this ontological beauty, one transcends the relative differences between beauty and ugliness, again to be transformed by the *dao*. They are, ontologically speaking, unified in the oneness of the *dao*:

> The ten thousand things are really one. We look on some as beautiful because they are rare or unearthly, and look on others as ugly because they are foul and rotten. But the foul and rotten may turn into the rare and unearthly, and the rare and unearthly may turn into the foul and rotten. So it is said, you have only to comprehend the one breath that is the world. The sage never ceases to value oneness.
>
> (Watson: 236)

For Zhuang Zi, the ontological beauty was produced at the moment when human is unified with nature in the *dao*.

11 Concluding with Life and Death: Zhuang Zi's Life Praxis

Different from the Confucian emphasis on moral praxis, Zhuang Zi proposed an idea of *life praxis* in relation to our ultimate concern with questions of life and death. He put this ultimate concern in the cosmic process of the *dao*'s manifestation and realization via the living body. On the one hand, to live meant for him to take the form of a living body; and, according to Zhuang Zi, it was the effect of an organic accumulation of the cosmic energy. On the other hand, to die or to perish was the effect of the dispersion of the cosmic energy. Even if to live, or the fact of being able to take the form of a living body, was in itself a joy of existence, to die was not a lamentable occasion. It was for this reason that Zhuang Zi said: 'The Great Clod burdens me with the form of body, labors me with tiresome life, eases me in old age and rests me in death. So if it makes my life good, it must for the same reason make my death good' (Watson 80). Therefore, one should be content with the time one comes to have life and goes to lose life; if so, neither sorrow nor joy can affect us (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi* 60). In this way one would be liberated from the ultimately worrisome concerns of life and death. Such a freedom is essential for a life of sanity.

Openness of mind was not limited to liberation from all attachment to the differentiation between life and death. For Zhuang Zi, human beings should follow the rhythm of cosmic creativity instead of imposing themselves on a specific form of existence. In the process of cosmic creativity one should not impose one's subjective will in discriminating the human body from other kinds of bodies. That is to say, the scarcity of body did not mean the superiority of the human body. For Zhuang Zi, there was an ontological equality among all living bodies. In accord with his ontological principle of equality of all things, Zhuang Zi did not make any distinction between the noble and the mean, the true and the false, the rational and the sensible. For him, there was only *one ontology*. He would assent even to become a rat's liver or a bug's arm (Watson 85). Nevertheless, in the depth of his soul, he had a beautiful dream. It was to become a butterfly, for him the most beautiful and free being wandering and playing in nature. Instead of becoming a rat or a bug, Zhuang Zi preferred to be a butterfly. On the ontological level, there was no distinction between Zhuang Zi and the butterfly. On the ontic level, there must be difference between the two. But the free and gracefully beautiful style of existence surpassed all differentiation and returned to the original union with the *dao*. And this was to be achieved through a profound life praxis. According to Zhuang Zi, this life praxis began from the spontaneous control of breathing to the point of minimizing the unconscious desire and its unconscious expression through dreams:

> The authentic person of old slept without dreams and awoke without worries. They ate without indulging in the flavor. They breathed deep and deep. For authentic persons drew breath from their heels … when man's indulgence in lustful desires is deep, their sensibility to Heaven's working are shallow.
>
> (*Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi*: 103)

Here it might be of interest to compare Zhuang Zi with Freud. Dreaming, according to Freud, is a disguised way of expressing one's unconscious desires. By contrast, to be overly immersed in passions and desires, according to Zhuang Zi, would render shallow one's sensitivity to Heaven's working. However, for him there was a way out: it was in practicing a profound and natural way of breathing, as deep as breathing with one's heels, by which one could minimize one's desire to the extent of sleeping without dreaming and awaking without daily anxiety over acquiring certain objects of desire.

A deeper way of life praxis is communicated to us by the narrative concerning the butcher Ding who, sectioning an ox, worked so skillfully that he slithered the knife along with the musical rhythm of a dance, as if engaged in an artistic practice. As we may imagine, an ox is a living being of extremely high complexity, signifying thereby the complexity of individual, social, and political life constituted by all kind of relations. Nevertheless, with an art of life praxis capable of grasping the complexity of life, one could eventually follow the rhythm of nature and earn the way of freedom as if in an act of artistic creativity. As the narrative of the butcher runs:

> And now – now I go at it by spirit and don't look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup, strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and follow things as they are. … There are spaces between the joints, and the blade of the knife has really no thickness. If you insert what has no thickness into such spaces, then there's plenty of room – more than enough for the blade to play about it.
>
> (Watson: 51)

The philosophical implications of this story tell us that, on the one hand, human life praxis is situated in the context of the ontology of dynamic relationships, in which all are dynamically and complexly related one to another, by reason of which one should act according to the natural makeup and follow things as they are. On the other hand, there exist always possibilities of freedom – 'the spaces between the joints', in which there is 'plenty of room – more than enough for the blade to play about it' (ibid.). The ultimate fact of being-in-relation does not mean total determinism and does not deprive human beings of their freedom. By contrast, the possibility of human freedom is not that of freedom in isolation and does not lead to chaos. There is freedom-in-relation, and there is relation in freedom. In other words, the relation we have is a relation imbued with freedom, and the freedom we have is a kind of relational freedom.

As illustrated by the narrative of the butcher Ding, there is an art of life praxis, to be learned and practiced by each one of us. The possibility of attaining a free and fresh way of life, the fulfillment of a life of sanity and meaningfulness, should be explored, unfolded, and realized through the art of life praxis without anxieties about life and death.

Notes

1. I distinguish classical Daoism into three phases of development: Lao Zi represents the founder of the school and the *Dao-De-Jing* the founding texts and the major work of the first phase; Zhuang Zi (375?–300? BCE) represents the second phase and the *Zhuang-Zi* as the major work of this phase of development; Huanglao Daoism represents the third phase.

2. I use the term 'multiple others' or 'many others' to replace the concept of 'the Other' proposed by French philosophers such J. Lacan, E. Levinas, J. Derrida, and G. Deleuze. For me, we are all born into and we grow up among multiple others. 'The Other' is too abstract and we never face the Other as such. Also, positing 'the Other' presuppose always an opposition with self. The Confucian concept of five relationships, the Daoist concept of 'myriad things', and the Buddhist concept of 'all sentient beings' represent always the idea of multiple others rather than simply the Other.

3. Usually I use, here and in the following quoted passages, the Chinese text in the *Zhuang-Zi-Ji-Shi* (莊子集釋 collected commentaries on Zhuang Zi) and the English translation by Burton Watson and Lin Yutang, and my corrections based on their translations, without putting the corrections in bold, to avoid disturbing the reader. Sometimes there is a need for my retranslation, on the basis of work done on these two translations or simply on my own understanding. Usually my corrections relate to the use of terms, the meaning of terms or sentences, sometimes changing only Wade-Giles to pinyin, sometimes with more substantial changes. I do not discuss the reasons for my corrections, though I have indeed my justifications. In the text quoted here, Watson's translation of the phrase 可不可 as '*proved … that the unacceptable was acceptable*' is not as good as Lin Yu-tang's '*affirmed what others deny*', though Watson's rendering of 然不然 as '*I have proved that not so was so*' is better than Lin's '*I have proved the impossible possible*'.

4. The title *Hui-Shi-Pian* (惠施篇) is in Du Bi's (杜弼) *Biography* of the *Northern Qi History*. Based on this, Wang Yinling (王應麟) of the Song dynasty judged it as a lost chapter of the *Zhuang-Zi*. Recent scholars such as Wang Shumin (王叔岷) identify it with the texts on Hui Shi in the chapter 'Under Heaven'.

5. For example, when Mencius said, 'Yang advocates everyone for himself, which amounts to a denial of one's prince; Mo advocates love without discrimination, which amounts to a denial of one's father. To ignore one's father on the one hand and one's parents on the other is to be no different from the beasts' (*Mencius* 114).

6. Here are the rest of the propositions: 6 There is no limit and yet there is a limit in the direction of the south. 7 One starts out for Yue today and arrives there yesterday. 8 Joined rings can be detached. 9 I know the center of the universe. It is north of the state of *Yen* (in north China) and south of the state of *Yue* (in south China). 10 Love all things extensively. Heaven and earth form one body (Lin Yutang 79, with my corrections).

7. Most English translations of the title 'Qi-Wu-Lun', such as Watson's 'Discussion on Making All Things Equal', or Lin Yutang's 'On Leveling All Things', understand it as a treatise on the equalization of all things. In fact, the title 'Qi-Wu-Lun' can be read as 'Qi Wulun' ('Equalization of Theories on Things') and 'Qiwu Lun' ('Equalization of All Things'), and as I read it this chapter starts with a discussion about theories of things before turning into a discussion on equalization of things. That's why I put the bivalent translation '*Equalizing Things Discourses*'.

8. It is my view that the 'self' that we have is a self in relation and a self in the making, not a self as a substance. It's at the moment of creativity and of good synthesis that we have a real sense of the self, which immediately leads to further creativity and synthesis. I suppose this view of the self goes well with the deep vision of the self implicit in Chinese philosophy.

9. Elsewhere I have developed the philosophical imports of Zhuang Zi's *yu-yan*, *chong-yan*, and *zhiyan*: see Vincent Shen 1985.

10. Here I follow Wang Fuzhi's interpretation as eight psychic states, rather than the twelve states of Wing-tsit Chan and Burton Watson. I take the last four words, *yao yi qi tai* (姚佚啟態) as more correctly to mean 'now slowly, now suddenly, unfolding their states'.

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III

CLASSICAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY (II): FROM HAN THROUGH TANG

Chapter 9
PHILOSOPHY IN THE HAN DYNASTY
Yiu-ming Fung

1 The Background and Characteristics of Philosophy in the Han Dynasty

Prior to the so-called *da-yi-tong* (大一統 the great unity) in the political system of the Qin (秦) and Han (漢) dynasties, the Warring States period (戰國時代) was in chaos not only in terms of the political situation and social order, but also in terms of the intellectual climate and ideology. The breakdown of political and social norms in terms of 'rites and music' in the later Zhou (周) dynasty gave rise to a consciousness of crisis. In dealing with the crisis and in searching for a solution, some thinkers and scholars wanted to revive or reconstruct the old tradition of the Zhou norms. This was the effort made by the ancient Confucians (Ru-jia 儒家), including Confucius (孔子), Mencius (孟子), and Xun Zi (荀子), who adopted a moral approach and believed that morality was the real power for changing the world. Some others were extremely disappointed with the function of the old tradition or any other normative idea for changing the reality of the situation from chaos to orderliness. Instead of changing the world, they wished to escape from the prevailing socio-political predicament and tried to achieve a kind of personal spiritual freedom as their ideal of life. This was the ultimate concern of the Daoists (*Dao-jia* 道家), including Lao Zi (老子) and Zhuang Zi (莊子), who adopted an onto-cosmological or aesthetic-cum-mystical approach and rejected the Confucian project of revisionism. For the Daoists, entertaining personal spiritual freedom is much more significant than constructing a social and political order. Confucianism and Daoism were the two main trends of humanistic thought in ancient China. Through their humanistic thinking, adherents of the former wished to change the actual world from chaos to orderliness while those of the latter desired to elevate themselves from the actual world of political darkness to an ideal world of spiritual brightness. However, the Confucians were unable to realize their project of reconstruction, while the Daoists did not, and would not wish to, have any positive project for the transformation of gloomy reality. In reality, the idea of social control and political monopoly promoted by the Legalists (*Fa-jia* 法家) and other purveyors of social and political engineering, such as those of the school of Vertical and Horizontal Alliances (*Cong-heng-jia* 縱橫家), was welcomed

by most political leaders and increasingly became the dominant ideology prior to the Qin and the Han dynasties. However, when the Han rulers began to control China in a state of 'great unity', it was important or even necessary for them to find a new ideology of the empire. The Daoists did not provide any ideology for the construction of an empire. The Confucians seemed to have an ideology for social order but did not provide any good justification of political dictatorship and social control, whereas the Legalists were able to provide techniques and mechanisms of political monopoly and social control but without a legitimizing rationale for the empire's political power. So, the new situation of 'great unity' presented the challenge of political reconstruction – hence the effort of Han elites in searching for a new ideology of the empire.

As indicated by some modern Chinese scholars in the field of pre-Qin history, the term *di* (帝) or *tian-di* (天帝 the emperor of Heaven) was used during the Shang (商) dynasty as a symbol for the origin of political power on Earth. It means that the legitimacy of an emperor's political power on Earth comes from the religious power of the emperor of Heaven. Some members of the Shang ruling class even identified *tian-di* as their ancestor-god who was supposed to have absolute power over their prosperity and the success of their political enterprise in the human world. The founding members of the Zhou dynasty, wishing to diminish the effect of this kind of legitimacy, used the terms *tian* (天) and *tian-dao* (天道) to replace *di* and *tian-di*, respectively, and claimed that 'there is no relative of the *tian* on Earth; only humans' virtuous performance can evoke Heaven's assistance'.[1] They declared that the reason why the Zhou dynasty were able to replace the Shang dynasty was that the Zhou rulers were virtuous and loved their people while the Shang leaders were tyrants, and therefore had been deprived of power by the *tian*. Confucius still accepted the melody of this virtue-oriented reasoning as justifying a political power but minimized the role played by the *tian* as a kind of supernatural power. In this regard, the emergence of the idea of *ren* (仁 benevolence) in Confucius' thought reflected this wish to distinguish the political function from the idea of *tian*; and he used the concept of *ren* as a moral ground to establish and justify his ideal of social and political order. As argued by Xu Fuguan (徐復觀) and Mou Zongsan (牟宗三),[2] to appeal to the *tian* as a religious ground to legitimize a political power was ineffectual in the later period of the Zhou dynasty – the Spring and Autumn period (春秋時代) and the Warring States period – because the foundation of the feudalism established in the early Zhou period had by then been broken and people no longer recognized the ethico-religious symbolism of the traditional political culture as a valid tool of legitimization. In comparison to the religious heteronomy of the *tian*'s function in political culture, to appeal to ethical practice and moral autonomy seems to be a feasible alternative for Confucius to reconstruct an ideal of social and political order. Confucius' main concern, as reported in some classical texts, was to rectify and reconstruct the social and political order of the Zhou dynasty. His social and political theses were not based on the traditional religious culture of China, but grounded in his ideas of moral psychology, action theory and virtue ethics. In this sense, we can say that Confucius was a 'moral humanist'.

Confucius and Mencius did not succeed in persuading the political leaders of their time to adopt their moral–political project. They failed because their project could not

help the political leaders extend their political power and establish a united empire. So, the Qin rulers of the Warring States period adopted the legalistic project and eventually succeeded in unifying China into the first empire in Chinese history. However, the empire lasted only about fifteen years and quickly collapsed. By sheer force of arms, coupled with the ruthless ideology of the Legalists, the Qin rulers succeeded in conquering all their rivals, but they did not have the ideas and policies with which to maintain their sovereignty. This may be the reason why Lu Jia (陸賈 ?–170 BCE), based on the historical experience of the collapse of Qin, recommended: 'An empire can be conquered from the horseback [by military force], but not ruled from the horseback [by military force]'; it may also explain why his recommendation was attractive and welcome to the Han leaders. They realized that not only the legalistic idea of *li* (力 force) but also the Confucian idea of *de* (德 virtue) could not be the foundation for a way of ruling an empire effectively. It implies that the humanistic thinking of the pre-Qin period was also considered unworkable in the new situation. In this regard, the thinkers and advisors of the Han leaders were required to search for a new ideology of the empire. However, the Han thinkers did not start their project from scratch: they borrowed some earlier ideas from the pre-Qin thinkers. In constructing their ideology, some borrowed the Confucian idea of *tian-ming* (天命 mandate of Heaven) and others adopted the Daoist idea of *wu-wei* (無為 non-doing, non-action, or non-activity). In one sense, their ideology was not an innovation; but, when these ideas were put together and embedded within a formal structure of *yin-yang* (陰陽) and *wu-xing* (五行 five elements, phases, or agents), as we will see later, the old ideas were assigned with new meanings within the framework. So, there happened a kind of chemical change or, in a loose sense, a paradigm shift. As mentioned above, the foundation of the feudalism established in the early Zhou dynasty had been broken in the later period and people in that period did not recognize the ethico-religious symbolism of the traditional political culture as a valid tool of legitimization. But in the Han thinkers' minds, the *tian-ming* has been transformed from a deified power to a naturalistic force. Their concept of *wu-wei* has been enriched with much more political import than the original idea of Zhuang Zi. This is one of the reasons why I say that the old ideas had a new life in the later era.

Gu Jiegang (顧頡剛) has demonstrated this change by saying:

> *Yin-yang* and *wu-xing* is the framework of the Han people's thought. Whether in religion, politics or academics, there was no thought which did not use this way of thinking. To investigate the origin of this thinking, [I think] it was coming from the need of classification for all the things in the universe … The consequence was that there was the thesis of *yin-yang* which could be used to unify all the natural phenomena, such as Heaven and Earth, day and night, male and female, and the abstract ideas, such as superior and inferior, motion and stillness, hardness and softness. There was also the thesis of *wu-xing* which could be used to unify seasons, directions, spirits, rhythms, colors of clothes, foods, smells, virtues and even the systems of emperors and the institutions of nations in accord with the five materials of wood, fire, earth, metal and water and their functions.[3]

It seems that this framework of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing*, on the basis of which some thinkers' ideologies were constituted, was understood as having a magical power, and thus was attractive to the rulers and people of the Han dynasty.

In general, the new political situation of 'great unity' gave rise to the Han thinkers' new ideology and fresh philosophical thinking. There are at least two main characteristics of their thought: eclectic or syncretistic in the content of various schools and schematized with the structure of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing*. Fung Yu-lan (馮友蘭) has rightly demonstrated that

> The people of the third century BCE, discouraged by centuries of inter-state warfare, longed for a political unification; their philosophers, consequently, also tried to bring about the unification in thought. Eclecticism was the first attempt. Eclecticism in itself, however, cannot build a unified system. The eclectics believed in the whole Truth, and hoped by selecting from the various schools their 'strong points,' to attain to this Truth or Tao (*dao*).[4]

For example, although the *Huai-Nan-Zi* (淮南子), written under the patronage of Liu An (劉安 ?–122 BCE), King of Huai-nan, just like the *Lu-Shi-Chun-Qiu* (呂 [不韋] 氏春秋 Lu Buwei's Edition of The Spring and Autumn Annals), has been labeled as a work with strong tendency towards Daoism, it was actually an eclectic compilation of essays that included not only the thought of Daoism, but also that of Confucianism and other schools. Another example is Dong Zhongshu's (董仲舒 ?179–?104 BCE) *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu* (春秋繁露 The Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals). Although he was recognized as the great Confucian in the former Han, his book was not in line with Confucius' and Mencius' humanistic thinking which stressed humans' moral autonomy. Instead, he adopted a semi-religious and semi-naturalistic approach to establish a teleological theory of ethical heteronomy. Here we may ask: why didn't the *Huai-Nan-Zi* as a Daoist work follow Zhuang Zi's aesthetic view of life and mystical view of the world, and why did Dong Zhongshu as a great Confucian choose an approach that deviated from Confucius' and Mencius' moral humanism? I think the main reason was not due to the eclecticism or syncretism in content, but because of the amalgamation of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* in their thought. In other words, in using this framework, Daoist ideas could be changed from their orientation to aesthetic mysticism to that of naturalistic cosmology, or the Confucian ideas could be changed from their moral humanism orientation to one of deistic determinism. In the next section, I consider the framework of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* and its magical power.
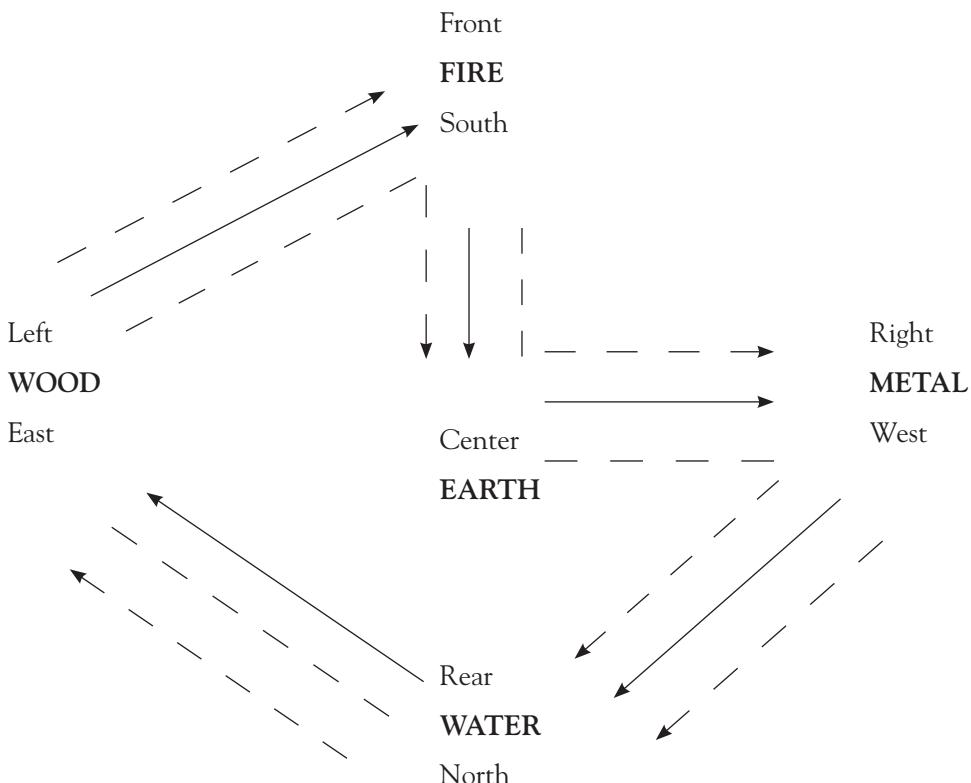
2 The Framework of *Yin-yang* and *Wu-xing*

As schematic tools for constructing worldviews, the *yin-yang*, *wu-xing*, and *ba-gua* (八卦 eight trigrams) were originated independently of each other. In the *Yi-Jing* (易 經 Book of Changes) and other Confucian texts in the Spring and Autumn period, there was no abstract idea of '*yin*', '*yang*', or '*yin-yang*'; '*yin*' and '*yang*' were only used separately to refer to sunlight during the day and a lack of sunlight at night.

Later, however, 'yin', 'yang', and 'yin-yang' were used as abstract ideas in the Daoist texts of the Warring States period and incorporated into the system of *liu-shi-si-gua* (六十四重卦 sixty-four hexagrams) in the *Yi-Zhuan* (易傳 Appendices of the Book of Changes). According to the *Yi-Zhuan*, there is a mutual interaction of *yin* and *yang* in the universe. As an onto-cosmological principle, in general, this could be used to explain the emergence and development of all the things and phenomena in the universe; in particular, it could be used to explain the change of situations as indicated in the different steps of a hexagram and the transformation of possible worlds as reflected in different hexagrams. Other than this kind of incorporation, there was a combination of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* for building a worldview, first attempted by the *Guan-Zi* (管子), an important work of the Huang-Lao Ji-xia school (黃老稷下學派) and well developed by Zou Yan (鄒衍 305–240 BCE), a great leader of the Yin-yang school (Yin-yang-jia 陰陽家). As mentioned in the *Yi-Zhuan* and the Daoist texts of the Warring States period, *yin* and *yang* was understood as two kinds of dynamic and natural form of flowing energy, force or ethers; and the relationship between them was regarded as both opposite and complementary with each other. However, as a scheme for building a worldview, it is too simple to explicate and explain the complicated world of natural phenomena and human affairs. In this regard, the scheme of *wu-xing* seems to provide more rich resources for building a worldview both at the level of classification and at the level of explanation. Based on the Daoist concept of 'qi' (氣 vital force, energy or ether) as a medium, the *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* could be combined together and used by Zou Yan and his followers as a framework to develop an all-inclusive onto-cosmology which could describe the world as an organic cycling whole and could extend the explanation based on its onto-cosmological principle from natural phenomena to human affairs.

Before the name of '*wu-xing*' was used to classify and cover all the five items in the universe, including the five directions, four or five seasons, five stars (or planets), and other five items such as five tastes, five colors, and five rhymes in its rigid classification for patterning the structure of the world, as mentioned in some pre-Qin texts, it had been only used to label the five stuffs (五材 *wu-cai*), i.e., water, fire, wood, metal, and earth, only described as five basic materials for living as follows: 'The water that flows downward to moisten produces salt; the fire that rises upward to burn produces bitterness; the wood that can be crooked or straight produces sourness; the metal that flows the man's will to change its form produces acrid; and the earth that can be used to sow grains produces sweetness.'[5] 'Therefore, the ancient kings used the earth to combine with the metal, the wood, the water and the fire to produce a hundred things, and then used them to harmonize the five tastes for cultivating mouth, to strengthen four limbs for protecting body, to harmonize the six rhythms for making ears acute, and to rectify seven bodies for serving mind.'[6] It is obvious that, at that time, they were not used as abstract concepts and their order (water [水 *shui*] → fire [火 *huo*] → wood [*mu* 木] → metal [金 *jin*] → earth [土 *tu*] or earth → metal → wood → water → fire) was not of any special sense.[7] Until the later time of the Warring States period, they were employed as a scheme of classification for all the things and phenomena in the universe in the sense that each kind or group of objects or events could be divided

into five items and embedded into a structural pattern. For example, in the 'Wu-Xing' chapter of *Guan-Zi*, it may be the first time to put the *wu-xing* into an order later called '*xiang-sheng* 1' (相生 mutual production or emergence: wood → fire → earth → metal → water [→ wood …]). In the *Lu-Shi-Chun-Qiu*, which has been believed to preserve Zou Yan's basic idea of the increase and decrease of the *yin* and the *yang* and his theory of the cycling of *wu-de* (五德 five virtues or five powers), *wu-xing* was put into an order later called '*xiang-sheng* 2' (相勝 mutual conquest or overcoming: wood → earth → water → fire → metal [→ wood …]). The structure of both '*xiang-sheng* 1' and '*xiang-sheng* 2' can be illustrated in the diagram.

Based on this structural pattern, most Han thinkers think that the world is an inter-connected web in the sense that every thing or phenomenon is situated in a dynamic cycle of relations both productive and anti-productive to some others.[8] Besides, the universe is also recognized as having some kind of inductance, correspondence or resonance, in terms of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing*, between different kinds of things or phenomena in Earth and between Heaven (*tian*) and human (人 *ren*). Based on these characteristics, Joseph Needham calls this kind of worldview 'correlative cosmology' and its thinking 'correlative thinking'.

Needham thinks that there were two ways of using the *wu-xing* scheme in ancient China: the first way is Zou Yan's naturalistic application of the scheme. He charac-

terizes Zou Yan's theory as half-scientific and half-political. The second way is more political and less scientific. He guesses that an intellectual turn from the first to the second way of thinking was made by Fu Sheng (伏勝 250?–175? BCE), an expert of *Sheng-Shu*. Based on this distinction, he thinks that,

> By that time [i.e., the first century] the essentials of the theory had become surrounded by an enormous accretion of omen- and portent-lore of all kinds. The theory known as 'Phenomenalism' … had become stabilised; according to this, governmental or social irregularities would lead to dislocations of the five-element processes on earth and deviations from the proper through all the subsequent dynastic histories in their 'Five Element Chapters' – the proto-science of the Naturalists had turned into the pseudo-science of the Phenomenalists'[9]

Nevertheless, as indicated by Benjamini Schwartz,[10] the historical evidence shows that there was no sharp distinction between what Needham calls 'naturalism' and 'phenomenalism' in the Han dynasty. Besides, I think that Dong Zhongshu's idea of 'mysterious resonance' between different things or phenomena and 'inductance or correspondence' (感應 *gan-ying*) between *tian* and *ren* cannot be understood as an alternative way of scientific thinking and the mode of explanation based on this idea cannot be interpreted as essentially different from or as incommensurable to the Western mode of 'mechanical impulsion or causation'. However, I agree with Needham that the 'principle of control' (相制 *xiang-zhi*) and the 'principle of masking' (相化 *xiang-hua*) derived from the 'principle of production' and the 'principle of conquest' can be regarded, in a restricted sense, as heuristic and significant to the understanding of the bio-ecological phenomena of the natural world.[11] It is only heuristic and significant in a restricted sense, because the ecological environment, either of the macro outside world or the micro world of human body, is not a closed system; anything can play a causal role in relation to another thing of the world if the condition of habitation in the world is changed. The complex world is not rigidly dominated by a dynamic cycle of five functional entities though sometimes some of its phenomena exhibit a small scale of dynamic cycle of mutual control and mutual masking as mentioned by Needham and others.[12]

One example from the *Su-Wen* (素問 The Plain Questions) volume of the *Huang-Di-Nei-Jing* (黃帝內經 Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor) can be used to illustrate this point. According to the *Su-Wen*, when someone is in a healthy state, her or his five organs (五臟 *wu-zang*) are in a cycle of balance; that is, in a normal situation, the five organs (liver, heart, spleen, lung, and kidney) signified by wood, fire, earth, metal, and water respectively, are interconnected by the mutual production and mutual conquest in a cycle of balanced state. However, if someone is sick, the physical or medical state of her or his five organs will enter into a cycle of imbalance. For example, if the liver is sick, it may transfer the sickness to the heart (i.e., following the production order from wood to fire but without good or positive production). It is called the 'transference of sickness from mother to son' (母病及子 *mu-bing-ji-zi*). Moreover, if the liver is sick, it

may also transfer the sickness to the kidney (i.e., reversing the production order from water to wood and without good or positive production). It is called the 'invasion of sickness from son to mother' (子病犯母 *zi-bing-fan-mu*). These are abnormal cases, because the mutual production order is in chaos or the production is not in a positive way. There are also abnormal cases when the mutual conquest is not in well order. For example, if the liver is sick, it may transfer the sickness to the spleen. It is called 'wood overacts on earth' (木乘土 *mu-cheng-tu*), because the conquest is overdone. Moreover, if the liver is sick, it may also transfer the sickness to the lung. It is called 'wood rebels against metal' (木侮金 *mu-wu-jin*), because wood is normally conquered by metal. There are two reasons for causing these cases of imbalance mentioned in the *Su-Wen*: the *qi* is 'more than enough' (過 *guo*) or 'too increase' (偏盛 *pian-sheng*) and 'less than enough'(不及 *bu-ji*) or 'too decrease' (偏衰 *bian-shuai*). In regard to the cases of mutual conquest, for example, if the *qi* of an organ y is more than enough, then the consequence is that it will decrease the *qi* of another organ x which is supposed to be able to conquer y. So the case can be described as 'y rebels against x'. Moreover, the *qi* of a third organ z which is supposed to be conquered by y will be too much decreased by the *qi* of y at an abnormal level. It can be described as 'y overacts on z'. These two kinds of imbalance could also appear in the cases of mutual production. The state of imbalance can be described as two kinds of struggle in *qi*: the one is '*sheng-qi*' (勝氣 the conquering *qi*) and the other '*fu-qi*' (復氣 the reversing *qi*). In facing a case of imbalance, what a Chinese medical doctor should do is to use herbal medicines or other techniques to cure the sick people by changing the situation of 'more than enough' or 'less than enough', and thus to help the sick people recover to the state of '*ping-qi*' (平氣 the balancing *qi*). In general and in a restricted sense, it does not only make sense but is also workable for the Chinese medical practitioners to use this mode of thinking to explain a few, if not many, interconnected conditions and symptoms of sickness. In this sense, it is heuristic and significant for medical treatment. However, there are at least two shortcomings in the explanation based on this schematic thinking: the states of 'more than enough' and 'less than enough' in abnormal cases cannot be quantified; and the explanation for the case of '*fan*' (invasion) in '*zi-bing-fan-mu*' or '*wu*' (rebellion) in '*mu-wu-jin*' is nothing but an *ad hoc* supplementary adjustment, which can be understood as a design for explaining away some unexpected or exceptional cases.

I agree with Needham that this mode of thinking is significant and heuristic in applying to the area of bio-ecology; however, it seems to me that he exaggerates the difference between the principles based on the *wu-xing* scheme in explaining the macro phenomena of the biological and physical world and the lawful principles in Western science. He stresses that 'the conceptual framework of Chinese associate or coordinative thinking was essentially something different from that of European causal and "legal" or nomothetic thinking'.[13] I do not think that there is a correlative or associative thinking in ancient China which is essentially different from or incommensurable to the analytic or causal thinking of the West.[14] If the *wu-xing* scheme provides only a pattern or model for describing the order or regularity of the world, it would be functioned as a model of description and there would be no principle

derived from this scheme. On the other hand, even if there are derived principles as mentioned by Needham, it is definitely not the kind of scientific laws. It may be one of the reasons why Needham claims that 'the [Western] mechanical and the quantitative, the forced and the externally imposed, were all absent' in Chinese correlative thinking and '[t]he notion of Order excluded the notion of Law'.[15] Although I agree that the mode of thinking based on the *wu-xing* scheme is not scientific in a modern sense, it is not because it is an alternative thinking which is essentially different from the Western analytic and causal thinking. The difference is not in the sense that one side is analytic and the other side non-analytic, or one side causal and the other side non-causal. It is not scientific in a full-fledged sense, because it is not grounded on scientific evidence with objective quantity, but issued from speculation and imagination.

Why is this kind of thinking not scientific? It is because its principles are not nomological in a scientific sense. I think there are at least three reasons to demonstrate this point:

(1) The principles based on the *wu-xing* scheme are just like the principle of spiral development based on the Hegelian dialectics, the principle of reversibility of phenomena in extreme circumstances (物極必反 *wu-ji-bi-fan*) based on the onto-cosmology of *Lao-Zi* or *Yi-Jing*, or the principle of retribution of cause and effect based on secular Buddhism and Daoism. All these principles are not falsifiable in Karl Popper's sense. There is no precondition specified in advance and thus there is also no real prediction. In this regard, they are all truisms because all exceptional cases can be explained away by some kind of *ad hoc* supplementary adjustment. In this sense, the difference between the principles based on the *wu-xing* scheme and those of modern science is the demarcation between speculative metaphysics and physical sciences. One of the obvious examples to illustrate this *ad hoc* supplementary adjustment can be found in Dong Zhongshu's idea of '*quan*' (權 expedient or strategic adjustment). According to his theory of the interconnection between the items of *yin-yang*, *wu-xing*, seasons, directions, etc., to be consistent (as indicated in the *Huai-Nan-Zi*), the driving force of *yin* should be in the west, otherwise it cannot assist (助 *zhu*) the operations of the element metal in autumn. But he thinks that,

> When the autumn season arrives, the lesser *yin* arises, but it is not permitted, on behalf of autumn, to associate itself with metal (in the west), for such association would result in injury to the work accomplished by fire (during the summer season just preceding). Nevertheless, it appears in the east on behalf of autumn, where, holding itself low, it pursues its business in order to bring the year's work to completion. Is this not the case of proper [expedient] adjustment? Thus the course of Heaven has its correct relationships, its [normal] natural order [經 *jing*], and its [expedient] proper adjustment [*quan*].[16]

According to Dong Zhongshu, not in accord to Heaven's normal natural order, the lesser *yin* emerges in the east, 'where, holding itself low, it pursues its business'. Thus

it humbly brings the work of the year to completion. Such is Heaven's '[expedient] proper adjustment'. Fung Yu-lan thinks the reason why the *yin* is thus relegated to a lesser position is that Heaven 'has trust in the *yang* but not in the *yin*; it likes beneficence but not chastisement' (chap. 47, 11.16). 'For this reason Heaven, in its operation of the *yin* ether, takes only a small amount of it to give completion to autumn, while it assigns the remainder to winter' (chap. 49, 12.3).[17] However, I think it is still not a good reason to use '*quan*' to replace '*jing*' except to treat it as an *ad hoc* supplementary adjustment which is only designed for explaining away an exceptional case. In other words, the design of '*quan*' discredits the universality of explanation, ruins its lawful basis.

(2) Needham realizes that in both the principle of control and the principle of masking there lurks a strong quantitative element;[18] it seems to him that the naturalists or thinkers of the Yin-yang school did not take up the challenge from the later Mohists (後期墨家) on the problem of quantity.[19] Actually, as indicated in many ancient texts, each of the '*wu-xing*' was only employed as a phenomenalistic concept of functional quality; the *wu-xing* by itself did not have any quantitative element or could not be subject to measurement. So, in this regard, the thinkers of the Han dynasty had to use the concepts of '*qi*' and '*yin-yang*' to elaborate a deep level of explanation to supplement the idea of '*wu-xing*' which was only used to function at the surface level of explanation. For example, in the *Guan-Zi*, the concepts of '*qi*' and '*yin-yang*' were used to explain the emergence of each *wu-xing*. In the 'Si-Shi' (四時 Four Seasons) chapter, fire was regarded as emerged from *yang* and metal from *yin*. In the 'Tian-Wen-Xun' (天文訓 Teaching of the Patterns of Heaven) chapter of *Huai-Nan-Zi*, fire was understood as having emerged from the hot *qi* which was accumulated from *yang* and water from the cold *qi* which was accumulated from *yin*. However, it should be noticed that the concepts of 'fire', 'metal', and 'water' here in both texts were not used individually as phenomenalistic concepts to refer to some kind of qualities of different things or phenomena in the world and not collectively used as a scheme to classify all the things and phenomena in the world within an orderly pattern of dynamic cycle. Instead, they were used to mean literally the physical entities fire, metal, and water. Until later in the *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, Dong Zhongshu borrowed the concepts of '*shao-yang*' (少陽 lesser *yang*), '*tai-yang*' (太陽 greater *yang*), '*shao-yin*' (少陰 lesser *yin*) and '*tai-yin*' (太陰 greater *yin*) from the *Yi-Zhuan* to specify the deep level of emergence of the *qi* which was understood as having the quality signified by each of the *wu-xing*. Since the scheme of *wu-xing* as a whole is considered as only exhibiting a structure of dynamic cycle and each element as a phenomenalistic quality, there is no driving force in itself to make the cycle in motion. So Dong Zhongshu employs the four semi-quantitative concepts for the explanation of the emergence of all the things and phenomena in the world which are situated in the scheme of *wu-xing*. I call the concepts 'semi-quantitative', because the quantities described by them cannot be physically measured though their quantity could be accumulated or decreased and described as 'more or less'. For the similar reason, particularly, in order to well-match the situation of how to calculate the quantity of herbal medicines used for treatment, in addition to the qualitative concepts of '*wu-xing*', there was a need to introduce the quantitative concepts

of 'three *yin*' and 'three *yang*' (i.e., 太陽 *tai-yang*, 少陽 *shao-yang*, 陽明 *yang-ming* and 太陰 *tai-yin*, 少陰 *shao-yin*, 厥陰 *jue-yin*) in the *Su-Wen*. Nevertheless, the concepts of 'three *yin*' and 'three *yang*' are not the proper concepts of quantity in physical sciences. Instead, they were used as a kind of phenomenalistic concepts of quantity. Just like the description 'much warm' or 'less cold', which is different in terms of measurement from the description 'high degree of temperature' or 'low degree of temperature', similarly, when we use the words 'more than enough' to describe the *qi* of something signified by one of the *wu-xing*, or use 'less than enough' to describe the *qi* of another thing signified by another element of the *wu-xing*, what we are using is not an objective but a subjective concept of measurement. In this regard, therefore, the thinking based on the framework of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* was not scientific in a full-fledged sense though Needham may be right to identify the thinking as proto-scientific. However, to regard the thinking as proto-scientific is not because of its being correlative and thus essentially different from Western scientific thinking, but because it is of the characteristic of metaphysical speculation and thus cannot provide any physical concept (or physicalistic concept in the Carnapean sense) of quantity and objective notion of measurement.

(3) One of the key theses of the so-called 'correlative cosmology' mentioned above is about the inductance, correspondence, or resonance between Heaven and human. Needham describes vividly that,

> In correlative thinking, conceptions are not subsumed under one another, but placed side by side in a *pattern*, and things influence one another not by acts of mechanical causation, but by a kind of 'inductance' … The symbolic correlations or correspondences all formed part of one colossal pattern. Things behaved in particular ways not necessarily because of prior actions or impulsions of other things, but because their position in the ever-moving cyclical universe was such that they were endowed with intrinsic nature which made that behaviour inevitable for them. If they did not behave in those particular ways they would lose their relational positions in the whole (which made them what they were), and turn into something other than themselves. They were parts in existential dependence upon the whole world-organism. And they reacted upon one another not so much by mechanical impulsion or causation as by a kind of mysterious resonance.[20]

Why is it possible to have a mysterious resonance in the universe? According to Dong Zhongshu's answer, it is because different things or phenomena with the same kind of *qi* or in the same numerical category will interact with each other. Or, put in Needham's words, it is because things of the same position in the ever-moving cyclical universe are endowed with some kind of intrinsic nature which will stimulate them approaching to each other. For Dong Zhongshu, there are two ways to describe the two kinds of intrinsic nature embedded in the *qi* of *yin* and the *qi* of *yang* respectively: they are '*yin* and *yang*' if described in a cosmological or naturalistic way; '*de* (德 beneficent power) and *xing* (刑 chastising power)' if described in an ethical or humanistic way. It

seems that he recognizes these as two kinds of descriptions of the same thing (intrinsic nature). In this regard, he probably believes that there is no gap between fact and value and the nature of things or phenomena in the universe could be described in either way, that is, either in naturalistic (or factual) language or prescriptive (or evaluative) language. In comparison with Hilary Putnam's or Alasdair MacIntyre's idea of 'functional unity' in terms of 'supervenience' or with John Searle's idea of 'derivation of performative acts' in terms of 'institutional fact' in bridging the gap between fact and value, Dong Zhongshu's idea of bridging the gap is neither one of them. His idea of 'association' or 'correspondence' is nothing but a metaphysical construction by speculation and imagination. Based on this point, I think he cannot escape from the charge of 'naturalistic fallacy'. Hence, the so-called 'correlative cosmology' based on this idea cannot be considered as scientific in a full-fledged sense.

In the *Guan-Zi* and *Huai-Nan-Zi*, there was an idea called '*shi-ling*' (時令 seasonal commands or periodical ordinances) which correlated the *wu-xing* with four seasons and instructed the rulers and the people how to deal with the natural phenomena and human affairs. In the *Li-Ji* (禮記 *Book of Rites*), there was a long section called '*Yue-Ling*' (月令 monthly commands or ordinances) which has also been found complete in the *Lu-Shi-Chun-Qiu*, and in large part in the *Huai-Nan-Zi*. As a small almanac, the work told the rulers and the people generally what would most likely happen each month and what they should accordingly do month by month so as to retain harmony with the forces of nature. The work described everything, including time and space, within the framework of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing*. Both of these two pieces of work stressed the harmony between human beings and the natural world. Later works of the Han thinkers on ecological balance basically followed this line of thinking. They employed the framework of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* to interpret the natural world as a closed system in which a kind of spontaneous adjustment was understood as working in a cycle. As a rational explanation, this was attractive in the Han period. But what this could provide is only a rationalization, not a causal explanation. As explained by Xun Zi, the real cause of ecological balance could be found in the explanation by induction based on the experience of the balance of supply and demand in resources. He says:

> By plowing in spring, weeding in summer, harvesting in autumn, and storing up in winter, the four activities are not out of their proper season; thus, the production of the Five Foods is not interrupted, and the Hundred Clans have more than enough to eat. The ponds, lakes, pools, streams, and marshes being strictly closed during the proper season is the reason that the fish and turtles are in plentiful abundance and the Hundred Clans have surplus for other uses. The cutting and pruning, the growing and planting, not being out of their proper season is the reason the mountain forests are not denuded and the Hundred Clans have more than enough timber.[21]

This experience of the protection of natural resources and keeping balance of supply and demand during the proper season can be regarded as the inductive base for Xun

Zi to make the above point. Xun Zi stresses that 'material goods are inadequate to satisfy all (物不能澹 *wu-bu-neng-dan*), there is certain to be contention',[22] this is because there is a tension between the scarcity of goods and people's subjective *desire*. However, there is no conflict between the scarcity of goods and people's objective *need*. So, he criticizes Mo Zi (墨子) that 'the teachings of Mozi too narrowly worry about the problem of the world suffering from the hardship of inadequate supplies. This "inadequacy" is not in fact a misfortune common to the whole world, but merely a hardship private to Mozi's exaggerated reckoning.'[23] It means that, although material goods are inadequate to satisfy people's desire, there is no inadequacy in meeting people's need if the people keep balance of supply and demand in using natural resources.

In his treatise entitled 'On the Essential Ideas of the Six Schools', Sima Tan (司馬 談 ?–110 BCE), an official historian and thinker of the former Han, made a remark on the Yin-yang school's doctrine of periodical ordinances that,

> The *yin-yang*, four seasons, eight positions, twelve limits, and the twenty-four seasonal nodes have their instructive ordinances. Those who comply with them will flourish; those who defy them, if their own person does not perish, will lose [their state]. Yet it does not necessarily need to be this way. Therefore I said, 'They cause people to feel constrained and to fear many things.' In the spring, living things are generated, in the summer they mature, in the autumn they are harvested, in the winter they are stored away: this is the Great Norm of the *tian-dao*. If you do not comply with it, then you lack the means to become the guiding basis for all-under-Heaven. Therefore I said, 'One cannot fault the way they prioritize the grand compliances of the four seasons.'[24]

It seems to me that, for Sima Tan, although the Great Norm of the *tian-dao* mentioned by the Yin-yang school was not recognized as necessary in term of lawful regulation in explaining the seasonal phenomena, it could be understood as a good rationalization for instructing people to do the right thing during the proper season in order to protect the natural resources and thus to keep balance of supply and demand of the natural resources. In this sense, I think that the periodical ordinances were not really functioned as a scientific or causal explanation for the seasonal phenomena; they just played a role of rationalization.

3 *Huai-Nan-Zi*'s Daoist Eclectic Philosophy

Just like the *Lu-Shi-Chun-Qiu*, the *Huai-Nan-Zi* as a collection of essays written by scholars from different schools has been understood by most past and modern scholars as a work of syncretism and thus classified as a publication of the Miscellaneous school (雜家 Za-jia). Some modern scholars from China's mainland stress that the *Huai-Nan-Zi* has a theoretical inclination to Daoism. Fung Yu-lan does not accept either status assigned to the *Huai-Nan-Zi*; he thinks that it was a work of the Huang-Lao Ji-xia school. I agree with Fung that some basic ideas of the Huang-Lao

Ji-xia school such as '*yin-yang*', '*wu-xing*', and a kind of political ideology did play an important role in the *Huai-Nan-Zi*. But, some other basic ideas from Zhuang Zi's philosophy such as '*wu-wei*' (non-doing, non-action, or non-activity), '*zi-ran*' (自然 spontaneity) and the *qi*-cosmology also played an essential role in the *Huai-Nan-Zi*. Since the framework of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* provided by the Ji-xia school served almost all theories of different thinkers in the Han dynasty and thus could be regarded as a common constituent for most theories, it would not be appropriate to treat this element as a distinctive characteristic of various thoughts in the Han period, including the thought of *Huai-Nan-Zi*. Since the *Huai-Nan-Zi* incorporated some Daoist elements in the thought of Huang-Lao school and some other Daoist elements in Zhuang Zi's philosophy, I think it is appropriate to classify the thought of *Huai-Nan-Zi* as a Daoist eclectic philosophy.

The main concern of Daoism in the pre-Qin period, including Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi's thought, was the meaning and value of life, though cosmological thinking was also an integrated part of their theories. Until the later period of the Warring States and the early period of the Han dynasty, the *qi*-cosmology was developed in much sophisticated form, especially when the *Huai-Nan-Zi* adopted the framework of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* in elaborating its *qi*-cosmology.

In the outer chapters and the miscellaneous chapters of *Zhuang-Zi*, it is believed that the disciples or followers of Zhuang Zi are more interested in cosmological problems; but in the inner chapters which have been regarded as the representative essays of Zhuang Zi's own thought, Zhuang Zi seems to think that we cannot effectively use language to define the concepts and to explain the questions of metaphysics or cosmology and that any proposal to explicate the concepts and to answer the questions would be falling into an infinite regression. For example, in 'Qi-Wu-Lun' (齊物論 'On Equalizing All Things'), Zhuang Zi thinks that the aesthetic-cum-mystical vision of the 'one unity of all things in the universe and I' cannot be described. Even though we could try to describe it as 'one', the one in reality together with the 'one' in language would constitute two entities. If we were required to use another term to describe the relation of these two entities, it would constitute three entities. So he says, 'If we go on like this, even the cleverest astronomical mathematician cannot keep up, let alone the ordinary people. Therefore, if, by moving from nothing to existence, we arrive at three entities, how much farther would we go if we move from [prior] existence to [later] existence! We'd better not move any farther, but following the natural course of things.'[25] Before this paragraph, in answering the question whether there was a beginning of the universe, he claims that,

> There was a beginning for all things; there was a time before that beginning; there had been a time before that. In the beginning, there was existence and there was nothing; there was a stage before the existence of nothing; there had been a stage before that. All of sudden there was nothing, but I really do not know whether nothing is existence or nothing. Now I have said something, but I do not know whether by what I have said I have really said something or not.[26]

From the above quotations, it is obvious that Zhuang Zi does not think that *dao*, the One or the origin of the universe can be defined and explained in our language.

In comparison to Zhuang Zi's refusal of explication and explanation of the ultimate questions mentioned above, in answering the similar questions, it is interesting that the *Huai-Nan-Zi* makes a 'cosmological turn' as indicated in the following paragraph:

> There was a beginning. There was a time before that beginning; there had been a time before that. In the beginning, there was existence and there was nothing; there was a stage before the existence of nothing; there had been a stage before that. The meaning of 'there was a beginning' is that there was a complex energy which not yet pullulated into germinal form, nor into any visible shape of root and seed and rudiment. Even then in this vast and impalpable condition the desire to spring into life was apparent; but, as yet, the genera of things had not yet formed. At the stage, 'there was a time before that beginning', the fluid (*ch'i*) [*qi*] of Heaven first descended, and the fluid of Earth first ascended. The *yin* and *yang* united with one another, prompting and striving amidst the cosmos. They wandered hither and thither, pursuing, competing, interpenetrating. Clothed with energy and containing harmony, they moved, sifted and impregnated, each wishing to ally itself with other things, even when, as yet, there was no appearance of any created form. At the stage, 'there had been a time before the time before that beginning', Heaven contained the quality of harmony, but had not, as yet, descended; Earth cherished the vivifying fluid (*ch'i*), but had not, as yet, ascended. There was a void, still, desolate, vapory, without similitude. The vitalizing fluid floated about without destination.[27]

This paragraph provides a vivid and detailed description of the emergence of the universe which did not appear in the texts before the publication of the *Huai-Nan-Zi*.

From the very beginning of nothing to the existence of all things in the universe, for the *Huai-Nan-Zi*, it could be thought as a process from non-differentiation to differentiation, or from the non-splitting state to the splitting state. Although Lao Zi's model of emergence 'from One to two and two to three' is mentioned in the 'Jing-Shen-Xun' (精神訓 Teaching of the Seminal Breath and Spirit), it seems that the *Huai-Nan-Zi* is more interested in using the model 'from One to two and two to four' from the *Yi-Zhuan* in theory construction. The *Huai-Nan-Zi* uses five directions to classify all differentiated things in the universe into different categories and applies the *yin-yang* scheme to explain the similarity between different things of various categories. In this context, it seems that the *wu-xing* scheme does not play an obvious role in classification as performed in the *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*; instead, it is employed to explain the seasonal commands (or periodical ordinances) just like the case in the 'twelve records' (十二紀 *shi-er-ji*) of *Lu-Shi-Chun-Qiu*. The *Huai-Nan-Zi* has not yet fully incorporated the *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* into an interconnected framework in explaining all the things and phenomena in the universe as was done in the *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*. However, in the process of emergence, *qi* and *yin-yang* are described

in the *Huai-Nan-Zi* as playing a role of driving forces in making the universe in a form of differentiation as follows:

> When Heaven and Earth did not yet have form, there was a state of amorphous formlessness. Therefore this is termed the Great Beginning (太始 *t'ai shih*) [*tai-shi*]. This Great Beginning produced an empty extensiveness, and this empty extensiveness produced the cosmos. The cosmos produced the primal fluid (元氣 *yuan ch'i*) [*yuan-qi*], which had its limits. That which was clear and light collected to form Heaven. That which was heavy and turbid congealed to form Earth. The union of the clear and light was especially easy, whereas the congealing of the heavy and turbid was particularly difficult, so that Heaven was formed first and Earth afterward. The essences of Heaven and Earth formed the *yin* and the *yang*, and the concentrated essences of the *yin* and the *yang* formed the four seasons. The scattered essences of the *yin* and the *yang* formed the myriad things. The hot force of *yang*, being accumulated for a long time, produced fire, and the essence of fire formed the sun. The cold force of *yin*, being accumulated for a long time, produced water, and the essence of water formed the moon. The refined essence of the excess fluid of the sun and moon formed the stars and planets. Heaven received unto itself the sun, moon, stars and planets, while Earth received water, rivers, soils and dust.[28]

The term '*tai-shi*' (the Great Beginning) and '*tai-yi*' (太一 the Great Oneness) are sometimes used as equivalent to each other in the *Huai-Nan-Zi*. Although *dao* is described in the 'Tian-Wen-Xun' as 'began from the Oneness', it is also indicated in the text that *dao* and Oneness are not separated. When the origin of the universe is described in a cosmological way, the *Huai-Nan-Zi* inclines to use the term 'Oneness' or 'Great Oneness'; on the other hand, when the existence of all the things in the universe is explained metaphysically, the *Huai-Nan-Zi* uses the term '*dao*' or '*tian-dao*'. For example, the following paragraph demonstrates a thesis which is more metaphysical than cosmological:

> Tao [*Dao*] covers Heaven and supports Earth. It is the extent of the four quarters of the universe and the dimensions of the eight points of the firmament. There is no limit to its height, and its depth is unfathomable. It encloses Heaven and Earth and endows things [with their nature] before they have been formed … Compressed, it can expand. Hidden, it can be manifest. Weak, it can be strong. Soft, it can be firm. … With it the mountain becomes high and the abyss becomes deep. Because of it, animals run and birds fly. Sun and moon shine and planets revolve by it. Through it the unicorn emerges and the phoenix soars.[29]

Under the influence of the schematic thinking of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing*, I think this was one of the main reasons why the *Huai-Nan-Zi* changed the approach of Zhuang Zi's transcendental and aesthetic-cum-mystical thinking to a new direction of semi-

empirical and semi-cosmological thinking. However, Zhuang Zi's influence did not totally disappear; this may be one of the reasons why the *Huai-Nan-Zi* developed a full-fledged cosmology on the one hand and did not give up the transcendental interpretation of *dao* on the other.

Based on an amalgamation of cosmological and metaphysical thinking, the *Huai-Nan-Zi* establishes a simple theory to explain the interaction between different things of the same kind in the universe. The basic principle of this kind of interaction was first mentioned in the chapter 'Xi-Ci' (繫辭 Appended Judgments) of *Yi-Zhuan* as '[different] notes of the same kind would resonate to each other and [different] *qi* of the same kind would approach to each other'. The similar words also appeared in the *Lu-Shi-Chun-Qiu*. To explain this kind of inductance, correspondence or resonance, the *Huai-Nan-Zi* appeals to the interaction between different things or phenomena of the same *qi* (either *yin* or *yang*).[30] The following is a more detailed description of some cases of interaction:

> Various things of the same kind would influence one another, and the root and topmost branches (of a tree) would respond to one another. Therefore when a *yang sui* (陽燧 a kind of mirror) is put under the sun, it becomes hot and creates fire. When a *fang chu* (方諸 another kind of mirror) [*fang-zhu*] is put under the moon, it becomes moist and forms water. When the tiger roars, the valley wind comes. When the dragon arises, great clouds appear. When unicorns fight, the sun and moon are eclipsed. When whales die, comets come forth. When silkworms produce their silk, the string of the *shang* note (商 in Chinese scale) breaks. When shooting stars descend, the great seas make inundations.[31]

If the same *yang* or same *yin* could be understood as the driving cause of interaction, correspondence or inductance, the isomorphism between Heaven and Earth as a macrocosm and human body as a microcosm could be considered as the rational ground of interaction, correspondence or inductance. The isomorphism can be demonstrated in the following:

> Heaven has the four seasons, Five Elements, nine divisions, and three hundred and sixty days. Man likewise has four limbs, five viscera, nine orifices, and three hundred and sixty joints. Heaven has wind, rain, cold and heat, and man likewise has (the quantities of) accepting and giving, joy and anger. Therefore the gall corresponds to clouds, the lungs to vapor, the spleen to wind, the kidneys to rain, and the liver to thunder. Thus man forms a trinity with Heaven and Earth, and his mind is the master. Therefore the ears and eyes are as the sun and moon, and the humors of the blood as wind and rain. In the sun there is a bird standing on three legs, and in the moon a three-legs toad. Were the sun and moon to miss their course, there would be eclipse and loss of light. Should wind and rain fail their proper time, there would arise

disaster and calamity. Should the five planets fail in their course, continents and countries would suffer calamity.[32]

In addition to the *qi* as the driving cause and the isomorphism as the rational ground of the interaction, the *Huai-Nan-Zi* also stresses human beings' spiritual power in motivating the phenomena of Heaven. The reason is that, 'If the refined sincerity (精誠 *jing-cheng*) is sensed in human mind, some kind of formed *qi* would be moved from Heaven'.[33] Here two things should be mentioned:

1 Although the *Huai-Nan-Zi* regards the interaction based on the driving cause of same *qi* and the rational ground of isomorphism as a natural course, i.e., a physical or mechanical process of *zi-ran*, it seems that the *Huai-Nan-Zi* believes there is a kind of parallelism between mental power and natural force. Based on this parallelism, I think it could give room to human's freedom of will.
2 Although the *Huai-Nan-Zi* thinks that, usually, the natural course of interaction could be explained by the principle of isomorphism, but there is no necessity because human intelligence is limited and thus cannot know the ultimate truth of reality. He believes that some correspondence is fake or mystical and not easy to discern so that human intelligence cannot reach.[34] It seems that the *Huai-Nan-Zi* also puts limitation on human's reason.

Besides the key tone of Daoism, there is also Confucian element in the *Huai-Nan-Zi*, especially in the 'Miu-Cheng-Xun' (繆稱訓 On Erroneous Designations). In this chapter, the author(s) wants to incorporate the Confucian active and moral element for the reconstruction of social and political order into a Daoist framework. It is an attempt to establish a view that the purposeful activity of human beings could be regulated by or grounded on the spirit of non-action. As demonstrated by some experts in the *Huai-Nan-Zi*, this incorporation of thought is not successful; there is a tension between the Daoist non-action and the Confucian intentional action which is not easy to relieve.[35] Based on the Daoist ideas of '*wu-wei*' and '*zi-ran*', the *Huai-Nan-Zi* advocates the ideal of a ruler who reigns without interference. It is obvious that this cannot be consistent with the Confucian revisionism and could not become an ideology attractive to the Han rulers who wanted to extend the power of the empire.

In the next section, I shall investigate the main theses of Dong Zhongshu's Confucian syncretism which was much more attractive to the Han rulers and people.

4 Dong Zhongshu's Confucian Eclectic Philosophy

In comparison with Liu An, Dong Zhongshu was much more successful in constructing an ideology attractive to the Han rulers. In replying to the questions on the recommendation of good governmental servants asked by Emperor Wu (漢武帝 140–87 BCE), Dong wrote three treatises on the relationship between Heaven and human as the fundamentals of government. His idea was not only well received by Emperor

Wu, but also had great influence on the intellectual thinking of the later period of Han after his death.

Dong Zhongshu's philosophy is basically an integration of the cosmology of *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* and the Confucian ethico-political doctrine. His cosmology is made up of ten items. They are: 'Heaven, Earth, the *yin* and *yang*, and wood, fire, earth, metal and water, make nine; together with man, they make ten. Heaven's number is with this made complete.'[36] Here the term 'Heaven' seems to have two meanings: the first token of the term refers to the physical Heaven, standing in opposition to Earth; the second means the totality of the nature or cosmos. In addition, sometimes he also uses the second token of the term to refer to something of intention or consciousness. In other words, the term may have a theistic import. Besides the term 'Heaven', another important term in Dong Zhongshu's cosmology is '*Yuan*'. He says:

> What is called the single *Yuan* (元 Origin) is the great beginning … It is only the sage who is capable of relating the many to the one, and thus linking them to *Yuan* … This *Yuan* is like a source. Its significance is that it permeates Heaven and Earth from beginning to end … Therefore *Yuan* is the root of all things, and in it lies man's own origin. How does it exist? It exists before Heaven and Earth.[37]

According to Fung Yu-lan's view, if '*Yuan* is the root of all things', it thus exists before the physical Heaven. But, does it also give being to the other Heaven which is the nature or cosmos possessed of consciousness? He thinks that Dong Zhongshu fails to indicate the ontological status of the second idea of 'Heaven'.[38] It implies that Dong does not make clear whether '*Yuan*' is used to refer to *qi*, *jing-shen* (精神 spirit) or Heaven (possessed of consciousness). Xu Fuguan and Jin Chunfeng (金春峰) have tried to interpret the term as referring to *yuan-qi* (the original ether or force).[39] But I don't think there is sufficient evidence to support this interpretation. Instead, I think '*Yuan*' is used by Dong as equivalent to the second token of 'Heaven' which refers to the nature or cosmos possessed of consciousness. As mentioned by Dong,

> Why did the *Chun-Qiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals) stress the importance of *Yuan*? It is because the book regarded *Yuan* as the foundation of rectification (本正 *ben-zheng*). *Dao* means the emperor's *dao*. If an emperor makes effort in rectification, then the *yuan-qi* would be in harmonized and regular order: the wind and rain comes in time, the *jing-xing* (景星 the star of fortune) appears, and the yellow dragon flies down. If an emperor does not, then there would be (unexpected) change in the upper Heaven and the *zei-qi* (賊氣 the harmful ether or force) would also appear.[40]

From this paragraph, it is clear that *Yuan* or *dao* as the foundation of rectification cannot be understood as equivalent to the *yuan-qi* which appears later when meeting the standard of *Yuan* and is parallel to *zei-qi*. In this context, it is obvious that '*Yuan*'

and '*dao*' are interchangeable and both can be understood as the foundation of recti-fication which could influence all *qi* including *yuan-qi*.

If *tian*, *Yuan* or *dao* is the foundation of a teleological order of the cosmos, the *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* can be recognized as the media of moving forces and properties in accord to the teleological order respectively. As mentioned in the last section, the *Huai-Nan-Zi* has not yet fully incorporated the *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* into an inter-connected framework in explaining all the things and phenomena in the universe as is done in the *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*. In the following paragraph, we can see that Dong Zhongshu may be the first thinker to incorporate *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* into an interconnected framework in explaining the seasonal phenomena and other natural phenomena and human affairs. He says:

> Each of the Five Elements circulates according to its sequence; each of them exercises its own capabilities in the performance of its official duties. Thus wood occupies the eastern quarter, where it rules over the forces (*ch'i*) [*qi*] of spring; fire occupies the southern quarter, where it rules over the forces of autumn; water occupies the northern quarter, where it rules over the forces of winter. For this reason wood rules over the production of life, while metal rules over its destruction; fire rules over heat, while water rules over cold … Earth occupies the center, and is called the heavenly fructifier (天潤 *t'ien jun*) [*tian-run*]. It is the assister of Heaven. Its power is abundant and good, and cannot be assigned to the affairs of a single season only. Therefore among the Five Elements and four seasons, earth embraces all. Although metal, wood, water, and fire each have their own particular duties, they could not stand were it not for earth. The case is like that of saltiness, sourness, acridness, and bitterness, which would be unable to be tastes were they not enriched by savoriness. Just as savoriness is the foundation of the five tastes, so earth is the ruler of the Five Elements. That the Five Elements have earth as their ruler is like the fact that the five tastes cannot but exist when savoriness is present.[41]

Here each of the *wu-xing* is just like a dispositional property which can be found in a proper time (season) and space (direction). What Dong Zhongshu means by 'rules over' (主 *zhu*) is not that each of them acts as a moving force or ruling power; instead, it acts as a dispositional property, that is, each of them exhibits a kind of regularity which is reflected in or, as sometimes literally interpreted, followed or observed by a kind of phenomenon in a proper season and direction. Although it can be said that 'each of them exercises its own capabilities in the performance of its official duties', it does not mean that each of them has the moving or driving force to perform the duties. The real moving or driving force lies in the *qi* of *yin-yang*. This is the reason why Dong Zhongshu claims that the *yin* and *yang* basing themselves upon the *wu-xing*, so as to supply assistance (起助 *qi-zhu*) to them in those (seasonal tasks) over which (the elements) preside. It means that the seasonal tasks or phenomena are in accordance with the regularities reflected in (or dominated in a weak sense by)

different but related dispositional properties (i.e., *wu-xing*) and moved or driven by some proper forces (i.e., the *qi* of *yin-yang*). So, he says:

> As to metal, wood, water, and fire, they each take that over which they are to preside, so as, in accordance with the (movements of the) *yin* and *yang*, to join forces with them in the performance of the common work. Thus the resulting achievements are not solely (due to) the *yin* and *yang*. Rather it is a case of the *yin* and *yang* basing themselves upon these (four elements), so as to supply assistance to them in those (seasonal tasks) over which (the elements) preside. In this way the lesser (*shao*) *yang* bases itself upon wood, thus assisting it in the germinating activities of spring. The greater (*t'ai*) *yang* [*tai-yang*] bases itself upon fire, thus assisting it in the nourishing activities of summer. Thus the lesser *yin* bases itself upon metal, thus assisting it in the maturing activities of autumn. And the greater *yin* bases itself upon water, thus assisting it in the storing-up activities of winter.[42]

The following paragraph also demonstrates that the real moving force or driving power is the *qi* of *yin-yang*:

> In spring and summer the *yang* is more abundant and the *yin* less, while in autumn and winter the *yang* is less abundant and the *yin* more. These amounts do not remain constant, for there is never a time when one or the other is not being divided and dispersed. As they emerge or retire, they mutually diminish or increase, and as they become more or less abundant, they mutually fructify and enrich. As the more abundant becomes dominant, the less abundant goes into retirement at an increasing rate. The one that retires is diminished by one, while that which emerges is augmented by two. Whatever of these is started by Heaven (on its course), as soon as it moves, thereupon becomes further increased (over its opposite in strength). It constantly holds a power opposed to, and moreover augmented over, that of the other. Thus, according to its own kind, it responds to the other. In this way the ethers influence one another as they pass through transformations in the course of their mutual revolutions.[43]

It is obvious that the *qi* of *yin-yang*, but not the *wu-xing*, can be more or less in quantity, can move in and out (*chu-ru* 出入 emerge or retire), and can be united or separated. A book of collective views published in the Later Han called *Bai-Hu-Tong-Yi* (白虎通義 Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall) asserts that, 'In regard to [*wu-*] *xing*, it is to say about the *yi* [義, meaning, quality or reason] of the *qi* run by Heaven.'[44] Zhang Jiebin (張介賓 ca. 1563–1640), a famous medical scholar of the Ming dynasty, in his explanation of the *Huang-Di-Nei-Jing*, also indicates that 'the *wu-xing* is the qualities of *yin-yang*, while the *yin-yang* is the *qi* of *wu-xing*'.[45] It means that all elements of *wu-xing* themselves are not the moving forces run by Heaven; they only behave as the qualities of the *qi*'s moving or the reasons reflected in the

regularities of the *qi*'s moving. In other words, as dispositional properties in terms of phenomenalistic qualities, the *wu-xing* cannot play the role of moving forces as the *qi* of *yin-yang* run by Heaven.

Based on the above interpretation, each of the *wu-xing* can be understood as an individual dispositional property. Besides, we can also roughly recognize some of the mutual relationships between two of them as causal connections though the causal power lies in the *qi* of *yin-yang*. The structure of the causal connections described by Dong Zhongshu is as follows:

> Collected together, the ethers (*ch'i*) [*qi*] of Heaven and Earth constitute a unity; divided, they constitute the *yin* and *yang*; quartered, they constitute the four seasons; (still further) sundered, they constitute the Five Elements. These elements (*hsing*) [*xing*] represent activities (*hsing*). Their activities are not identical. Therefore they are called the 'five activities'. These five activities constitute five faculties. Each in turn gives birth to the next and is overcome by the next but one in turn [*bi-xiang-sheng1-er-jian-xiang-sheng2*比相生而間相勝].[46]

It is the case that sometimes there is a series of happenings of natural phenomena or human affairs endowed with both positive and negative connections of causality. In this context, if we consider the symbolic use of the *wu-xing* scheme as one of the possible models of description, the scheme is significant and heuristic. However, if we regard the scheme as reflecting an all-inclusive pattern or order which is supposed to be able to explain all the things and phenomena in the universe, it would be a clumsy design. As indicated in the second section, the scheme is not workable in explanation without *ad hoc* supplementary adjustment.

According to the above interpretation, the causal connections are reflected in the symbolic use of the *wu-xing* scheme, the *wu-xing* itself does not have any causal power. The real power lies in the *qi* of *yin-yang*. When the *qi* moves, for Dong Zhongshu, physically speaking, it is the *qi* of Heaven to move; but mentally speaking, it is also the *qi* of Heaven to express its feelings or judgments. It seems that it is not a parallelism between the physical move and the mental act and not a relation of supervenience that the mental act is depended on the physical move. As mentioned in the second section, it can be understood as the different descriptions of the same phenomenon or the different descriptions of an event of the same intrinsic nature. He says:

> The constant (principle) of Heaven and Earth is the succession of the *yin* and *yang*. The *yang* is Heaven's beneficent power, while the *yin* is Heaven's chastising power … In Heaven's course, there are three seasons of formation and growth and one season of mourning and death. Death means the withering and decay of various creatures; mourning means the grief and sadness (engendered) by the *yin* ether. Heaven has its own feelings of joy and anger, and a mind (which experiences) sadness or pleasure, analogous

to those of man. Thus if a grouping is made according to kind, Heaven and man are one.[47]

But how is it possible for the same thing with these two kinds of descriptions which cannot be reduced to each other? Or, why there is no gap between fact and value under these two different descriptions? Dong Zhongshu's idea of bridging the gap is by 'association' which is based on his metaphysical speculation and imagination. Our further question is: how can Heaven's feelings be analogous or correlated to those of human? In the following, Dong provides a detailed explanation for this point:

> Nothing is more refined than the (*yin* and *yang*) ether, richer than Earth, or more spiritual than Heaven. Of the creatures born from the refined essence (精 *ching*) of Heaven and Earth, none is more noble than man. Man receives the Decree (命 *ming*) of Heaven, and therefore is loftier (than other) creatures. (Other) creatures suffer trouble and distress and are unable to match themselves with Heaven and Earth; only man is capable of doing this … The symbols of Heaven and Earth, and the correspondence between the *yin* and *yang*, are ever (found) established (also) in the (human) body. Thus body is like Heaven, and its numerical (categories) correspond with those of the latter, so that its life is linked with the latter. With the number (of days) that fills a year, Heaven gives form to man's body. Thus the 366 lesser joints (of the body) correspond to the number of days (in a year), and twelve divisions of the larger joints correspond to the number of months. Within (the body) there are the five viscera, which correspond in number to the Five Elements. Externally there are the four limbs, which correspond in number to the four seasons. The alternating opening and closing (of eyes) corresponds to day and night. The alternation of hardness and softness corresponds to winter and summer. The alternation of sadness and pleasure corresponds to the *yin* and *yang*. The mind possesses the power of thinking, which corresponds to (Heaven's) power of deliberation and calculation. (Man's) conduct follows the principles of proper relationship, which correspond to (the relationship between) Heaven and Earth … In what may be numbered, there is a correspondence in number. In what may not be numbered, there is a correspondence in kind. There is an identity in both (cases) and a single correspondence (of man) with Heaven.[48]

Joseph Needham describes the correspondence in kind and correspondence in number as a kind of 'mysterious resonance'.[49] But how is the resonance possible? Needham does not provide any explanation. I think the answer to this question lies in the following cosmological explanation of the origin of human's physical and non-physical endowments:

> What produces (man) cannot (itself) be man, for the creator of man is Heaven. The fact that men are men derives from Heaven. Heaven, indeed,

is man's supreme ancestor. This is why man is to be classed with Heaven above. Man's physical body is given from through the transforming influence of the numerical (categories) of Heaven. Man's vigor is directed to love (仁 *jen*) [*ren*] through the transforming influence of Heaven's will (志 *chih*) [*zhi*]. Man's virtuous conduct is expressed in righteousness (義 *yi*) through the transforming influence of Heaven's orderly principle (理 *li*). Man's likes and dislikes are influenced by Heaven's warmth and purity. Man's joy and anger are influenced by Heaven's cold and heat … The duplicate of Heaven lies in man, and man's feelings and nature derive from Heaven.[50]

According to Dong Zhongshu's view, human's physical and non-physical endowments are transformed by or emerged from Heaven; in this regard, human can be classified as of the same kind of Heaven. Moreover, if Heaven and human are of the same kind, there will be a kind of correspondence between them. In other words, he employs a cosmological explanation to support his view of the sameness in kind (and the sameness in number), and then based on the sameness in kind and the conditional relation that things of the same kind would correspond to or energize each other, he could conclude, by modus ponens, that there would be correspondence or resonance.

Dong Zhongshu believes that this conditional relation is evident in experience, so the inference is sound. Based on this inference, he thinks that the influence based on the correspondence between Heaven and Earth on the one side and human on the other side is not in one direction but symmetric (*xiang-dong* 相動 mutual reaction). Moreover, he also extends his idea of correspondence to the phenomena of visitations (*zai* 災) and prodigies (*yi* 異) and uses these to explain the rise or decline of an empire. He says:

If now water be poured on level ground, it will avoid the parts that are dry and move toward those that are wet. Whereas if (two) identical pieces of firewood are exposed to fire, the latter will avoid the one that is wet and catch to that which is dry. All things avoid that from which they differ and cleave to that to which they are similar. Thus forces that are similar meet each other, and tones that match respond to each other. Experience makes this evident. For suppose (two) lutes are played in alternation to each other. If the note of *kung* [*gong* 宮 in Chinese scale] is struck on the one, that of *kung* will respond on the other, and if the note of *shang* is struck on the one, that of *shang* will respond on the other. Among the five notes, each one that matches sounds of itself. There is nothing supernatural in this. It is because of their numerical (harmonies). (Likewise) a thing that is beautiful will call to itself another beautiful thing the same in kind, whereas an ugly thing will call to itself another ugly thing the same in kind. For example, when a horse neighs, another horse will respond; when an ox lows, another ox will respond. In the same way, when an emperor or king is about to arise, auspicious omens first appear, whereas when he is about to be destroyed, evil auguries likewise first appear. Thus it is that things of the same kind call to one another … It is not

solely the *yin* and *yang* ethers which thus approach and withdraw according to their kind. The generation of inauspicious misfortune or of good fortune also proceeds in the same way. It is nothing but a case in which, when one begins something oneself, things act in response according to their kind.[51]

Although Dong Zhongshu claims that it is not a matter of supernatural, he does not really think that it is a natural matter. So he asserts that 'it is not solely the *yin* and *yang* ethers which thus approach and withdraw according to their kind'. In other words, in comparison with the natural view of the *Huai-Nan-Zi*, he does not accept the Daoist explanation of the symmetric influence of correspondence. Instead, he believes that, 'In reality, it is not spontaneous (*zi-ran*), there is something to cause it to be the case. So things do have a real causal power for their being the case though this causal process is invisible.'[52] In combination with Dong's view of *tian* or *Yuan*, this non-natural and real causal power can be interpreted as coming from the *tian* of consciousness. Based on this teleological cosmology, he could establish an all-inclusive order of the universe. Furthermore, he claims that human should take example from Heaven or observe the *dao* of Heaven, Heaven's *yang* is the dominant power and its *yin* the submissive power, and the emperor or king is the ruler in Earth who represents the intention of Heaven and thus could incorporate the dominant and submissive powers into harmony which is reflected in the social and political order of the empire. This is the attractive ideology which is established as a seeming by-product but the real concern of Dong Zhongshu's Confucian syncretism.

5 Wang Chong's Naturalistic Philosophy

It has been well perceived by most scholars that Wang Chong (王充 27–?97 CE) was one of the great rationalists and skeptics in the later Han period. His book the *Lun-Heng* (論衡 Balanced Enquiries or Critical Essays) has been recognized as a great work which provided systematic criticisms on the philosophy of the former Han, especially on the teleological thought of '*tian-ren-gan-ying*' (天人感應 the inductance of Heaven and human) and '*tian-ren-he-yi*' (天人合一 the unity of Heaven and human) held by Dong Zhongshu and others. Although he was deeply influenced by the Daoist philosophy of the pre-Qin period and seriously criticized the *yin-yang* philosophy of the former Han period, his philosophy is neither similar to Lao Zi's or Zhuang Zi's transcendental or aesthetic-cum-mystical philosophy nor giving up the scheme of *yin-yang*. Just like most other thinkers of the later Han, he still uses the scheme to elaborate his rationalist and naturalistic philosophy though he rejects the teleological idea of 'inductance', 'correspondence', or 'resonance' and is skeptical of the effectiveness of the explanatory power of the scheme of *wu-xing*. As we know, Zou Yan is also labeled as a 'naturalist' by Needham; but it is quite different in meaning if we use the same term to describe Wang Chong. Because Wang's naturalistic philosophy does not presuppose any idea of 'mysterious resonance' and has a strong tendency to choose a positivistic strategy to construct his worldview.

Wang Chong claims that the *wu-xing* is not an explanatory scheme of universality

and necessity. He attacks the view that 'when Heaven created all things it imbued them with the *qi* of *wu-xing* and they would fight together and destroy one another'. He also provides a few counter-examples to demonstrate that to assign the *wu-xing* to the five kinds of animals and thus to use the 'principle of mutual conquest' to explain their relations is not in accord with facts.[53] In regard to the scheme of *yin-yang*, although Wang Chong attacks Dong Zhongshu's mysterious idea of '*gan-ying*' (inductance, correspondence, or resonance), he does not reject a restricted idea of 'correspondence in kind' based on the natural and spontaneous activities of the *qi* of *yin-yang*. According to his restricted idea, he could not accept a two-way influence between Heaven and human and the one-way influence from human to Heaven. Even though it is possible for things in the universe to have *qi*-interaction with each other, there are restrictions on the interaction such as the problem of whether the distance of the interaction is appropriate and whether the quantity of energy is enough. Moreover, he believes that not all phenomena can be explained by the idea of 'correspondence'. It is because the quantity of energy in some phenomena is immeasurable and changes from time to time without regularity and thus would affect the natural course. So he stresses that we have to observe the factual evidence and to choose a positivist attitude to deal with the problem of inquiry. For example, from a positivist perspective, he claims that 'whether days are lengthening or shortening cannot be explained with *yin-yang*'.[54] Besides, he also thinks that some phenomena happen by sheer coincidence and thus we cannot use the *yin-yang* scheme to explain their existence.[55]

The basic idea of Wong Chong's naturalism is transformed from the Daoist idea of 'spontaneity'. The idea of 'spontaneity' in the *Zhuang-Zi* is established from a perspective of aestheticism and could be interpreted as a harmonic state of the universe. In contrast to this aesthetic idea, Wang Chong's idea is much more physical or mechanical in terms of the *qi*-interaction. He says:

> By the fusion of the (*yin* and *yang*) ethers of Heaven and Earth, all things are spontaneously produced, just as by the union of the fluids of husband and wife, children are spontaneously produced … When Heaven moves, it does not desire to produce things thereby, but things are produced of their own accord: such is spontaneity (*tzu jan*) [*zi-ran*]. When it gives forth its ether, it does not desire to create things, but things are created of themselves: such is non-activity (*wu wei*). What is it of Heaven that is thus a spontaneous and non-acting principle? It is its ethers (*ch'i*) [*qi*], which are placid, tranquil, desire nothing, do nothing, and are concerned with nothing … The way of Heaven (*Tien Tao*) [*tian-dao*] is one of non-activity. Therefore in spring it does not act to germinate, in summer to cause growth, in autumn to give maturity, and in winter to store up. But the *yang* ether comes forth of itself (in spring and summer), and things of themselves germinate and grow; the *yin* ether arises of itself (in autumn and winter), and things of themselves reach maturity and are stored up.[56]

Natural phenomena, for Wang Chong, are just natural; they are neither done by someone (或使 *huo-shi*) nor done without activity (莫為 *mo-wei*). Following Zhuang Zi's thought, he believes that things are produced of their own accord and natural phenomena happen spontaneously. Although he still recognizes the production and destruction of things and phenomena as the process of increase and decrease, unity and split, or interaction of the *qi* of *yin* and *yang*, he does not agree with Dong Zhongshu that there is a mysterious inductance, correspondence or resonance between Heaven and human, especially for the influence from human to Heaven. He says:

> Now the Way of Heaven is that of spontaneity, and this spontaneity means non-activity. It may fortuitously happen that the two (*yin* and *yang*) principles coincide (with human events) in such a way that, when a human event occurs, these ethers of Heaven are already present. This, therefore, is called the Way (of Heaven). If, however, such an occurrence were to be regarded as a 'response' to the acts of government, this would be to deny its spontaneity.[57]

Wang Chong's skeptical spirit can be found in his 'four doubts', that is, the doubts of the theses of '*han-wen*' (寒溫 cold and warm), '*qian-gao*' (譴告 reprimand), '*bian-dong*' (變動 activation and reaction), and '*zhao-zhi*' (招致 causing). The first thesis asserts that the ruler's joyful or angry *qi* would directly affect the weather of the natural world. The second thesis is about Heaven's warning or punishment of humankind through visitations or prodigies. In contrast to the one-way influence of the second thesis, the third thesis mentions a two-way influence that the ruler's political behaviors would invite or activate Heaven's reaction. The fourth thesis claims that things and phenomena of the same kind would have a causal relation just like that of a shadow reflecting a shape and it is not necessary to presuppose that there is a will of Heaven. He often uses counter-examples to refute these theses. For example, in regard to the first issue, he thinks that coldness and warmth are dependent on Heaven and Earth and are linked with the *yin* and *yang*. It is impossible for human affairs or the administration of the country to have any influence on them. He also claims, for the sake of argument, if the change of outside weather were influenced by the human's feelings or the ruler's joyful or angry *qi*, the perception of coldness or warmth inside the human's body or the ruler's body would have been changed in advance. Since the consequent of this (counter-factual) conditional sentence is not true, he can infer that the first thesis cannot be maintained. He argues that the second thesis is also not acceptable. To claim that Heaven has the power to warn and punish humankind, one has to presuppose that there is a will or consciousness in Heaven. But this presupposition is not necessary and cannot be proved by evidence. In regard to the third thesis, he thinks that, in comparison with Heaven, human status is very inferior and their power too weak, it is impossible for the human to move or change the phenomena in Heaven. He attacks the fourth thesis by the fact that the same *qi* could not interact with each other beyond a limited distance. In this regard, he seems to have an idea that it must be within a limited space and time for a limited energy or power to perform any physical relation. It also implies that the quantity of the moving *qi*

must be measurable at least in terms of common sense or in accord with people's sensible experience.

Based on his skeptical methodology, Wang Chong attacks the thesis of 'periodical ordinances' by demonstrating the fact that 'the four seasons are not formed by politics'.[58] In addition, he also attacks the teleological idea of 'inductance', 'correspondence', or 'resonance' between Heaven and human, especially the irrational theses of visitations and prodigies. He claims that these theses are just self-defeating:

> Those who talk about visitations and prodigies have themselves already expressed doubt as to whether Heaven employs such visitations and prodigies to reprimand people. So in place of this they say that the coming of visitations and prodigies is, as it were, caused by the administrative activities of the sovereign, which operate upon Heaven in such a way that Heaven activates its ethers in response. The case is like that of beating a drum or striking a bell with a hammer. The drum is like Heaven, the hammer like the administrative activities, and the sound of the drum or bell like Heaven's response. When the ruler of men acts below, the ethers of Heaven come accordingly.[59]

One of the reasons why this kind of 'gan-ying' (inductance, correspondence, or resonance) is not acceptable is that it is not in accord with the way of natural course, that is, spontaneity. So he concludes that 'The Way of Heaven is that of spontaneity, which consists of non-activity. But if it were to reprimand men, that would constitute action and would not be spontaneous. The school of Huang-Lao, in its discussions on the Way of Heaven, has found the truth.'[60]

Although Wang Chong adopts the idea of 'zi-ran' from the school of Huang-Lao in explaining most natural phenomena, he thinks that this kind of explanation is not universally workable. It is because the Daoists do not know how to use the factual evidence to verify [the theory reflected in] their language and action when they talk about 'zi-ran'.[61] For example, according to the Daoist idea of 'correspondence in kind', since raining belongs to yin and shining yang, coldness belongs to yin and warmth yang, raining in the morning should be cold and shining in the morning should be warm. But there are cases that raining in the morning is warm and shining in the morning is cold. So, the explanation based on the increase and decrease of yin-yang together with the idea of 'correspondence in kind' is not universally workable.[62] It seems that Wang Chong generally agrees that the way of natural course is spontaneity in terms of the natural movement via the increase and decrease of yin-yang. This indicates the regularity of most phenomena in the universe. But particularly he is aware that there are also phenomena of irregularity though they do not appear as frequently as those of regularity. The former reflects the way of Heaven while the latter indicates that there are incidents or contingencies in the universe which are unexpected and not subject to the explanation as in the cases of the former.[63]

Wang Chong's view on incidents or events of coincidence is related to his idea of 'ming' (命 fate). In the chapter 'Ming-Yi' (命義 The Meaning of Fate), he thinks that 'ming' is about the fortunes and misfortunes of people's life and 'xing'

(性 human nature) about the good and evil of people's conduct. It means that '*ming*' and '*xing*' do not refer to the same thing. In the chapters 'Ming-Lu' (命祿 Fate and Emolument) and 'Ben-Xing' (本性 Original Nature), he seems to take a contrary view that '*xing* is similar to *ming*' and 'endowed with *xing* and given of *ming* are the same fact'. It seems to imply that they are not different in terms of *qi*-endowment. I think the seeming contradiction can be moved if we pay ample attention to the two senses of the term '*ming*' used by him in different contexts. Since he believes that both human's nature and fate are formed or made from the very beginning of life by the *qi* of Heaven and Earth, in terms of the *qi*-determinism, there is no difference or gap between human's nature of capacity (才性 *cai-xing*) and fate of life (生命 *sheng-ming*). He says: 'using *qi* to form *xing*, when *xing* is formed *ming* is also determined'.[64] Both are formed by *qi*, so the former can be called '*qi-xing*' (氣性) and the latter '*qi-ming*' (氣命). However, he also uses the term '*ming*' to refer to the consequence of behavior in terms of its being determined by some external and occidental factors. This is not related to the *qi* endowed from the very beginning of life, but related to the chance or occasion in some unexpected moment or within a period of time of contingency. This is called the 'fate at a contingent moment' (時命 *shi-ming*).

Wang Chong's idea of '*shi-ming*' is different from his idea of '*qi-ming*', while the referent of his idea of '*qi-ming*' is not separate from the referent of his idea of '*qi-xing*'. So, it is obvious that his idea of '*xing*' is essentially different from Mencius' idea of '*xing*', because the former refers to a kind of moral quality which is endowed with *qi* whereas the latter refers to a kind of innate morality which is reflected in human's compassion. It is also obvious that for Mencius *xing* is independent of *ming* whereas for Wang Chong *xing* is not separate from *ming*. Mencius stresses the difference between *xing* and *ming* and thus recognizes value as independent of fact. In contrast, Wang Chong seems to regard value as dependent on fact because for him *xing* as the origin of morality is not separate from *ming* and thus both are *qi*-determined. If this interpretation were right, there would have been no room for him to explain the problem of freedom and responsibility for human's behavior. The following paragraph seems to provide a picture of contradiction:

> With respect to man's appointment of fate, when his parents give forth their vital forces, he already gets his fortunes and misfortunes. Man's nature is different from his fate. There are people whose nature is good but whose fate is unlucky, and there are others whose nature is evil but whose fate is lucky. Whether one is good or evil in his conduct is due to his nature, but calamities and blessings, and fortunes and misfortunes, are due to fate. Some people do good but get calamities. This is a case of good nature but unlucky fate. Some people do evil but get blessings. This is a case of evil nature but lucky fate. Nature may be good or evil, and fate may be lucky or unlucky. A person with lucky fate does not necessarily miss blessings even if he does no good, and a person with unlucky fate does not necessarily escape calamity even if he makes good efforts in his conduct.[65]

As explained above, there is no difference or gap between '*qi-xing*' and '*qi-ming*'. If 'man's nature is different from his fate', it seems that the term 'fate' should not be understood as the same as '*qi-ming*'. Nevertheless, the sentence 'when his parents give forth their vital forces, he already gets his fortunes and misfortunes' used by Wang Chong to explain the term 'fate' does imply that the term is not different from '*qi-ming*'. He also thinks that the *qi* of *ren* (仁之氣 the *qi* of benevolence) is human's *qi-xing* and the *qi* of fortune is human's *qi-ming* and both are endowed from parents. So they are not separate with each other and can be understood as the same fact, that is, the fact of being determined by *qi*. But why does he still claim that 'man's nature is different from his fate'? I think it is because he does not really think that they are the same though he believes that, in terms of both being determined by *qi*, they are not separate from each other. More importantly, I think another reason is that, as claimed by him in another context, the good and evil are mainly 'not based on nature, but on cultivation' or 'not only based on nature, but also on education'. So he says that 'to perform the behaviors of good or evil is not due to human's *zhi-xing*' (質性 endowed dispositional quality and nature).[66] In this sense, although someone's *qi-xing* should be connected with her or his *qi-ming* and both are *qi*-determined, her or his choice of doing something or not doing something is mainly due to cultivation or education. In other words, in addition to human's internal factors, there are external factors including human's learning and interaction with others that could change what the *qi* determines and thus provide a space of freedom for human's choice.

In regard to the problem of incidents or events of coincidence, there seems to be another contradiction in Wang Chong's philosophy. His ideas of '*shi*' (時 a contingent moment), '*xing*' (幸 luckiness), or '*ou*' (偶 coincidence) all imply that the relevant events happen without necessity. On the other hand, he believes that '*ming*' is determined by *qi* and thus cannot be changed by human's effort. So he says that, 'A fate cannot be done with [human's] effort and a [contingent] moment cannot be changed by [human's] power.'[67] It seems that there is a kind of necessity in fate. However, *shi*, *xing*, or *ou* are related to human's *ming*, how could Wang Chong have a consistent view that the former is contingent while the latter necessary? I think there is an essential point which may be held by Wang Chong, that is, an implicit distinction between logical necessity and physical necessity. It seems to me that he regards the events of the former as not logically necessary and the facts of the latter as physically necessary. He does not accept the teleological idea of '*tian-ming*' which is based on the presupposition of a kind of religious–cosmological necessity of influence of Heaven on human's fate. He also rejects the ontological idea of '*sui-ming*' (隨命 the supervenience of fate) which is based on the presupposition of a kind of metaphysical necessity of influence of moral power on human's fate. Since human's fate is understood by him as determined by the *qi* given from Heaven, Earth, and parents, he believes that there is a kind of natural and coincident cooperation (自然偶合 *zi-ran-ou-he*) in the movement of *qi* in making human's fate, including the fate of life and death, and the fate of fortunes and misfortunes. He also believes that these could be explained in details by a peculiar theory of '*xing-qi*' (星氣 *qi* of stars) and by a peculiar theory of '*gu-xiang*' (骨相 phrenology). However, to believe these proto-scientific theories seems to be not

in accord with his positivist mentality. Even though Wang Chong was a great skeptic in ancient China, his mind seems still unable to escape from speculation.

Notes

1. The chapter 'Cai-Zhong-Zhi-Ming' (蔡仲之命 'The Charge to Cai-Zhong') of *Shang-Shu* (尚書 *Book of Documents*).
2. Xu Fuguan (1975a), chapter 2; and Mou Zongsan (1973), chapters 3 and 6.
3. Gu Jiegang 2005: 1.
4. Fung Yu-lan 1966: 187.
5. The chapter 'Hong-Fan' (洪範 'The Great Pattern') of *Sheng-Shu* (*Book of Documents*).
6. The chapter 'Zheng-Yu' (鄭語 'Discourses of Zheng') of *Guo-Yu* (國語 *Discourses of States*).
7. As demonstrated in Pang Pu (龐樸) 2005: 257-8, there were examples of 'fire conquers metal' and 'water conquers fire' recorded in *Zuo-Zhuan* (左傳 *Commentary of Zuo*) and, with evidence provided by Wang Yin-Zhi (王引之) in his *Jing-Yi-Shu-Wen* (經義述聞 *Records of the Meaning of Canons*), examples of 'mutual production' between the meaning of first name and the meaning of alias of some people in the Spring and Autumn period. However, there is no evidence that a complete list of the 'mutual production order' or the 'mutual conquest order' was established in the Spring and Autumn period.
8. One example of the idea of dynamic cycle was mentioned in the *Huai-Nan-Zi* that any thing or phenomenon signified by one of the *wu-xing* would enter into a cycle of five stages called 'helping' (相 *xiang*), 'flourishing' (旺 *wang*), 'retiring' (休 *xiao*), 'undergoing imprisonment' (囚 *xiu*), and 'dying' (死 *si*).
9. Joseph Needham 1956: 247.
10. Benjamini Schwartz 1985: 364.
11. Joseph Needham 1956: 257–8.
12. Mark Sagoff provides a carefully articulated and comprehensive criticism of the idea of 'ecosystem'. He thinks that the so-called 'ecosystem' is, in fact, devoid of system in a scientific sense. This is because 'the ecosystem as an object of scientific inquiry is just a pointless hodgepodge of constantly changing associations of organisms and environments'. This point can be found in Mark Sagoff 1997: 901.
13. Joseph Needham 1956: 286.
14. Detailed arguments against Needham's and Angus Graham's very idea of 'correlative thinking' can be found in Yiu-ming Fung 2006a: 117–64 and Yiu-ming Fung 2006b, 'Paradoxes and Parallelism in Ancient Chinese Philosophy', forthcoming.
15. Joseph Needham 1956: 290.
16. The chapter 'Yin-Yang-Zhong-Shi' (陰陽終始 'The Completion and Beginning of *Yin-Yang*') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 29.
17. Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 29.
18. Joseph Needham 1956: 259.
19. The *Mohist Canon* (墨經) B43: 'The five elements do not perpetually overcome one another. The reason is given under 'quantity' (宜 *yi*) [appropriate or appropriate in quantity].' Explanation B43: 'The five are metal, water, earth, wood, and fire. Quite apart (from any cycle) fire naturally melts metal, if there is enough fire. Or metal may pulverize a burning fire to cinders, if there is enough metal. Metal will store water (but does not produce it). Fire attaches itself to wood (but is not produced from it). We should recognize that the different things such as (mountain-) elks or (river-) fishes, all have their own specific merits.' The English translation of this paragraph is from Joseph Needham 1956: 259-60.
20. Joseph Needham 1956: 280-1.
21. The chapter 'Wang-Zhi' (王制 'On the Regulations of a King') of *Xun-Zi*, the English translation is from John Knoblock 1999: 241.
22. The chapter 'Wang-Zhi' of *Xun-Zi*, the English translation is from John Knoblock 1999: 214.

23. The chapter 'Fu-Guo' (富國 'On Enriching the State') of *Xun-Zi*, the English translation is from John Knoblock (1999): 283.

24. Sima Tan, 'Lun-Liu-Jia-Yao-Zhi' (論六家要指 'On the Essential Ideas of the Six Schools'), the English translation is based on Wm. Theodore deBary and Irene Bloom 1999: 280, with minor revision.

25. The chapter 'Qi-Wu-Lun' of *Zhuang-Zi*, the English translation is based on Wang Rongpei (汪榕培) 1999, vol. I: 29, with minor revision.

26. The chapter 'Qi-Wu-Lun' of *Zhuang-Zi*, the English translation is based on Wang Rongpei 1999, vol. I: 29, with minor revision.

27. The chapter 'Chu-Zhen-Xun' (俶真訓 'Teaching of the Beginning of Reality') of *Huai-Nan-Zi*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. I: 395–6.

28. The chapter 'Tian-Wen-Xun' of *Huai-Nan-Zi*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. I: 396–7.

29. The chapter 'Yuan-Dao-Xun' (原道訓 'Teaching of Searching out *Dao*') of *Huai-Nan-Zi*, the English translation is from Wing-tsit Chan 1963: 305.

30. The chapters 'Lam-Ming-Xun' (覽冥訓 'Teaching of Peering into the Obscure') and 'Tai-Zu-Xun' (泰族訓 'Teaching of Grand Reunion') of *Huai-Nan-Zi*.

31. The chapter 'Tian-Wen-Xun' of *Huai-Nan-Zi*, the English translation is based on Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. I: 397–8, with minor revision.

32. The chapter 'Jing-Shen-Xun' of *Huai-Nan-Zi*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. I: 399.

33. The chapter '*Tai-Zu-Xun*' of *Huai-Nan-Zi*.

34. The chapters 'Shuo-Shan-Xun' (說山訓 'Teaching of Discourses on Mountains') and 'Lam-Ming-Xun' of *Huai-Nan-Zi*.

35. Chen Jing (陳靜) 2004: 167–70.

36. The chapter 'Tian-Di-Yin-Yang' (天地陰陽 'Heaven, Earth and *Ying-yang*') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 19.

37. The chapter 'Yu-Ying' (玉英 'Quintessence of Jades') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 19–20.

38. Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 20.

39. Xu Fuguan 1975b: 229; and Jin Chunfeng 1997: 146.

40. The chapter 'Wang-Dao' (王道 'Dao of Kingship') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*.

41. The chapter 'Wu-Xing-Zhi-Yi' (五行之義 'The Meaning of Five Elements') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 20–1.

42. The chapter 'Tian-Bian-Zai-Ren' (天辨在人 'The Distinction of *Tian* Based on Man') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 25.

43. The chapter 'Yin-Yang-Zhong-Shi' (陰陽終始 'The Completion and Beginning of *Ying-Yang*') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 24–5.

44. This description can be also found in Wang Bing's (王冰) Explanatory Notes of *Su-Wen*.

45. Zhang Jiebin, 'Wu-Xing-Tong-Lun' (五行統論 'A Unified Theory of *Wu-Xing*') in his *Lei-Jing-Tu-Yi* (類經圖翼 *The Illustrated Supplement to the Systematized Canon*).

46. The chapter 'Wu-Xing-Xiang-Sheng' (五行相生 'The Mutual Production of *Ying-Yang*') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 21–2.

47. The chapter 'Yin-Yang-Yi' (陰陽義 'The Meaning of *Yin-yang*') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 29–30.

48. The chapter 'Ren-Fu-Tian-Shu' (人副天數 'The Correspondence in Number between Man and Heaven') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 30–1.

49. Joseph Needham 1956: 281.

50. The chapter 'Wei-Ren-Zhe-Tian' (為人者天 'What Produces Man is Heaven') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 32.

51. The chapter 'Tong-Lei-Xiang-Dong' (同類相動 'Things of the Same Kind Energize Each Other') of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 56.

52. The chapter 'Tong-Lei-Xiang-Dong' of *Chun-Qiu-Fan-Lu*.

53. The chapter 'Wu-Shi' (物勢 'Tendency of Things') of *Lun-Heng*.

54. The chapter 'Shuo-Ri' (說日 'Discussion on the Sun') of *Lun-Heng*.
55. The chapter 'Ou-Hui' (偶會 'Coincidence') of *Lun-Heng*.
56. The chapter 'Zi-Ran' (自然 'Spontaneity') of *Lun-Heng*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 152–3.
57. The chapter 'Han-Wen' of *Lun-Heng*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 154.
58. The chapter 'Han-Wen' of *Lun-Heng*.
59. The chapter 'Bian-Dong' of *Lun-Heng*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 154.
60. The chapter 'Qian-Gao' of *Lun-Heng*, the English translation is from Fung Yu-lan 1934, vol. II: 154.
61. The chapter 'Qian-Gao' of *Lun-Heng*.
62. The chapter 'Han-Wen' of *Lun-Heng*.
63. In the chapter 'Shi-Zhi' (實知 'Real Knowledge'), Wang Chong says that 'there is something which cannot be known. When someone knows it, it is known by its unknown.' It seems that he believes that there are questions unknown or without solution. Of course, this kind of questions is also not subject to explanation.
64. The chapter 'Wu-Xing' (無形 'Invisible') of *Lun-Heng*.
65. The chapter 'Ming-Yi' of *Lun-Heng*, the English translation is from Wing-tsit Chan 1963: 303–4.
66. The chapter 'Zhi-Qi' (治期 'The Period of Ruling') of *Lun-Heng*.
67. The chapter 'Ming-Lu' of *Lun-Heng*.

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Chapter 10
NEO-DAOISM
Alan K.L. Chan

'Neo-Daoism' refers to the main development in Chinese philosophy during the period of political disunion after the fall of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) between the third and the sixth century CE. Like any convenient label, the term must be used with due care. It signifies a broad philosophical front united in its attempt to discern the perceived true meaning of the Dao, but it does not name a homogeneous or partisan 'Daoist' school. Alarmed by the apparent decline of the Dao and eager to institute political change, leading intellectuals of the day initiated a radical reinterpretation of the classical heritage. Fresh insights emerged from a dynamic encounter with tradition, which occasioned intense debates and set new directions for the development of Chinese philosophy.

Chinese sources label the movement *xuan-xue* (玄學). The word *xuan* depicts literally a deep shade of dark red. It is used in the *Lao-Zi* (老子), or *Dao-De-Jing* (道德經), to describe the sublime mystery of the Dao, which transcends language and sensory perception. In a general sense, then, *xuan-xue* means the study or 'learning' (*xue*) of the mysteriously profound or 'dark' (*xuan*) Dao. As 'Neo-Daoism' is ambiguous, many scholars now prefer to translate '*xuan-xue*' more literally as 'Dark Learning', or noting that '*xuan*' functions as a noun in this construction, 'Learning/Investigation of the Mysterious/Profound'. As a type of learning or philosophic discourse aimed at explicating the meaning of Dao, *xuan-xue* as such, of course, is not 'mysterious' or 'dark', except to critics who judge it obfuscating and detrimental to the flourishing of the Dao, especially in political terms. *Xuan-xue* may be abstract in some respects, and it is certainly critical of the dominant Confucian ideology; nevertheless, it is committed to bringing to light what may otherwise appear 'dark' or inaccessible to understanding. In this discussion, I begin by situating *xuan-xue* in its historical context and outlining its general hermeneutical orientation. The thought of He Yan (何晏, ca 207–49 CE), Wang Bi (王弼 226–49 CE), and Guo Xiang (郭象 d. 312 CE) will be taken as representative of Neo-Daoist philosophy, although other currents of *xuan-xue* will also be introduced.

1 Neo-Daoism and Pure Conversation

Neo-Daoism has often been approached from a historical perspective. Toward the end of the Han dynasty, a major political protest movement known as *qing-yi* (清議) or 'Pure Criticism' shook the Chinese world. Led by eminent scholar-officials and students of the imperial academy, it was directed especially against the alleged abuses of powerful palace eunuchs. The movement, however, was ruthlessly suppressed. Consequently, many literati seem to have become disillusioned with the political process. This not only marked a turning point in Han politics but also impacted with considerable force on the course of culture and philosophy.

The Wei dynasty (220–65) formally ended the rule of the Han in 220 CE. Politics remained extremely volatile. Externally, two rival regimes challenged the Wei claim to supremacy; internally, power struggles among factions of the ruling elite rendered life at court doubly treacherous. In this context, we find the appearance of an influential upper-class cultural phenomenon known as 'Pure Conversation' (*qing-tan* 清談), in which scholar-officials and men of letters in general gathered for pleasure and devoted their intellectual and creative energies to music, poetry, philosophy, and other forms of cultured discourse. *Xuan-xue* in the general sense outlined above formed a major topic of Pure Conversation.

In view of the turbulent political background, some scholars have concluded that Neo-Daoism contained a strong element of escapism. According to this interpretation, whereas *qing-yi* centered on political criticism, *qing-tan*, its cultural successor, was self-consciously non-political. Fearing for their safety and disheartened by the apparent futility of political engagement in effecting meaningful change, the literati turned their attention to, as it were, purer pursuits. Although the political background is important, this does not give the whole picture. Certainly, to some scholars at that time politics was so corrupt as to make a mockery of any sense of honor and moral integrity, but many continued to harbor hope in revitalizing the rule of Dao. Neo-Daoism is complex and encompasses a range of responses to new demands and challenges that came to shape the intellectual landscape of post-Han China.

2 Hermeneutic Renovation

When the Wei dynasty came to power, attempts were made to reform government. A first wave of Neo-Daoist philosophers represented chiefly by He Yan and Wang Bi sought new ways to restore unity and harmony. The Confucian orthodoxy established since the Han dynasty could no longer satisfy the demands of a new age. Indeed, it was deemed a crucial part of the problem that led to the demise of the once glorious Han empire.

The critique of Han Confucianism does not amount to rejecting the thought of Confucius. Virtually everyone agreed that Confucius was the highest sage. The problem, rather, has to do with the perceived misunderstanding and misappropriation of Confucian teachings. Scholarship had become an avenue for emolument, and as a result self-interest outweighed the concern for truth. This in part explains the

emphasis on 'purity' in Neo-Daoism. Moreover, the Confucian orthodoxy exacted compliance, which set limits to thought. The classics were restricted to a particular mode of interpretation, and non-canonical literature, including Daoist works, were often viewed with suspicion or dismissed outright. In the interest of unity, orthodoxy prescribed closure; but in an age of disunity, the quest for order demanded freedom from outmoded constraints.

Commentaries to the classics formed the backbone of Han Confucian learning. They were framed methodologically in what has come to be called the 'section and sentence' (*zhang-ju* 章句) style, which emphasized detailed explanation of individual words and phrases of the classics. The attention to detail was at times so overwhelming, as the historian Ban Gu (班固 32–92) observes, that a discussion of a text of five words could take up to 20,000 or 30,000 words. This necessitated heavy specialization, which heightened virtuosity but also opened the door to vain scholastic display and fragmentation of learning. One of the most important debates in *xuan-xue* confronts directly the question of interpretation, which brought hermeneutics for the first time to the forefront of Chinese philosophy.

The debate focuses on the relationship between 'words and meaning' (*yan-yi* 言意) and has its roots in the *Yi-Jing* (易經 *Classic of Changes*), in which Confucius is made to ask whether words can fully disclose the meaning of the sages' teachings. This goes beyond the interpretation of any one work, probing the nature of understanding itself. As common sense seems to suggest, words often fail to express completely intense emotional experiences or complex ideas. A minority of *xuan-xue* scholars, represented by the late third-century thinker Ouyang Jian (歐陽建), defended the thesis that meaning can be conveyed fully by words (*yan-jin-yi* 言盡意). The majority, however, regarded words as necessary but not sufficient to understanding.

A spokesman for the view that 'words cannot fully express meaning' (*yan-bu-jin-yi* 言不盡意) was Xun Can (荀粲 ca 212–40 CE), who gained considerable notoriety for his claim that the classics are but the 'chaff' of the sages' profound learning. The conclusion is inescapable, according to Xun, for meaning transcends the limiting confines of language. Wang Bi puts forward a more complete and nuanced argument. Although meaning is mediated by words and other communicative tools, the means of understanding must not be confused with the end itself. Citing the *Zhuang-Zi* (莊子), Wang Bi maintains that the words and images that make up a text must be 'forgotten' before meaning can be understood. To understand a poem, for example, extrapolating from Wang's argument, it is not enough to assemble an exhaustive list of definitions. The words are 'forgotten' or left behind in the sense that understanding reaches into the underlying world of ideas where deeper meaning resides. Guo Xiang, a second pillar of Neo-Daoist philosophy next to Wang Bi, also makes clear that although ideas issue from words, they cannot be reduced to the literal, surface meaning of the words themselves. We will turn to Wang Bi's and Guo Xiang's other key contributions to *xuan-xue* shortly.

This kind of hermeneutic strategy effectively frees the interpreter to explore the classics afresh and diverges sharply from the Han model, which typically assumes that meaning is defined by external referents. In particular, given the dominance of

yin-yang theories, the classics were seen to refer to diverse cosmological phenomena. For example, Han commentators commonly took the word 'one' to mean the pole star. In contrast, Neo-Daoist writings show little interest in cosmological speculation. This does not mean that the authors had abandoned the *yin-yang* cosmology; rather, they believed, the classics were concerned with issues more profound than mapping the various components of the cosmos. A poem may depict certain objects or events, but its sense is not limited to reference, and the meaning of the whole transcends the identity of its parts. From a new hermeneutic vantage point, proponents of the 'Learning of the Profound' thus endeavor to reverse an 'outward-bound' interpretive course to return to the 'roots'; that is to say, to recapture the core teachings of the sages.

Understanding may depend on direct intuition. Nevertheless, to Wang Bi, Guo Xiang, and other major Neo-Daoist theorists, all of whom excelled in the art of argumentation, there is no substitute for careful philosophical analysis. The ancient sages shared a profound understanding of the Dao. On this view, Confucius, Lao Zi, and other sages and worthies were all 'Daoists', albeit in the non-partisan sense of the term. The *Yi-Jing*, *Lao-Zi*, and *Zhuang-Zi* especially afford a wealth of insight into the order of nature and the human condition. Most Neo-Daoists of the third and fourth centuries concentrated on these texts, which were later collectively referred to as the 'three profound treatises' (*san-xuan* 三玄). Wang Bi, for example, is best known for his commentaries on the *Yi-Jing* and the *Lao-Zi* – indeed, his *Yi-Jing* commentary became required reading for later scholars – and Guo Xiang is arguably the most important *Zhuang-Zi* commentator in Chinese history. It should not be overlooked, however, that both Wang Bi and Guo Xiang, and He Yan also, had commented on the *Lun-Yu* (論語 *Analects*). Convinced of the unity of the classics, they each provided an integral account of the one 'Daoist' tradition.

3 The *Nothingness* of Dao

Critics, past and present, are adamant that Neo-Daoists had distorted the teaching of Confucius, or worse, misused the authority of Confucius to lend credence to their own private agenda. Partisan disputes notwithstanding, the view presented in this article is that *xuan-xue* scholars set forth their understanding of the Dao in a philosophical synthesis. But this is not to say that they had understood the wisdom of the sages in the same way.

The idea that all beings are derived from the Dao, a basic insight articulated, for example, in the *Lao-Zi*, furnishes a common point of departure for *xuan-xue* scholars. From this perspective, Neo-Daoism may be said to be characterized by a keen interest in ontology, although as we shall see, ontological investigation is integrally related to ethics and politics. While there is no disagreement about the general 'Daoist' origin of beings, questions remain as to the way in which the Dao gives rise to 'Heaven and Earth' and the 'ten thousand things', that is to say, all beings. There is also the question of the way in which the Dao is related to human affairs. Both He Yan and Wang Bi focused on these questions. More specifically, they explained in different

ways that all things originate from *nothingness* or *non-being* (*wu* 無), and in so doing they helped chart a new course for philosophic exploration.

He Yan was one of the undisputed political and intellectual leaders of the early Wei dynasty. During the Zheng-Shi (正始) reign era (240–9) of the Wei dynasty, He Yan directed the board of personnel in the central government, which oversaw all civil appointments. Although most of his writings have not survived, tradition accords that he was adept in explaining the *Lao-Zi* and the *Yi-Jing*. He was also the principal author of an influential commentary to the *Lun-Yu*. Wang Bi was a younger contemporary and enjoyed an enviable reputation as being one of the brightest of his age. He Yan recognized Wang Bi's genius in argumentation and philosophical analysis. He had also tried to advance the latter's political career. The *Jin-Shu* (晉書), the standard official history of the Jin dynasty (265–420), which followed the Wei, later recalls that during the Zheng-Shi reign era He Yan, Wang Bi, and others established the view that all beings 'have their roots in *wu*' (*yi-wu-wei-ben* 以無為本), which launched the Neo-Daoist movement. This may give the impression that He Yan and Wang Bi shared the same interpretation of Daoist ontology. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that they had understood the concept of *wu* quite differently.

The concept of *wu* is central to *xuan-xue*. It is a difficult concept and has been translated variously as 'nothing', 'nothingness', 'non-being', and 'negativity'. It appears prominently in the *Lao-Zi* and serves to bring out the transcendence of the Dao. Nameless and formless, according to the *Lao-Zi*, the Dao as such can only be described negatively as *wu*, literally 'not having' any characteristics of things. Yet, the *Lao-Zi* also makes clear that the Dao is the 'beginning' and 'mother' of all beings (e.g., Chapter 1). For this reason, the Dao is said to be 'dark' or 'mysterious' (*xuan*). The concept of *wu* thus offers a key to unlocking the mystery of Dao, which guides Neo-Daoist philosophy.

During the Han period, most scholars favored a cosmological reading of the Dao. More precisely, they located the origins of the universe in the transformation of the 'vital energy' (*qi* 氣) that constitutes the cosmos. Simply put, the general belief was that an original generative *qi*-energy – or 'pneuma', as some scholars prefer in translating the word *qi* – through a process of differentiation gave rise to two basic cosmic forces known as *yin* and *yang*, which in turn formed Heaven and Earth and further through their dynamic interaction, all beings. Judging from He Yan's extant writings, there is little doubt that he also subscribed to the then prevalent *yin-yang* cosmology. However, what this account fails to explain is the radical transcendence or 'otherness' of the Dao.

He Yan attempted to address this in his 'Discourse on the Dao' (*Dao-Lun* 道論) and 'Discourse on the Nameless' (*Wu-Ming-Lun* 無名論), fragments of which have been preserved in the commentary on the *Lie Zi* (列子) by Zhang Zhan (張湛), who flourished during the second half of the Jin dynasty. In the latter of these two discourses, He Yan succinctly defines the Dao as 'that which does not have anything' (*wu suo you zhe ye* 無所有者也), which sets the Dao apart from beings with distinguishable features such as form and name. In the 'Discourse on the Dao', he writes, 'Beings depend on *wu* in coming into existence, in becoming what they are. Affairs rely on *wu* in coming to

fruition, in becoming what they are. Now, one tries to speak about *wu*, but no words could describe it; name it, but it has no name; look at it, but it does not have any form; listen to it, but it does not give any sound. Then, indeed, it is clear that the Dao is complete.'

The Dao is *wu* not because it does not exist or is lacking in any way, but because it is 'complete' (*quan* 全). Things with forms and names do arise as a result of the transformation of *yin* and *yang*, as the *Yi-Jing* and earlier scholars have correctly discerned, but the source of the life-giving and life-sustaining *qi* itself is totally undifferentiated and as such 'does not have' (*wu*) any distinguishable features and therefore cannot be perceived or described. This ultimate source of life and order is what the ancients called the Dao, and this is why the Dao is said to be 'nothing' and 'mysterious'. This rules out any nihilistic reading of the Dao and opens the door for Neo-Daoist ethics and political philosophy, which will be discussed later.

Wang Bi offers an alternative to understanding the origin of beings. To Wang, cosmological explanations are in the final analysis unhelpful because they fail to resolve the problem of infinite regress. If the chain of beings were to be traced to a specific agent or entity, the origin of the latter must itself be questioned. Put differently, what gives rise to the category of beings cannot be itself a being. *Yin-yang* and other cosmological concepts do yield important insight into the workings of the Daoist world, but they cannot lay bare the highest Daoist mystery, with which the sages of old were principally concerned. To unlock the mystery of Dao, reflection must venture beyond the confines of what may be called an ontology of substance to discern the logic of creation.

The *Lao-Zi* states that 'Dao gives birth to One', which produces 'Two', and in turn the myriad creatures (Chapter 42). Whereas Han commentators generally identified the 'One' with the original *qi* that generated the *yin* and *yang* energies at the 'beginning', Wang Bi broke new ground in presenting an account of how the multiplicity and diversity of beings must logically stem from a single source. The genesis of the cosmos certainly cannot be understood apart from Dao, but it is not the handiwork of any primordial being or substance, no matter how powerful or fecund. As Wang Bi sees it, 'beginning' is not a temporal reference but signifies logical priority. 'Two' would be inconceivable without 'One', but this is a conceptual relationship not to be reduced to a hierarchy of substances. Dao constitutes the absolute beginning and may be described metaphorically as the 'mother' of the universe in that all beings have causes and conditions which in the end derive logically from 'One' (e.g., commentary on Chapters 42 and 51 of the *Lao-Zi*). But 'One' remains a metaphysical concept; indeed, as Wang Bi makes the point in both his *Yi-Jing* ('Appended Remarks', Part I) and *Lao-Zi* (e.g., Chapter 39) commentaries, in this sense 'One' is not a number but that which makes possible all numbers and functions. This is but another way of saying that the logic of creation points directly to the 'non-being' of Dao.

'All things in the world are born of something (*you* 有); something is born of nothing (*wu*),' according to the *Lao-Zi* (Chapter 40). Elsewhere, the *Lao-Zi* emphasizes that 'Dao' is but a 'makeshift' name, a metaphor for that which all beings depend on for their very being (Chapter 25). It would be a mistake to equate Dao simply with

a formless and nameless something of which nothing can be said. This does not deny the existence of an undifferentiated original *qi*; rather, the point is that Dao is a higher-order concept that accounts for the coming to be of *qi* itself and of all *qi*-constituted beings and substances. In a cosmological reading, it would be appropriate to speak of 'the Dao', with the definite article; but in Wang Bi's interpretation, 'Dao' is but a symbol of *wu*, what is not of the category of things. In this context, *wu* may be rendered 'non-being' or 'negativity', to highlight its sense of absence and absolute otherness. At the same time, by means of the concept of 'One', Wang Bi is able to affirm the unity of creation, that all beings are rooted in a necessary ontological foundation, without having to resort to the language of time and being. This is consistent with Wang Bi's critique of the Han hermeneutical model that privileges external referents as the locus of meaning. The idea of a single 'root' also has important practical implications.

Not all Neo-Daoists recognized the priority of 'non-being'. Toward the end of the third century, for example, the Jin dynasty scholar Pei Wei (裴頠) composed a treatise provocatively titled 'Extolling (the virtue of) Being' (*Chong-You-Lun* 崇有論), no doubt to counter the influence of Wang Bi's view. However, it was Guo Xiang who articulated the most important critique of a metaphysical reading of *wu* as non-being.

Guo Xiang was an influential statesman and also highly regarded by his contemporaries for his intellectual accomplishments. He had written on the *Lao-Zi* and the *Lun-Yu*, although these survive only in a few quotations preserved in later sources. His commentary to the *Zhuang-Zi*, however, remains a classic to this day, through which the *Zhuang-Zi* text has come down to us in its present form, divided into thirty-three chapters. Like Wang Bi, Guo Xiang was also dissatisfied with the orthodox mode of classical learning established since the Han dynasty, with its signature emphasis on philological details and cosmological correspondences. To understand the classics, one must look beyond the surface meaning of individual words and phrases to discern the underlying ideas. Words are important as a communicative tool, but they must not be taken uncritically at face value. This is especially important to interpreting a text like the *Zhuang-Zi*, which employs a large number of parables and metaphors, often involving spiritual agents or supernatural exploits. Taken literally, they verge on the fantastic; properly understood, they disclose the wonder of the Dao and the greatness of the Daoist sage. Placing the *Zhuang-Zi* under fresh philosophical scrutiny, Guo Xiang challenged not only the established views of Han Confucian scholars but also those of Wang Bi and other Neo-Daoist champions.

The logic of transcendence may seem appealing, according to Guo Xiang, but it does not explain the origin of being at all. This is because *wu* in the sense of non-being or negativity is entirely conceptual, an abstraction, and as such cannot create anything. So defined, non-being and being are mutually exclusive; consequently, as Guo Xiang plainly states, 'non-being cannot change into being' (commentary on Chapter 22 of the *Zhuang-Zi*). If non-being cannot bring forth being, and given that the idea of a creator or original substance remains problematic, then the only alternative would be to regard the created order as having come into existence spontaneously. As Guo Xiang reasons, as non-being entails the absence of being, it cannot produce

being. Moreover, before being comes to be, it cannot produce other things. Then, as Guo asks with rhetorical flourish, who or what was responsible for bringing being into existence? The only logical answer is that 'it spontaneously comes into being!' (commentary on Chapter 2 of the *Zhuang-Zi*). This implies that being is eternal, without positing an objectified, transcendent Dao. Particular beings can of course be traced to contingent causes, but ultimately, Guo Xiang concludes, the origin of being can only be understood in terms of a process of 'self-transformation' (*zi-hua* 自化 or *du-hua* 獨化).

Chinese sources often characterize Wang Bi's position as one that 'values non-being' (*gui-wu* 貴無) and contrast it with Guo Xiang's emphasis on being. To Guo, the logic of creation does not entail non-being; what it shows is that at the most basic ontological level, prior to the coming to be of individual things with characteristic forms and names, being is 'so of itself' or 'naturally so'. In this way, Guo Xiang thus finds a deeper meaning in the well-known Daoist concept of 'naturalness' or 'spontaneity' (*zi-ran* 自然). Like Wang Bi's idea of 'One', this, too, has important practical implications, as we shall see shortly. The differences between Wang Bi and Guo Xiang testify to the richness of Neo-Daoism. Still, *xuan-xue* is not only about ontology. Ontological analysis serves to lay a foundation for a Dao-centered ethics and political philosophy. In what follows, Wang Bi's and Guo Xiang's approaches again will be introduced as representative of the Neo-Daoist movement.

4 The Quest for Daoist Order

If Dao is by definition what being is not, how is it related to the world? The concept of *li* (理), principle or pattern, plays an important role in bridging the gap between transcendence and immanence in Wang Bi's philosophy. In his commentary on the *Yi-Jing*, Wang stresses that phenomena conform to fundamental principles, such as the laws of nature, which in turn can be traced to a logically necessary unity. Contrary to Han accounts, the *Yi-Jing* has little to do with cosmological inventory or numerological manipulation; rather, to Wang Bi, it is primarily interested in bringing to light the philosophical basis of change. The ancient sages recognized that the many stem from 'One', and devised the hexagrams to give systematic expression to the transformation of nature. However, as mentioned earlier, the concept of 'One' does not signify any one thing that somehow gives rise to the manifold processes of change. What it indicates is that conceptually, multiplicity and diversity presuppose unity. Dialectically understood, the concept of 'One' complements that of non-being. In Wang Bi's approach to Daoist mystery, although there is still room for disagreement among interpreters, non-being uncovers the ground of being, whereas the concept of 'One' highlights the principle of unity that governs the Daoist universe.

If Dao as principle permeates nature, its presence can also be detected in the socio-political arena. Just as the mind commands the body, the family and the state should ideally be minded by a single sovereign. The hierarchical structure of socio-political relations is thus seen to have a basis in the natural order of things. In this way, traditional Confucian concerns merge with Daoist insights. When applied to politics,

this means that for Wang Bi the restoration of order and harmony hinges on sagely leadership at the top and a strong central government.

Strength cannot be measured by brute force, however. In the Daoist sense, true strength is found in what the mundane world may regard as 'weakness', in following the yielding ways of nature without artificial interference or aggressive control. Far from advocating any kind of strong-arm tactic, and eschewing the traditional Confucian reliance on the regulatory power of ritual norms and conduct, Wang Bi and his colleagues sought order in naturalness and spontaneity (*zi-ran*).

Specifically, naturalness suggests government by 'non-action' (*wu-wei* 無為), a concept enunciated in both the *Lao-Zi* and the *Lun-Yu*, and attributed to no less a personage than the sage-king Shun (舜). This may be contrasted with 'Legalist' policies that emphasize stiff punishment and thorough political control. In theory, *wu-wei* aims at preserving the natural order – again, the natural is seen to encompass the social in the Neo-Daoist scheme of things – so that the myriad things and affairs can flourish and attain their proper end in accordance with constant principles. Practically, it involves the elimination of willful intervention and a return to 'emptiness and quiescence'; that is, freedom from the dictates of desire and a life of guileless simplicity. In this regard, politics is shown to have its roots in self-cultivation. The ideal rule of the sage begins with returning to the 'roots' of one's Dao-centered nature, which tends toward stillness. This follows from the analysis of non-being, which peels away the many layers of disquieting human business to reach a tranquil core. This is the one teaching that unites the ancient sages. Confucius may not have spoken about non-being explicitly, but as Wang Bi declares, his every word and action nonetheless embodies the truth of naturalness and non-action.

While Wang Bi celebrates 'One', Guo Xiang focuses on the many. It is true that natural and social phenomena attest to the operation of constant principles. But this does not warrant nullifying individuality in the name of a higher metaphysical unity. Individuals are born with different capacities. The principle of nature dictates that everyone is endowed with a particular 'share' of vital energy, the creative power of the Dao that determines one's physical, intellectual, emotional, and moral capacity. Extending a naturalistic reading to an old religious concept, this is in Guo Xiang's estimation what is meant by the 'Mandate of Heaven' (*tian-ming* 天命).

Individual differences ought to be accepted, but they do not give cause to prejudice or discrimination. Each individual, the gifted as well as the disadvantaged, is in principle complete in his or her own way, and constitutes an equally indispensable part in a larger whole. Daoist ethics, in this framework, thus consists in being true to oneself, and nourishing one's nature. This is the practical significance of naturalness. The sage, as Guo Xiang points out in his *Zhuang-Zi* commentary, precisely recognizes the principle of *zi-ran*, cultivates his inborn capacity, and in so doing fulfills his destiny.

In following nature, the sage abides by non-action. Not to be confused with total incation, *wu-wei* signals a mode of being that makes full use of one's natural endowment. Guided by inherent moral principles, there is no place for artificiality or self-deception in the ideal Daoist way of life. Clearly, ethical purity does not entail

renunciation. The sage need not avoid politics or other forms of worldly involvement. Though he finds himself along the corridors of power, the sage safeguards his nature and remains empty of desire. In government, the sage-ruler naturally reduces arbitrary restrictions, adjusts policies to suit changing needs, identifies the right people for office, and generally creates a conducive environment in which all under Heaven can dwell in peace and realize their full potential.

The sage can accomplish all this because he is blessed with an exceptionally rich endowment. Nevertheless, Guo Xiang makes clear that there is no point in trying to imitate the sage. Any attempt to do so would in fact violate the spirit of naturalness. This brings into view a key difference between Wang Bi and Guo Xiang, and also an important debate in Neo-Daoist philosophy concerning the nature of the sage.

Historically, He Yan is credited with having established the view that sages do not experience such basic emotions as pleasure and anger, or sorrow and joy. He Yan is in effect saying that the ideal sage embodies the fullness of the Dao, as measured by his extraordinary *qi*-endowment, and the nature of the sage, like that of the Dao, is therefore also undifferentiated and complete. This enables the sage to be absolutely impartial and impervious to the ubiquitous influence of self-interest. He Yan's theory was widely accepted at that time, as traditional sources relate that Zhong Hui (鍾會 225–64), a contemporary and rival of Wang Bi, and others had elaborated on it. Guo Xiang seems to have shared the same view. The sage's extraordinary constitution translates into a purity of being that excludes emotional disturbances. For this reason, his action accords completely with principle. In being true to himself, the sage can therefore rule the world without being corrupted or enslaved by it. Though this does not justify inequality in ethical terms, there is no denying that individuals are different in their *qi*-endowment and that the sage enjoys an extraordinary nature and capacity.

Wang Bi challenged He Yan's view of the nature of the sage. If there is a fundamental unity to all beings, it cannot be maintained that some are nevertheless exempted from the rule. Further, if sages are born a special species apart, they cannot serve as a source of motivation and inspiration. It would then be impossible to become a sage, which seems to contradict both classical Daoist and Confucian teachings. The sage is not immune from emotional experiences, but he differs from ordinary human beings in his heightened spirituality and vision. Even Confucius could not but be pleased when he met Yan Hui (顏回), his prized disciple, or be saddened by the latter's untimely demise. With feelings, the sage is able to respond to things, but with his clear understanding and in abiding by quietude and non-action he is never burdened by them. It is logically invalid, as Wang Bi astutely observes, to argue from the absence of attachment to the absence of emotions.

Sharing the same philosophical vocabulary, reacting to a common heritage, and converging on certain central issues such as the nature of Dao and the nature of the sage, *xuan-xue* proponents nonetheless exercised remarkable independence and critical acumen. It is noteworthy that although politically Wang Bi benefited from He Yan's patronage, he did not submit to the latter in developing his own investigation

of the Profound. A generation later, Guo Xiang did not hesitate to reopen cases that many had considered settled. In this crisscross of ideas, Neo-Daoism prospered.

5 Other Neo-Daoist Currents

The year 249 CE marks a watershed in the history of the Wei dynasty. In that year, the general Si-ma Yi (司馬懿 179–251) outmaneuvered and overpowered his opponents and seized control of the government. This brought the Zheng-Shi (正始) reign era of the Wei dynasty to a close, after which though the Wei imperial house of Cao (曹) continued to rule in name, it was the Si-ma family who dominated the political stage and eventually founded the Jin dynasty in 265. Scores of eminent scholar-officials were killed in the coup of 249, including He Yan, who was an adopted son and also related by marriage to the reigning house of Cao. Wang Bi died later in that same year as well, reportedly of a sudden illness. Historians thus make use of the term 'Zheng-Shi *xuan-xue*' (正始玄學) to mark the first phase of Neo-Daoism. During the transition between the Wei and Jin dynasties, a group of intellectuals, remembered fondly in Chinese sources as the 'Seven Worthies (or Sages) of the Bamboo Grove' (*zhu-lin-qi-xian* 竹林七賢) came to represent the voice of the 'Learning of the Profound'. Although the term 'bamboo grove' appears in Buddhist sources, it probably refers to a place (in modern Henan Province) where the group and other associates met in the pleasure of friendship. Among the seven, Xi Kang (嵇康 223–62 or 224–63), Ruan Ji (阮籍 210–63), and Xiang Xiu (向秀 ca 227–80) are of particular interest to students of philosophy.

Xi Kang and Ruan Ji, the acknowledged leaders of the group, exemplify the kind of free and critical spirit to which men of letters were increasingly drawn at that time. Xi Kang – the surname 'Xi' is pronounced 'Ji' in modern Chinese – was related by marriage to the Cao family and refused to serve the Si-ma government. Likened to a 'sleeping dragon' of potential threat to the Si-ma regime, he was eventually imprisoned and sentenced to death. Several thousand students of the imperial academy reportedly petitioned for his release. Before the execution, as traditional sources further relate, Xi Kang remained perfectly composed; as the final hour drew near, he asked for a zither (*qin* 琴, or lute according to some translators) and gave a parting performance, lamenting only that the tune he had played would now die with him. Ruan Ji reluctantly took up a post in the Si-ma government and was spared a violent death. Never a consenting partner in the intercourse of power, however, he had to endure repeated slanders and escaped censure only by finding refuge in an almost constant state of intoxicated stupor. The Wei-Jin transition was a time, to paraphrase the famous words of a later historian, when few intellectuals of note (*ming-shi* 名士) were able to survive intact. Both Xi Kang and Ruan Ji were uncompromising in their attack on hypocrisy and the tussle for wealth and power among the elite. Extremely talented in music and poetry, daringly unconventional in thought and behavior, they both looked to naturalness (*zi-ran*) to provide a basis for renewal.

Ruan Ji left behind a good number of poems and several essays. An early work is entitled 'Discourse on Music' (*Yue-Lun* 樂論), in which he discusses along Confucian

lines the function of music in bringing about harmony. Like most Neo-Daoists, Ruan Ji believed that the teachings of Confucius had been distorted by 'orthodox' scholars, who under the banner of Confucianism sought merely to further their own gain. Ruan Ji also wrote on the 'three profound treatises', devoting an essay to each. While the essay on the *Yi-Jing* dates probably to his youth, and that on the *Lao-Zi* survives only in fragments, the essay on 'Elucidating Completely the *Zhuang-Zi*' (*Da-Zhuang-Lun* 達莊論) reflects Ruan Ji's mature thinking. Equally important is his famous poetic essay, the 'Biography of Master Great Man' (*Da-Ren-Xian-Sheng-Zhuan* 大人先生傳), in which he takes aims at the corrupt ways of the world and evokes an image of Daoist transcendence, a biting contrast that is rendered all the more poignant in the light of his own predicament.

Unlike Wang Bi, Ruan Ji did not see non-being as the one thread running through the classics. Rather, it is the plenitude of nature that constitutes the proper starting point for philosophical reflection. The diversity of phenomena does not entail disorder; on the contrary, they conform to constant principles and function in harmony. In his essay on the *Zhuang-Zi*, Ruan Ji traces this to the transformation of the one vital *qi*-energy that pervades the universe. In his essay on the *Lao-Zi*, he states in no uncertain terms that this is what the *Yi-Jing* means by the 'Great Ultimate' (*tai-ji* 太極); in the *Chun-Qiu* (春秋 *Spring and Autumn Annals*), which is traditionally ascribed to Confucius, it is called the 'Origin' (*yuan* 元), and in the *Lao-Zi*, the Dao.

At the ethical level, the concept of naturalness affirms that 'fullness' can only be realized in 'emptiness'. In other words, devoid of self-interest, the 'great man' or sage finds fulfillment in quietude and non-action. In the 'Biography of Master Great Man', Ruan Ji speaks eloquently of the Daoist sage as one who rides above the servitude of mundane life in complete freedom and transcendence. This presupposes a profound understanding of what the *Zhuang-Zi* calls the 'equality of things', now explained by Ruan Ji in terms of the oneness of *qi*. Life and death, fortune and misfortune, and other seemingly unbridgeable divides form but moments in the same continuum of natural transformation. The sage, accordingly, regards them as one. Distinctions, not in the sense of differences but in that of value discrimination, can thus no longer be maintained. In this way, the sage holds fast to tranquility and embraces emptiness. However, the most startling revelation in the 'Biography of Master Great Man' arises from a philosophy of history, in which Ruan Ji describes the world as having fallen from a pristine state of natural order where there were neither rulers nor ministers.

Anarchism, a doctrine rarely entertained in the whole of Chinese philosophy, thus made a notable appearance in Neo-Daoism. In the fourth century, the scholar Bao Jingyan (鮑敬言) took up the same theme in an essay titled 'Treatise on Not Having Rulers' (*Wu-Jun-Lun* 無君論). Little is known about Bao Jingyan, whose views have been preserved in part by the great Daoist master Ge Hong (葛洪 ca 283–363) in his *Bao-Pu-Zi* (抱樸子 *The Master Who Embraces Simplicity*); but the main thesis here is clearly that rulership is but a form of domination that violates naturalness. In comparison, the majority of Neo-Daoist scholars may be said to have espoused fairly 'conservative' political ideals. He Yan, Wang Bi, and Guo Xiang had little difficulty justifying absolute monarchical rule, provided that it coincides with non-action. Even

Xi Kang, who is often depicted as a radical iconoclast, admits that rulership has a place in the natural order.

Xi Kang did not comment on the 'three profound treatises', although he openly acknowledged Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi to be his teachers. As Pure Conversation developed, essays, criticisms, and replies to criticisms grew in popularity as a more direct medium of philosophical discourse. Xi Kang's extant writings include a collection of sixty poems, an influential 'Rhapsody on the Zither' (*Qin-Fu* 琴賦), and fourteen essays. In his essays, Xi Kang addresses some of the most controversial debates in *xuan-xue*. On the relationship between 'words and meaning', it is clear that he would side with Wang Bi. In the interpretation of naturalness, Xi Kang parts company with many of his contemporaries in recognizing a religious dimension to Daoist teachings. It may be worth mentioning that Xi Kang also compiled a hagiographical work titled 'Biographies of Sages and High-Minded Scholars' (*Sheng-Xian-Gao-Shi-Zhuan* 聖賢高士傳), which now exists in a reconstructed version made during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

The principle of *zi-ran* is to be understood concretely in terms of vital energy. Like Guo Xiang, Xi Kang believes that individuals receive a *qi*-endowment of varying abundance and richness which defines their nature and capacity. This explains why some people are blessed with long life or exceptional talents, while others cannot but endure certain natural disadvantages. The fact that one may be gifted in some ways but deficient in others attests to the presence of different powers informing each individual. Thus, in an essay called 'On Intelligence and Courage' (*Ming-Dan-Lun* 明膽論), Xi Kang disputes the claim that those who possess intelligence or discernment are sure to have courage. Arising from different determination of *qi*, as Xi writes, the two 'cannot produce each other'.

However, while most people are born with a mixture of strengths and weaknesses, the logic of naturalness does admit the possibility of perfect endowment. Viewed in this light, sages must be recognized as extraordinary beings animated by the purest and richest form of *qi*. For the same reason, Xi Kang argues for the existence of 'immortals', a popular belief in religious Daoism, which was established toward the last years of the Han dynasty but did not make its presence felt in the upper reaches of society until the Wei-Jin period. In this regard, it is important to see that Neo-Daoist 'naturalism' does not preclude religious sensibility. Just as the natural can be seen to include the social, spirits and immortals have their place in a Daoist world. Put another way, the distinction between 'natural' and 'supernatural' collapses in the realm of the Dao; to Xi Kang, both the sacred and the mundane spring from the transformation of *zi-ran*.

So defined, neither sagehood nor immortality can be achieved through effort or learning. Yet, the doctrine of naturalness does not necessarily entail a kind of 'fatalism' that dismisses all effort. Immortality may be beyond reach to those who are not born with an exceptional *qi*-constitution, but as Xi Kang explains in his much quoted essay 'On Nourishing Life' (*Yang-Sheng-Lun* 養生論), self-cultivation can substantially enhance one's physical and spiritual well-being. Specifically, breathing exercises, dietary control, and the use of drugs can help maximize the limits of one's natural endowment, and bring about rejuvenation and long life. Drug use, incidentally, like

wine consumption, was widespread among the literati; He Yan, for example, is known to have championed a certain drug for its ability to 'lift one's spirit', and historical sources unanimously report that Xi Kang was a connoisseur in this field. Nevertheless, useful as such practices may be, as Xi Kang is careful to add, the task of self-cultivation would be in vain if desires are allowed to dominate.

Desires are harmful to both body and mind. Purity of being, conversely, entails the absence of desire or any form of emotional disturbance. Does this mean that all desires are unnatural? The question was already raised in the debate on the nature of the sage between He Yan and Wang Bi. In this instance, Xi Kang's essay on nourishing life led to a critique by Xiang Xiu, for whom desires arise naturally from one's heart and mind. As such, they cannot be eradicated; rather, affects and appetites can only be regulated by means of ritual action and rules of propriety.

Other philosophers, as we shall see, would add to this debate. In reply, Xi Kang points out that although anger and joy, and the desire for fame and beauty may stem from the self, like a tumor they do not serve the interest of personal well-being. Basic needs are of course not to be denied, but desires are shaped by objects and reflect cognitive distortions that blind and consume the self. To quench one's thirst, one does not desire to drink the whole river. This is fundamentally different from the desire for power and wealth, which allows no rest. Furthermore, the suppression of desire by artificial means may remove certain symptoms, but it does not cure the disease. It is only by recognizing the harmful influences of desire that one begins to seek calmness and emptiness of mind. Ultimately, nourishing life is not only about health and longevity, but also sets its sight on a higher – and to Xi Kang, more authentic – mode of being characterized by dispassion.

In this connection, Xi Kang's well-known thesis that emotions are alien to music – or literally, that 'sounds do not have (in them) sorrow or joy' (*sheng-wu-ai-le* 聲無哀樂) – becomes readily understandable. If emotions and desires are not intrinsic to nature, and since sounds are naturally produced, it cannot be the case that music embodies sorrow or joy, as traditional Chinese musical theory has generally assumed. Subjective and cognitive reactions, in other words, should be distinguished from what is natural and objective; otherwise, Xi Kang argues, one can hardly account for the fact that the same piece of music may invoke different responses in different audiences.

If Xi Kang and Ruan Ji sharpened the Daoist sense of naturalness, Xiang Xiu provided a passage from Wang Bi's 'valuing non-being' to Guo Xiang's rehabilitation of being. Xiang Xiu was a brilliant interpreter of the *Zhuang-Zi*. Indeed, for a long time it was held that Guo Xiang had plagiarized Xiang Xiu's work. Guo Xiang's own contribution should not be undermined, as modern scholarship rightly recognizes, but there is little question that he had benefited from Xiang Xiu's inquiry into the Profound.

Xiang Xiu's *Zhuang-Zi* commentary is no longer extant, except for some 200 quotations preserved in various sources. It was Xiang Xiu who introduced the terms 'self-production' (*zi-sheng* 自生) and 'self-transformation' (*zi-hua* 自化); but he seems more concerned with the idea that 'only that which is not produced and not transformed can be the root of production and transformation'. This implies either non-being or an uncaused first cause, neither of which would be acceptable to Guo

Xiang. 'Self-transformation', in Guo's formulation, does not explain exactly how being came into existence; instead, it offers a logical alternative, which bypasses the philosophical problems associated with both a pure negation and the positing of a particular causal agent.

On the ethical front, especially with respect to the interpretation of Daoist freedom, Guo Xiang seems to have followed Xiang Xiu's view more closely. Although the myriad creatures differ in infinite ways, according to Xiang Xiu, they are one in that they attain freedom and authenticity by following their nature. It is true that they cannot compare with the sage, who alone is not dependent on anything and is one with the universal flux; but even the most insignificant creature can find supreme happiness in complete self-realization. During the fourth century, the Buddhist monk Zhi Dun (支遁) challenged the 'Xiang-Guo' – that is, Xiang Xiu and Guo Xiang – interpretation without differentiating the two, arguing that only the enlightened sage can truly experience transcendental freedom.

6 *Ming-Jiao* vs. *Zi-Ran*

From He Yan and Wang Bi to the 'Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove' and Guo Xiang, the main features of Neo-Daoism can be discerned. From a broader, thematic perspective, given the dissatisfaction with Han Confucianism, many of the debates in *xuan-xue* revolve around the relationship between *ming-jiao* (名教) – 'orthodox teachings' or more literally, 'doctrine of names', which sets out what is deemed proper practice – and *zi-ran*. Does *ming-jiao*, constituted by doctrines of propriety and government, oppose the order of nature and thwart all aspiration toward transcendence and freedom from mundane concerns? Two main approaches can be distinguished, whose impact far exceeds the quiet preserves of the philosophers' ivory tower or 'bamboo grove', to spark new trends in politics and culture. In this context, another major *xuan-xue* debate on the relationship between human 'capacity' (*cai* 才) and 'nature' (*xing* 性) should also be considered.

For Wang Bi, it is clear that government and society should ideally conform to nature, which is seen to be rooted in Dao. Guo Xiang is even more specific in arguing that the norms and rites that define civilization are not foreign to nature, but in principle flow spontaneously from it. The natural bond between mother and child, for example, attests to the inherent harmony between *ming-jiao* and *zi-ran*. Inasmuch as Confucianism pays special attention to propriety and government, whereas classical Daoism focuses on naturalness, Wang Bi and Guo Xiang can be said to have synthesized the two traditions. The same is true for Xiang Xiu. As the poet Xie Lingyun (謝靈運 385–433) puts it, 'Xiang Xiu treats Confucianism and Daoism as one.'

To those who regard *ming-jiao* and *zi-ran* as complementary, the relationship between individual capacity and human nature takes on particular significance. Human nature is generally understood to be what is inborn, endowed by 'Heaven'; but is capacity inborn, be it in terms of physical endowment, intelligence, or moral capacity? This is important especially because the right people must be identified to lead the country and to serve the public good. If capacity is determined by *qi*-endowment, which appears

to be the majority view, in principle it can be gauged from a person's appearance. A number of *xuan-xue* scholars are particularly known for their ability to identify talent; many intellectuals in fact subscribed to the then prevalent theory that to know a person, it is enough to look into his or her eyes. A late second-century or early third-century work known as *Ren-Wu-Zhi* (人物志, which has been translated into English as *The Study of Human Abilities*) by Liu Shao (劉邵), a senior contemporary of He Yan, has already attempted to map out different types of human capacity and the signs by which they might be recognized. As *xuan-xue* developed, the relationship between capacity and human nature became the topic of a major debate, on which Zhong Hui is said to have written a treatise. This deserves attention, before we return to the more general debate on the relationship between *ming-jiao* and *zi-ran*.

Zhong Hui rivaled Wang Bi as one of the most gifted philosophers of their age. From a distinguished family, he rose to the highest ranks of government after the Si-ma clan seized control in 249 CE. Historical sources relate that it was at his instigation that Xi Kang was put to death. At the pinnacle of his career, serving as one of the 'three excellencies of state', Zhong Hui decided to turn against the Si-ma regime and was killed as a result. Most of Zhong's philosophical writings have been lost, except for about twenty-five quotations from his commentary on the *Lao-Zi*. Although his treatise on capacity and nature is no longer extant, it is reported widely in later sources.

Entitled 'Discourse on the Four Roots of Capacity and Nature' (*Cai-Xing-Si-Ben-Lun* 才性四本論), it discusses four theses on the fundamental relationship between capacity and human nature. The first position is that the two are 'identical' (*tong* 同), which suggests that both capacity and nature are determined by *qi*. In other words, human nature can be understood concretely in terms of one's inborn *qi*-constituted capacity. They are referred to differently because whereas nature is the inner substance, capacity reaches outward and finds expression in life span, ability, as well as moral behavior. This view is particularly associated with the scholar Fu Gu (傅嘏 209–55), who criticized He Yan during the Zheng-Shi era and later became a major policymaker in the Si-ma administration. Another third-century scholar by the name of Yuan Zhun (袁準), who was a friend of Xi Kang, composed a 'Treatise on Capacity and Nature' (*Cai-Xing-Lun* 才性論) to argue the case. On this view, sages are born, not made.

Opposed to this is the thesis that capacity and nature are 'different' (*yi* 異). The identity thesis, according to this counter proposal, has misconstrued the relationship between capacity and nature, because although the latter may be inborn, the former is shaped by learning and effort. What is endowed at birth provides but the basic apparatus and faculties for a human being to grow and to learn; but the person that one becomes is the result of learning and putting into practice the teachings of the sages. This also implies that sagehood is an attainable goal, independent of a person's inborn *qi*-allotment.

The third position, which Zhong Hui himself holds, argues that capacity and nature 'coincide' (*he* 合), and may be seen as an attempt to mediate between the first two views. Although native endowment is necessary for realized capacity, it is not sufficient. What is endowed is the potential, which must nevertheless be carefully nurtured

and brought to fruition. In this way, Zhong Hui is able to affirm the importance of learning and effort, while maintaining the pervasive influence of *qi* in furnishing the necessary 'stuff' for personal development. Finally, the fourth thesis recorded in Zhong Hui's treatise posits that capacity and nature 'diverge' (*li* 離) from each other. This is probably directed at Zhong Hui's modified identity thesis – inborn nature does not provide the necessary fertile ground for cultivation; on the contrary, it needs to be rectified by learning. Human beings are naturally driven by desire and therefore must rely on rituals and instruction to become responsible individuals. In this sense, capacity and nature do not 'coincide', as Zhong Hui has envisaged, but are disparate and stand opposed to each other.

Regardless of their position on the *cai-xing* debate, He Yan, Wang Bi, and Guo Xiang all seem relatively sanguine about the relationship between *ming-jiao* and *zi-ran*. However, not all *xuan-xue* scholars share this view. Both Xi Kang and Ruan Ji are evidently convinced that *ming-jiao* impinges on the ideal natural order of things. They reject the claim – supported, for example, by Guo Xiang, who incidentally enjoyed a successful political career – that one could maintain an inner purity and transcendence in the midst of worldly involvement. Genuine freedom is possible only if one goes beyond orthodox teachings and aligns oneself completely with naturalness. This not only invites philosophical debate but also gives impetus to an avant-garde, counter-culture development, which adds a tinge of romanticism to Neo-Daoism.

Central to the debate between *ming-jiao* and *zi-ran* is the place of emotions in the ethical life. The dimension of affectivity in the nature of the sage, as we have seen, has occasioned a sharp exchange between He Yan and Wang Bi. Xi Kang looks to dispassion as an ethical ideal, as we have also seen, and Xiang Xiu has responded that passion must be placed under strict control by ritual norms and conduct. Notwithstanding the plurality of views on this issue, many scholars during the Wei-Jin era have come to appreciate strong emotion as a sign of authenticity. Thus, for example, Wang Rong (王戎 234–305), one of the 'Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove', did not try to control his grief in accordance with ritual when his son died. The sage may be able to leave behind all traces of emotion, he explains; but 'in people like us', feelings find their deepest and by implication truest expression. Whether Wang Rong had actually uttered these words is not the issue – some sources ascribe them to his cousin, another well-known intellectual at the time, Wang Yan (王衍) – the more important point is that naked feelings have come to be cherished as a Neo-Daoist ideal. In the same spirit, Xun Can was devastated by the death of his wife. In reply to criticism that he had surrendered himself to the dictates of the heart, Xun simply laments that it would be difficult to find again a woman of true beauty. His grief was so great, as we read in his biography, that he died shortly after at the age of twenty-nine.

The unaffected display of emotion often came into conflict with the norms and behavior sanctioned by orthodox teachings. Ruan Ji, for example, was criticized for having contravened the rules of propriety in sending off his sister-in-law on a journey. In reply, Ruan states bluntly that such rules were never meant for him. When Ruan Ji's mother died, he was found on various occasions eating meat, drunk, and generally acting in a manner so unconventional as to attract a call for his banishment from

the realm. Nevertheless, traditional sources also relate that Ruan Ji was a paragon of filial piety; his grief at his mother's passing was so intense that he coughed blood and 'wasted away' for a long time. These accounts, more than providing a record of events, serve to dramatize the vast divide that separates naturalness from the artificial and often hypocritical observance of orthodox customs, from the perspective of those who champion Daoist *zi-ran*.

Once unconventional behavior is seen to express naturalness and authenticity, it is perhaps inevitable that more radical gestures would come to create a colorful but nonetheless extremely slippery slope. Ruan Ji, for example, is said to have frequented a neighbor's place for wine and the company of his beautiful wife. When Ruan got drunk, he would innocently sleep next to her. Another neighbor had a talented and beautiful young daughter. The fact that Ruan Ji did not know the family did not prevent him from going to her funeral and crying with abandon when she died. Liu Ling (劉伶), also a member of the 'Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove', is well known for his fondness for wine. Never without a bottle in hand, when traveling Liu would ask an attendant to carry a spade so that should he get drunk, fall from the carriage and die, he could be buried on the spot. Liu Ling also took to nudity to express his naturalness and individuality. Answering his critics, who found him naked, drinking in his house, Liu said, 'I take Heaven and Earth as my dwelling, and my rooms are my coats and pants; so what are you gentlemen doing in my pants?'

As Pure Conversation gained currency, many literati were quick to imitate such behavior. It was fashionable to give free rein to one's impulses, to be outrageous; and many hoped to establish a reputation by opposing orthodox teachings. Whether this represents a deterioration of Neo-Daoism is a value judgment that need not concern us. The point to note is that serious practical implications follow from a philosophy of *zi-ran*. There are, of course, scholars who would defend the primacy of orthodox teachings. Yue Guang (樂廣 252–304), for example, was obviously unimpressed by the extent to which many of his contemporaries had gone in the direction of naturalness to seek a fulfilling life. 'In *ming-jiao* itself there is a blissful abode,' he asks, 'so why go to such extremes?'

In the early fourth century, the Jin dynasty was forced to flee its capital and to rebuild in south China. As the literati settled in a new land, they looked back to the time of He Yan and Wang Bi, to 'the voice of Zheng-Shi', as scholars then put it, as the golden age of the 'Learning of the Profound'. Although Pure Conversation continued with undiminished rigor, it did not introduce many new ideas. In the southern court, we are told, the senior statesman Wang Dao (王導 276-339) would only talk about 'nourishing life', 'words and meaning', and Xi Kang's theory of music. Throughout the Jin period and beyond, as another early source relates, the debate on the 'four roots of capacity and nature' and Xi Kang's thesis that 'sounds do not have sorrow or joy' remained the mainstay of philosophical discussion.

As Neo-Daoism entered its last phase, another Daoist work, the *Lie-Zi*, came to rival the 'three profound treatises'. Zhang Zhan (ca 330–400) wrote an important commentary on the work – indeed, some would argue that Zhang had a hand in the formation of the *Lie-Zi* itself – in which he recapitulates many of the ideas that span

the spectrum of Neo-Daoist philosophy. What is of particular interest is that Zhang explicitly introduced Buddhist ideas into *xuan-xue*.

Buddhism had of course entered China long before the Jin period. Given the similarity between 'non-being' and the Buddhist concept of 'emptiness', there is some suggestion that Neo-Daoism was influenced by Buddhist philosophy from the start. Though possible, there is so far no strong evidence linking He Yan, Wang Bi, and other early Neo-Daoist scholars to Buddhism. On the contrary, it is clear that *xuan-xue* had exerted considerable influence on the development of Chinese Buddhism. From the fourth century onward, Buddhist masters frequently engaged in Pure Conversation and challenged *xuan-xue* scholars at their own game.

The Jin dynasty came to an end in 420 CE, followed by a series of short-lived dynasties in both north and south China. While Pure Conversation survived, and *xuan-xue* was in fact made a part of the official curriculum at the imperial academy, it was Buddhism and religious Daoism that captured the philosophical and cultural imagination. Later still, with the rise of Neo-Confucianism, many scholars rose to condemn 'Dark Learning' – using the word *xuan* in a pejorative sense – for having deviated from the teachings of Confucius, although it is evident that, like Chinese Buddhism, Neo-Confucian philosophy was also indebted to *xuan-xue* (for example, in the formulation of the central Neo-Confucian concept of 'principle').

Occupying a key place in the history of Chinese thought, Neo-Daoism merits careful attention for its contribution to metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, and other areas of philosophic concern. It should be emphasized again that *xuan-xue* is not monolithic. There are family resemblances among the views proposed, of course, but *xuan-xue* remains a field of contested meaning, in which different interpretations of Dao and the attendant ethical and political issues are put forward for debate. It should be remembered also that the philosophy of naturalness does not give rise to pessimism or renunciation. Even Xi Kang and Ruan Ji did not abandon the promise of renewal. Although many had found in the ancient recluse a source of inspiration, and despite the fact that it was common for the literati to refuse office, there is an optimism that naturalness and non-action would in the end bring about harmony and peace. By redefining tradition in the light of Dao, a deeper understanding would help remove the obstacles that stand in the way of the unfolding of Daoist order.

Note

This essay is a revised and enlarged version of my entry on 'Neo-Daoism', in Antonio S. Cua (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, New York and London: Routledge, 2003, 214–22.

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Chapter 11

CHINESE BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY FROM HAN THROUGH TANG

Whalen Lai
With assistance from Yu-Yin Cheng

The history of Chinese Buddhist thought from the Han through the Tang dynasty can be covered by way of a critical review of the text known as *The Awakening of Faith in Mahayana* (*Da-Cheng-Qi-Xin-Lun* 大乘起信論). An inspired digest of Mahayana (大乘) essentials, this work (*AFM* for short) appeared around 550 CE. Midway through that Han-Tang transition, it helped to close the era of tutelage under foreign masters that went before and to initiate the era for the founding of Sinitic Mahayana schools that followed. Situating it thus would allow us to show, in a dense format, how the *AFM*

1 captured a key psychological schema prevalent in Han Chinese thought;
2 inherited and transformed the exchange between 'Buddhist Emptiness and Daoist Nothingness' in the Three Kingdoms period;
3 encapsulated the Nirvana school's speculations on Buddha-nature in the southern dynasties; and
4 overcame the new challenge of Yogacara (瑜伽行派) in the early sixth century.

In turn, the *AFM* would spur the rise of the Huayan (華嚴) school, inform the Chan (禪) teachings, give endorsement to the Pure Land faith, and cause an internal schism within the Tiantai (天台) school later in the Song dynasty.

The word 'faith' in the title of the *AFM* might mislead some readers. It is not faith in the Christian sense of having faith in God and being saved through Grace in return. Faith in early Buddhism is the initial trust in the truth of the teachings before embarking on this quest for wisdom. In the *AFM*, it is more. It is confidence in wisdom or Buddha-nature being already in one's possession: an affirmation of *a priori* enlightenment. The reference to 'awakening' in *AFM* is to this arousing of the *bodhicitta* (bodhi-mind: the 'aspiration for enlightenment'). Once that is aroused, Buddhahood is providential. This sense of self-confidence in the *AFM*, however, rose in response to

an awareness of 'bad times' due to this temporal distance from the historical Buddha. At the time, the dawning of the Last Age – the Age of the Degenerate Dharma – had been dated to 552 CE or 1,500 years after the *parinirvana* (the final passing away) of the Buddha. The *parinirvana* was dated then to 1048 BCE. It had been pushed back 500 years because of a renewed debate between the Buddhists and the Daoists at the northern court in 520 CE. To counter the Daoist claim that Laozi (老子) had gone west to become the Buddha in India, the Buddhists made a counter-claim that led to this accelerated backdating of the two founders. That hastened the coming of the Last Age, so there was a widespread uncertainty in the air. The *AFM* sought to alleviate doubt by so arousing faith. Even before 520 CE, the *Xiang-Fa-Jue-Yi-Jing* (Sutra for Resolving Doubt in the Age of the Semblance Dharma: 像法決疑經) called for a similar 'allaying of doubts'. The difference is that it encouraged generous acts of charity and setting up these 'inexhaustible treasure stores' of material goods alias spiritual merits. In contrast, the *AFM*'s response is more intellectualist: it offered this promise of universal *a priori* enlightenment. But this Gnostic message was copied verbatim into the *Zhan-Cha-Jing* (Sutra for Observing Destinies 占察經) to support a cult of karmic fortune-telling. There the pious would confess their sins and then cast lots (actually, spin these tops) to see what future had in store for them. This amounts to a Buddhist version of the *Yi-Jing* (Classic of Change 易經). People 'prayed and then watched' for signs of their karmic destiny. Such was the temper and tempo of the times when the *AFM* made its appearance.

1 On the Term 'Sinitic Mahayana'

Chinese Buddhist thought can always be shown to have inherited elements from Chinese philosophy. That is only natural. It is however important not to reduce Chinese Buddhist reflection to just Chinese inspiration, for it is also true that Chinese Buddhist thought was responding to Indian (and Central Asian) Buddhist precedents. Characterizing that cultural exchange as involving first Indianization and then Sinicization is tempting and not altogether improper. But at some point, there should or could rise a creative synthesis, the end product of which is, so to say, more than the sum of those Chinese and Indian parts. Now although it is not always easy to draw the line where said synthesis begins, we will use that category, 'Sinitic Mahayana', to characterize that higher synthesis so we might hear its own independent voice. That voice represents the direct Sinitic response to the transcendental *Buddha-Dharma* (Buddhist Teaching) that is Mahayana. Putting it that way accords with the fact that Mahayana is pan-Asian. It was never meant to be the property of a single culture. The *Dharma* as Truth is Truth universal. It was never the property of the Indian subcontinent. (In fact, historically speaking, Mahayana apparently rose under foreign impact; it is post-Asoka and post-Alexander. Its initial home base could possibly be in the marginal south or at the northwestern frontier.) Mahayana wisdom being transcendental, it should be accessible to any potential bodhisattva who cared to take on the twin burden of Wisdom and Compassion. 'Sinitic Mahayana' is simply the same collective response to the Mahayana Dharma in the Sinitic arena. It avoids

the suggestion that 'Chinese Buddhism', a cultural product, is somehow just 'Indian Buddhism', another frozen entity, undergoing the necessity of sinicization.

There are other grounds for employing that neologism. After all, Mahayana has canonical status whereas the English word Buddhism is a modern European namesake. Mahayana as a synonym for the ultimate Truth is what, as the *AFM* would have it, awakens the faithful to seeing it truthfully. Faith is first incipient; in due course, it is *a priori* Wisdom. Buddhist studies as a designated field of scholarship has gone through a number of fashions in recent times; 'Sinitic Mahayana' as a key to appreciating said phenomenon might help to correct certain prejudices, be it traditional sectarian or modern, objectivist. A recent finding that Mahayana might well has come into its own as the 'great tradition' in name and in reality for the first time, only in China – that finding might actually help support our contention. Indian Mahayana had a grandiose vision of itself, but it was never so great in fact as to displace so-called Hinayana (小乘) and claim exclusive reality. Most of the time and in more places, Hinayana as a monastic institution with a palpable Vinaya (monastic code) could well be the Buddhist mainstay in India. Mahayana and Hinayana monks lived then side by side, or so Xuan Zang (玄奘) reported. With few exceptions, Hinayana was the majority school among those 'kingdoms' on the Silk Road. It is somehow only in China proper that Mahayana would become the exclusive tradition. Sinitic Mahayana describes that outcome. After so coming into its own, it recalled and reviewed its own history much as Christianity would recall and review the Hebraic tradition. The past is told to accord with its future end, that is to say, teleologically. It is that teleological write-up of the past – by modern Japanese Buddhist scholars especially – that has recently been called into question. We need to be aware of such teleological distortions when Sinitic Mahayana tells its own ideological roots in India. The *AFM* does not bill itself as a Sinitic vision; it attributes its authority to the Bodhisattva Asvaghosa at King Kaniska's court. Sinitic Mahayana would rely on that legend and then with confidence, declare later in a conflict with Xuan Zang's 'new learning', that the Indian Yogacara philosophy Xuan Zang brought back from India simply fell short of Mahayana. Yogacara was labeled 'Hinayana-esque' and 'pseudo-Mahayana' and banished from China. (Its revival in the last century was a turnaround.)

Sinitic Mahayana as a Sinitic response to Mahayana thus carries with it a spiritual proclamation (*kerygma*) that lifts it above the Indian and the Chinese material roots. Christianity might be, at the earthly level, a Jewish sect of the 'Jesus People' Hellenized. But the *kerygma* or proclamation of the Early Church that saw Jesus as the Christ would also lift itself spiritually above its two cultural roots. The message would prove a stumbling block to both Jews and Romans alike. Christ as 'Logos taking Flesh' might fuse the Greek and the Hebraic lore but that formula on which a new community was built made little sense in the original Hebrew or the original Greek. Greek Logos did not take flesh and walked around on earth. God and man were distinct; YHWH did not get into begetting either. To appreciate Sinitic Mahayana, we might need to see how its new understanding of Truth might at times be a stumbling block to its two cultural roots; how it proclaims something new that cannot be so simply reduced to Indianization or Sinicization. In its own time, the *AFM* was party to this crafting of

a new Sinitic Mahayana identity. It was meant originally to be a terse digest of the Mahayana essentials; it would, thanks to the commentary tradition turn, by the 700s, into a new framework of a Huayan-esque Summa Buddhologica. We do not intend to use this work to re-create the history of Mahayana in India as if Asvaghosa was indeed its prophet. We use this work only to track down the unfolding of Chinese Buddhist reflection before the sixth century and how, with the *AFM*'s Sinitic Mahayana digest of what went before, spearheaded its own flowering in the Sui-Tang era to follow.

2 A Rumor of Transcendence

Before discussing *AFM*, we consider, in a prologue, how China stepped into the medieval Buddhist period. We select three early figures and three related issues that rose before Kumarajiva's 'Thesis on Mahayana' finally tutored the Chinese into understanding what the meaning of Mahayana entails. The three figures chosen for review are Dao An (道安), Hui Yuan (慧遠), and Fa Xian (法顯). The issues facing them involves this fundamental shift from the classical to the medieval mindset. In three areas involving the apperception of a unity to Truth, the depth to Personhood, and the location of a spiritual Home, we catch, with the three thinkers themselves, this rumor of angels alias this intrusion of Transcendence.

Now, the English word 'Transcendence' has its usage rooted in medieval usage. It is not a word native to the Greek philosophy. The classical thinkers, both East and West, knew only 'one world' and they recognized its limit as one that is set by nature and rests with the cosmic order. There was then no 'other world' as medieval thinkers would know. There was no sense of a Beyond that medieval Otherworldliness would implicate: no salvific Christian heaven and no liberating Buddhist nirvana. In the East, Indian Buddhist thinkers would carve out the new categories of the transmundane that supersedes the mundane and the highest truth that displaces the worldly truth. Chinese Buddhists followed suit in their translation of these terms. The current word for rendering the English word for 'transcendence' would learn that Buddhist usage. It leans on a metaphor taken over from renditions of the Mahayana Wisdom that 'has gone, gone beyond'. It draws in other medieval words for 'rising above (flying upward)' or 'crossing over (a barrier like a mountain)'. These words help to paint an Other World.

By the time Aquinas in the West set Nature due the created world under the Super-Nature of divine Grace, the classical idea of a 'single world' had lost credence. The new word 'transcendence' would help to bear up a transcendental dualistic worldview that befitted the age of faith and of the spirit. Unfortunately, the word 'transcendence' could and would be read back into the classical thinkers. It would then be used to characterize Plato's philosophy. Plato is then often said to hold that there exists these Ideas in heaven of which their earthly counterparts are imperfect copies. Ideas are then said to be 'transcendental' and Platonic Idealism is then contrasted with Aristotle's more 'immanent' philosophy. For the latter, Form and Matter coexist. All things are conjunctions of the two: the From that in-forms and the Matter that subsists. But such a reading of transcendence is a medieval linguistic distortion of the

original Platonic view. Heidegger is closer to the original when he worked at removing an implicit dualism of the Ideal and the Real. Heidegger did so by making Being itself ambivalent – Being 'hiding itself even as it reveals itself'. For Heidegger, the parable of the Cave in Plato is not about the Light outside the cave being inexplicable Being (inexplicable to other cave dwellers who had not seen the light) and the Shadow cast on the walls as the shades of Becoming (poor copies of the pure ideas). The point of the parable of the Cave, says Heidegger, is about this Light (of Being) streaming into the cave and casting these shadows (of the moving objects) that at once 'hides even as it reveals, and reveals even as it hides'. It is not that there are two worlds: the world of light (Being) outside and the world of shadows (Becoming) inside. The light discloses itself precisely through the shadows; one learns to appreciate the shadows for they somehow embody, in a hide-and-seek manner, the Light of Being.

The medieval mindset of the 'two worlds' had led to this common perception that Plato regarded worldly realities to be a poor copy of the eternal Ideas. That is too Gnostic a reading. The matter should be restated differently. The genius of the Greek mind lies in its ability, when given those very real chairs before us, to catch a glimpse of their perfect beauty. This Greek aesthetics that enables it to divine the ideal form out of palpable reality is best seen in the sculpture of the Nude. The sculptor creates the perfect Nude – by numbers and proportions as it were – and the beholder is entranced by an unearthly beauty in an earthly form. The sculptured figure however does not correspond to any human form. No one person ever conforms to that ideal proportion. In other words, the Greek Mind does not see the given world as a poor copy of some ideal world that one should escape to. The Greek Mind enjoins us to abide with this one world and to relish in seeing perfection therein, Being in Becoming, the Ideal in the Real.

2.1 The Transcendence to a Unity of Truth

I take note in the above aside on how the medieval mindset regularly exported its categories into its reading of the classical worldview. But if it is not that easy to see how the new had distorted the old – by unraveling the paradigm shift – it is also not easy to trace how a people slowly learned to step away from the classical into the medieval. For us, it means capturing this rumor (this growing sense) of Transcendence and registering how Transcendence was recognized for what it is (as real and true) with new categories and new concerns. We will begin with the case of Dao An and his struggle with the received texts of a new faith, viz. the Buddhist sutras.

Something alien had dawned upon a significant number of Chinese in the fourth century. There was this rumor they heard, for some time now, about a sage in the West called the Buddha not unlike Chinese sages. This Buddha taught some teaching called Dharma that resembled Laozi's Dao (道). And upon that a new community called the Sangha rose similar to native fellowships of aspiring immortals. The tendency to cast the unknown after the manners of the known (as shown above) was one way to deal with the Other. Negative portraits of the Other were also possible; instead of friend, the alien turns into a foe like previous, native foes. Finding out the *real*

difference between self and Other takes time. In time, more informed defenders in both traditions would lay out the real differences and perhaps stake out an exclusive path to Truth. But beyond such pros and cons, compromises and syntheses, there was, I believe, something that ran deeper: an awareness of a new and higher reality, a profound inner self, and a broader community, something not known before. A rumor of Transcendence was afoot. By the time this awareness of something new set in fully, all three traditions – Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist – would have incorporated that mode of Transcendence into their systems, lifestyles, and activities.

Dao An was probably the leading Buddhist figure in the fourth century. He devoted himself to the Buddha; guided his large following in the Dharma; and worked hard to collect and codify the sutras. By adopting *Shi* (釋) for his own Buddhist surname – short for 'spiritual son of Sakyamuni' – he sealed this brotherhood of monks henceforth, all sharing that surname. The majority of his writings would be deemed Hinayanist, but Dao An knew of Mahayana Emptiness; and was credited with heading the *ben-wu* (本無) school that paired Emptiness with Daoist Non-Being or Nothingness. More on that in a later section. He was not blind to the risk of conflating the two, being the one to label and criticize the shortcomings of so freely 'matching Buddhist and Daoist concepts'. For that, tradition would blame, not him but, a lesser *ben-wu* school for so sinicizing Emptiness.

Dao An appreciated but he did not realize the full import of Mahayana. Like his contempories, he regarded Mahayana and Hinayana as two legitimate paths, one for the greater souls, the other for the lesser ones. Great and small are thus relative terms. It took Kumarajiva to clarify the fuller import of the Great Vehicle. Mahayana could then mean the absolute path and truth, one not so ready to be compatible with Hinayana. With the Lotus Sutra's Ekayana (One Vehicle), Mahayana might even absorb the Small Vehicle into itself. By the time of the *AFM*, the word 'Mahayana' pushes itself to becoming not just the all-inclusive path. Mahayana had undergone hypostasization to become the sole Reality. Its principle is the Suchness Mind present in all sentient beings. It is the alpha and omega of faith and wisdom itself. (All that had Sanskrit inspiration: but the *AFM* would empower Fa Zang [法藏] to indict Indian Yogacara as 'less than Mahayanist'.)

Dao An might have missed seeing the exclusivist claim of Mahayana, but he contributed an innovation in sutra hermeneutics that grew into a structure of great significance. The word *sutra* has been translated into *jing* (經), the word for classics. Chinese style at writing classical commentaries had been imported into sutra commentaries. But there is a basic difference between classics and sutras. Classics captures collective wisdom of the ancients; they are not individually authored books. So the earliest Classics are supposed to be collections from the early Zhou (周). The Duke of Zhou gets some credit for the compilation; Confucius is supposed to be a judicious transmitter – he did not author or add anything to (implying tamper with) the received text. (A political or sage-king myth did grow out of his having compiled and inserted praise and blame into the *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋.) Sutras are sacred and thus 'ontologically' different. They are the living words of the Buddha who somehow so touched Transcendence that his words are Law and Truth. That transcendental Truth

being One, there is assumed this unity of teaching in any and all sutras; sutras are organic wholes. That thesis was advanced already by the Mahasanghika sectarians in India that imagined the Buddha (then reaching transmundane height) teaching all the Sutra-Dharmas in 'one single voice'. Dao An then believed – he saw or he found – a logical structure in any and all sutras: they all have three parts, viz. Prologue, Central Thesis, and the Unfolding of said Thesis. Every sutra has it. None can be without it. Each of the three parts could be and was refined and subdivided, until the whole sutra is given this architectonic, pyramidal structure. That dissection of an organic whole is currently available in the preface to the Japanese Issaikyo (一切經) canon. Each part or sub-parts are specified and pinned down by 'chapter and verse', down to the exact words in a line. The diligence required in coming up with such would nowadays boggle our minds. But with the Word of God being one, the Bible and the Qur'an had been so similarly dissected, and the pious still followed it and are assured of the holistic Truth.

Dao An, being one of the earliest 'sutra catalogers', did his best to bring some order to the fuller canon. He did not but others later would extend that unity of teaching in one sutra to the whole canon itself. A *progressive* unity of Dharma was postulated. Some logical sequence of revelation involving relative depths and strategic advances was duly uncovered. The time and the place when major sutras were taught by the Buddha during his lifetime on earth were even pinpointed. The Buddha supposedly first taught the Hinayana Agamas and then, step by step, he revealed the fuller teaching, ending with the Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra on his last day on Earth. The scheme had to be adjusted for sectarian ends: so the Huayan school would have the Buddha teaching the Avatamsaka Sutra first. A lay movement would come up with a Chinese Trapusa Bhallika Sutra that preceded the Agamas meant for monks. And the Tiantai school would make sure that the Lotus Sutra came after and not before the Nirvana (sutra) school's choice. Similar attempts to line up the Bible's teachings in a perfect sequence had been made by the faithful in Europe. Using the Biblical genealogies allowed some literalist to even come up with the exact year, month, day, and hour when God supposedly created the world. All that shows that those who have eyes for such truths might indeed see it.

We take note of this presumption of Dharmic unity and its consequence because the 'progressive revelation' informs the various 'tenet classification' systems used by the Chinese to come up with a Sinitic Mahayana teleology for the various philosophies discovered in various texts. Even now, the whole Taishō Tripitaka itself is arranged using such a scheme that Tiantai Master Zhi Yi (智顗) first perfected for his Lotus Ekayana school. That tenet classification system was based on a diligent reading of the sutras; its intricacy just cannot be due to Sinicization since nothing like that existed before. And since Sinitic Mahayana came up with more nuanced unfolding of the Dharma than, say, the standard set of the 'Three Turnings of the Wheel' used in India, we have to acknowledge this Sinitic contribution to Mahayana ingenuity and independence.

2.2 The Transcendence of soul and its community

If Dao An set the stage for an integral vision of the sutra Dharma, then the leading disciple that he sent south, Hui Yuan (慧遠) of Lushan (盧山), would help to carve out an independence for the Sangha. Hui Yuan won this public debate on whether the monk should or should not bow before the king. He won in part because of his high social standing among the magnate families supportive of the new faith. The Sangha could stand up against the relatively weak pretender to the southern throne who sought control of this burgeoning community. In contrast, Dao An, faced with a far more powerful foreign ruler in the North, bowed to the harsher reality there. Though no less committed to Sangha self-rule, Dao An conceded that 'in times (of chaos) like this, the Buddha Dharma cannot be established without the support of the state'. Not so in the south. In making his case for the independence of the monk there, Hui Yuan drew on the then current belief in there being this immortal soul. The Buddhists joined with the Daoists and against the Confucians in defending the existence of the soul. Hui Yuan's reading of the soul, in one sense, was nothing original. But the thesis actually carved out a higher destiny for this soul and, with it, a safer sanctity for the Sangha.

Hui Yuan notes how the monk, in his psyche, lived 'outside the square that is the world'. For that, the monk should not be restricted by the law of the land. But how so? Because the monk had reversed the fall of the soul into the world. The soul (shen 神) by itself is self-contained or passive; it is the *animus* or animated aspect of it (called the *ling* 靈) that is drawn into being active. Upon receiving stimulus from without, there is this psychic response from within. The soul is thus so drawn into the world. The good benefit is that the person learns to make use of things in the world for utilitarian ends. The bad side effect is that emotions are aroused and the original peace of mind or the passivity of the soul is lost.

Now, the average person would become engaged to and get himself all tangled up with the affairs of the world. Not so the monk. Unlike that householder and family man, the vocation of the Buddhist monk works at reversing that process. He learns to withdraw the senses, put a stop to worldly pursuits, until he retrieves that impassive soul. The monk who is spiritually free is now no longer belonging to this world or the king's domain. As one who lives 'outside the square [of the earth]' (*fang-wai-zhi-shi* 方外之士), he is outside the laws of the land. He should not be forced to bow before the king. Hui Yuan's theory of the immortal soul, strictly speaking, did not accord with Buddhist *anatman*. His psychology of a passive *shen* devolving into an active *ling* just rehearses a formula on human nature and emotion found in the Music chapter of the Book of Rites. The technique of withdrawing the senses from being tangled up by the world was known to and practiced by the Daoists also. There might even be a precedent for so defying the king. A pair of famous hermits had refused to answer the summons of the Zhou king. They ran off into the hills and, as hermits, simply lived off the land. They later starved themselves to death when they were reminded by an old woman that even the wild berries and the edible ferns came out of land that belonged to the king. After their story is so told, there is this general deference to sages like this

pair. Kings were pressed not to interfere with such sages and some had issued special dispensations for such souls.

But Hui Yuan had fought for something more – not royal dispensations which still acknowledges the reach of the king's power but rather – a new set of laws, the vinaya, the basis for Sangha self-rule. It is the vinaya that dictates that non-compliance with the rule about paying homage before the king. And the fight was not over some exceptionally sage monk that deserves an exemption. King Asoka was taught a lesson that he should bow before a seven-year-old novice. Hui Yuan who lived by the monastic code (he died by it too because he would not take medicine laced with alcohol) was making his case for monastic independence. Of course, he did not assert a right based on that different set of law. He played the skillful apologetic; he used arguments drawn from the native tradition of inner cultivation. By detaching his soul from worldly things, the monk lives 'outside the square that is the world'. Having left home and country, the nirvanic (nirvana-bound) monk transcends the limit of the world – a free spirit and outlaw.

Now, there are scholars who read the term *fang* (square) as meaning not 'the square of the earth' which is based on the dictum 'Earth is square as Heaven is round.' They read *fang* as 'art, craft, prescription, method' as tied to the Han *fang-shi* (方士 magicians, masters of the occult arts). If so, Hui Yuan would be setting up the Buddhist monk above the Daoist magician. The Daoist operates natural magic; nature is the limit of his world. The nirvanic Buddhist lives above said natural limit. He knows Transcendence or what Aquinas calls Super-Nature. Classical Daoist vocabulary did not know of the truly otherworldly; it stopped short of a Wisdom 'gone, gone beyond'. (The new, medieval Daoist sects would; their scripture would also work to 'deliver, free, transport' man to the otherworldly Beyond, using the verb *du* [度] in that 'to transcend' sense.)

2.3 The Transcendence of locus: the new Middle Utopia

What brought this sense of Transcendence to the foreground of the medieval mindset is ultimately the Buddha. Like Christ, the Buddha came also to embody Transcedence. Buddha and Dharma merged into one. Like Christ, the Buddha also survived or overcame Death. Nirvanic extinction notwithstanding, the Buddha retained a presence. His person or personality, whatever that 'self' might mean, lives on: the Buddha is the first of the Three Jewels. The faithful would and did report seeing the Buddha much as Christians would have their visions of a living Christ. Notwithstanding the dogmatic difference on the resurrected/reborn body, Christ and Buddha appeared post mortem in some 'transfigured' form that is neither pure spirit nor pure matter. (It took Mahayana centuries to come up with a third body betwixt the formless Dharmakaya and the physical Rupakaya to better handle such manifestations.) Having died mortal, Confucius was never pictured as having some postmortem body denoting his living presence. No Confucian ever asked about 'Why can I not see Confucius in person?' (Confucius himself did miss seeing the Duke of Zhou in his dreams.) But we have a series of queries in early Chinese Buddhism from

people wanting to but wondering why they could not see the Buddha. If others could somehow witness his continual presence, why not I? These questions disappeared after the early fifth century, roughly after Kumarajiva answered Hui Yuan's clumsy questions about the exact relationship between Dharmakaya and Rupakaya. But some questions are naïve. A more mature person learned to move on, because the question was answered by a subtle change in perception in the culture. A skeptical Roman centurion might ask, 'Why, if Jesus had been resurrected, would he not walk down this street and dispel my doubt?' But a Europe converted to the Christian faith would know better than to be that literalist. So too, a Chinese population converted sufficiently to Buddhism would acknowledge the Buddha's living presence without demanding a literal proof. By the early decades of the fifth century, China no longer needed visible proof to substantiate this rumor of a deathless Tathagata. The rumor of Transcendence was no longer just hearsay. It was existentially real. The collective mindset lived with and operated on this presence of the Transcendental.

Still, for all that, the Buddha could be more 'real' in some places than others. So in 399 CE, hoping to gain access to the full Vinaya, Fa Xian the pilgrim left China for India, the home of the historical Buddha. He took the long way, going by land and returning by sea, covering more land and water than would the later, famous pilgrim, Master Tripitaka Xuan Zang during the Tang. Fa Xian saw a more vibrant Buddhist culture in India. (Some regarded that to be a better testimony to Mahayana presence.) By the time Xuan Zang arrived in India, the tradition was more retrenched and more monastic and would be facing further decline in time. As the home of the Buddha, the first Dharma and the first Sangha, India lured the pious pilgrim, then as now. This rumor of Transcendence in a homeland outside China would redraw the Chinese world map. For the faithful, China was no longer the center of the world; India was. The Middle Kingdom now describes central India. Cosmography also changed. The world was no longer defined by the shape of the turtle, 'square earth and domed sky'. Indian Mt. Sumeru cosmology would soon help shape the Buddhist Three Realms even in China. China might have lost its old center; but it saw a new, transcendental axis mundi in India. It had stepped into its medieval era.

To connect this prologue to the main body of this article on the *AFM*, this future shift told below might be useful. Two centuries later, the *AFM* would formulate a Sinitic appraisal of what Mahayana meant. Pilgrims still wanted to visit the sacred sites of the Buddha in India, but fixation with the locative was being replaced by the utopia of the Suchness Mind being available anywhere and everywhere. A century later when Xuan Zang returned from India with the Yogacara philosophy, the confidence in the *AFM* was shaken by the 'new learning' that was Indian Yogacara. But Sinitic confidence came back and would rally itself as to declare Yogacara as falling short of (Sinitic and not Indic) Mahayana. By the 700s, the romance with India had been further eclipsed. The utopic had found a new home: in China itself. There were more pilgrims coming to the Buddha kingdom that was then China. (Indian Buddhism was in decline by then.) To that historical role of the *AFM* mediating that shift from Indic to Sinitic Mahayana, we now turn.

3 The *AFM* Structure of One, Two, Three, Four, and Five

The *AFM* is well known for organizing the Dharma (its teaching) around a set of numbers, from one to five. Namely, One Mind; Two Aspects; Three Greats; Four Faiths; and Five Practices. Although the use of sequential numbers reminds us of numeral counts in Hinayana *Abhidharma* (lit. superior or advanced teaching), a closer look will show that this is not Indic but rather, a Sinitic innovation. The reason? The *AFM* series violates a basic Abhidharmic principle 'to separate and distinguish'. That means, when reality is broken down to its constituting elements, one should not conflate or confuse (any overlapping) categories. The *AFM* did precisely that. It intends the One to be there behind the Two, the Three, the Four, and the Five.

And in order to achieve that smooth 1–2–3–4–5 progression, the *AFM* did not mind adding and subtracting the standard *matrika* (numeral) counts. Thereupon it freely expands the three Jewels (viz. Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha) into four. One takes the three refuges by first trusting in this One Mind of Suchness in us all. Similarly, it cuts the standard six bodhisattvic *paramitas* down to five practices. It discounted the sixth and last, the crowning 'perfection of wisdom', on the ground that wisdom is already innate to the One Mind. The five perfections as practices only reconfirm what is already *a priori* there. This is why, says the *AFM*, any appearance of 'incipient enlightenment' is predicated on this 'original enlightenment'.

But what is this One Mind that underlies the whole set (One to Five)? The *AFM* does not explain as much as it asserts: 'The Principle (the Dharma of Mahayana: the message of universal enlightenment) is as such the mind of sentient beings.' But before we get into that *AFM* declaration about Buddha-Nature being in our mind, it is requisite for us to first review the prehistory that is Indian Buddhist philosophy. We need to familiarize ourselves with its vocabulary and assumptions before we uncover the Chinese vocabulary and assumptions that went into the *AFM*.

4 The Three Buddhist Philosophical Systems in India

Indian philosophy as a whole is distinguished from European philosophy in that its purpose is not the love of wisdom (*philo-sophia*) for its own sake: it is always so that the wisdom would deliver man from this world of rebirth (life-and-death: *samsara*) to the freedom due liberation (*moksa*: nirvana). And because past karmic 'cause and effect' defines our current and future states, knowledge of how causality works is basic to all philosophical analysis. Different schools have different theories of causality and, accordingly, of how best to sever the karmic links on the chain. In that larger context, Buddhism is known for its peculiar causal theory known as *pratitya-samutpada*, dependent co-origination. This is the basic Truth or Reality (Dharma) that the Buddha discovered, although other formulas, such as the Four Noble Truths, etc. could also be so featured as the Buddha-Dharma. With this knowledge of Reality, the Buddha achieved enlightenment and could, in turn, teach his path to others.

Initially, Dharma (as Reality) predates the Buddha and, as Truth, has precedence over the Buddha. We find the Buddha advising his disciples thus, viz. 'Follow the

Dharma – not the person.' As the Buddhist tradition grew, so grew its identity and a confident distinction of its Dharma from other teachings then current. Henceforth, the Buddha heads the Three Jewels and taking refuge means '(I hereby follow) the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.' The Buddha comes first; the Dharma next; and the Sangha (understood in Hinayana as the fellowship of monks) last. (In theory, Sangha can be more broadly defined as to include the laity.)

Now, although the Buddha taught the Dharma which is now enshrined in the Sutras, it is best if we mean by Buddhist philosophy the *subsequent* systematization of the Buddha's teaching into a coherent whole. That is because, as with Jesus, the Buddha imparted various 'teachings' on various occasions that might not be always so consistently the same. And just as the Church developed 'theology', so the early Sectarian Sangha would in time codify the Buddha's teaching. That codified teaching is referred to as Abhidharma or 'superior/advanced teaching'. In the Pali *tripitaka* (three-basket) canon of the Theravada (the Way of the Elders: this being the one Sectarian Buddhist school whose Sri Lankan extension survives to this day), the first basket goes to the Vinaya or monastic rules; the second basket to the Sutras which are 'words of the Buddha'; and the third basket to these later systematic commentaries on the sutra that is the Abhidharma. For that, Abhidharma is so counted as the first system of Buddhist philosophy. It is the only system for Pali Buddhists; but it is not the last system to evolve.

Five hundred years after the Buddha's *parinirvana*, a movement rose that called itself Mahayana, the Great Vehicle. It dissociated itself from and criticized, with natural prejudice, the previous Sectarian Buddhists (labeling them Hinayana or Small Vehicle). That all started with a new set of *sutras* called the Emptiness Sutras which was deemed no less the 'words of the Buddha'. Mahayana is *de jure* one, but in reality it is *de facto* a mix of many different traditions. It does not have a single Sangha or a common canon like the Pali canon. It evolved many sutras and such revealed teachings might still be open to reception. The systematizing of its *sutra* teachings into a number of coherent philosophies went to authors of those Mahayana *sastras* (commentaries on the sutras). The standard count of Indian Buddhist philosophies would now list three such 'turnings of the Wheel':

Hinayana Abhidharma	Based on the Hinayana sutras	Atomistic Realism
Mahayana Emptiness	Based on the Emptiness sutras	Universal Emptiness
Mahayana Yogacara	Based on the Yogacara corpus	Consciousness Only

It is China, looking back to India, that would discover a fourth Indian lineage of sutras with a teaching that would justify a fourth commentarial philosophy that would overtake Yogacara. It is built on the Tathagatgarbha or Buddha-Nature corpus which has only one commentary in India, the *Ratnagotravibhaga*, but this work is more 'poetic' than 'systemic'. What gave it a formidable structure is none other than the *AFM* which was compiled in China but dutifully credited to a key Indian figure, the bodhisattva Asvaghosa. We need to explain the succession of the three Indian schools first.

5 From Dharma to Abhidharma

Legend has it that the Buddha left home in search of the wisdom that would end suffering. He uncovered its cause: it lies with cravings; the cessation of which would end suffering. The way to that involves morality and meditation; cleansing the mind of evil and pursuing the good brings about this nirvanic bliss. When codified, this teaching is given as the Four Noble Truths; the wisdom involves the dissecting the apparent self into the component Five Heaps; the practice found ways to avert the Three Poisons of the mind; etc. So we are told by the sutras. But the aforesaid counts of four, five, and three may not be the exact words of the Buddha. We know such neat counts because, in the early days, the Buddha taught by speech and 'what was heard' is sutra; which was not written down as 'scripture' (on palm leaves and later bound up into books). Because the teachings were orally transmitted, one handy way to commit the words of the Buddha to memory was by using numerical lists or *matrika*. The use of numerical counts became standard.

But even then, there was not always consensus on such neat counts as Three, Four, Five as named earlier. For example, there are these Twelve Chains of Causation but that did not always come in twelve. On different occasions, the sutras have the Buddha teaching less than twelve. It could be just six, or seven, or ten. And worse, the sequence of succession could vary. So it was really up to the Abhidharmic scholar-monks to come up with a consistent count and the best successive rationale possible. To produce and to sustain the rationality of that system, Abhidharma must break down false wholes into real parts and keep every element (atoms called also *dharma*) discrete and distinct. That is an imperative in Atomism anywhere. To illustrate what that means, how it works, and how that would touch off Mahayana's negative reactions, we pick the simple but central example: what exactly did the Buddha mean by no-soul (*anatman*)?

The Buddha supposedly taught *anatman* (no-soul). Scholars who fished out the earliest stratum of his recorded sayings might conclude that the Buddha did not have it, never so clearly or that insistently anyway. The crystallization of 'no-soul' as an -ism came only as his tradition grew as to become more conscious of its alleged distinction. Standing up to the Hindu Upanisadic atman might lead to setting up some antithesis. As the Upanisads staked its claim on this existence of a soul in man that is at once identical with the ultimate reality or world-soul (viz. the *atman-Brahman* identity), the Buddhists learn to play up 'no-soul' and the extinction of all identity in *nirvana*. One way for the Buddha to talk about his having only an 'apparent self' is to dissect it into the Five Heaps (or Aggregates). Meanwhile, *anatman* suggests this sense of self-loss. Such self-loss might have been induced by the Mindfulness technique that the Buddha supposedly initiated. During mindfulenss, one registers just this ever-changing, fivefold aggregation of Form, Sensation, Perception, Will, and Consciousness. Form (*rupa*) is the physical or somatic body; the rest is name (*nama*) describing mental or psychic states in increasing depth. Our five sense organs pick up sense (form to eyes, taste to tongue, etc.); which we now perceive as objects (by name); our likes and dislikes kick in as will. There is therefore no unchanging 'self'; there is at best this underlining

root (or stream of) consciousness. None of the five heaps are permanent though; the whole psychosomatic (*nama-rupa*) apparatus changes from second to second. So the Buddha taught.

In time, the Abhidharmists would delve deeper. He would break down these basic heaps into these still finer atoms (*dharmas*), each of them logically self-contained (has *svabhava* or self-nature). All qualitative differences in the world that we know can be bleached out by reducing them into combinations of these quantifiable atoms. By law, these dharmas are no more divisible; and by reason, they have to be discrete and distinct. This atomistic system does not yield 'eyeless monads' but rather, its opposite. That is because, except for nirvana which is a single blissful monad (that cannot change: it is unborn and undestructed), everything else is classified as *compounded dharmas*. What we take as real is a façade; it is made up of these highly unstable atoms, whose nature is to suffer and to change. Such Abhidharmic Realism would be demolished later by Mahayana Emptiness (see *infra*). But to be fair, it is well to remember that a modest dose of Realism is therapeutic for all concerned. Its analytic acumen supported meditative discernment, and vice versa. It helped curb egoism and induce concern; it did so by exposing how there is this selfish craving but there is no self that craves. The 'self' as *bhava* (continual existence) is itself a product of craving. In its analysis of the psyche, Abhidharma sorted out the positive elements (like friendliness) to cultivate and the negative elements (like avarice) to avoid. In that sense, Abhidharma could and did enhance the whole Buddhist project to 'do good, avoid evil, and cleanse the mind' – all for a good nirvanic end.

The specialization in Abhidahrma is, however, (a) presumed a division of labor within the monastic vocation; which was (b) only possible by virtue of endowment; such that often it is (c) royal patronage that promoted such scholastic systematization. As scholastic rationality fed on itself, (d) it might push certain thesis to extremes. We know that after King Asoka, more sectarian schools rose. Among the different schools, different count of the total numbers of *dharmas* rose: 75 or 100 or whatnot. An example of such scholastic refinement would be this: *nirvana* was originally the sole 'uncompounded dharma': it could stand by itself. All other realities being 'compounded' are as such, naturally 'mutable'. But soon enough, since there was the *nirvana* attained by the Buddha under the bodhi-tree and the final *nirvana* at the Buddha's demise, it seems only proper to distinguish a *nirvana* with residue and a *nirvana* without residue. Then there were these transcendental states achieved during meditative practice leading up to *nirvana*. Since they marked steps on this staircase to *nirvana*, maybe they should be counted as uncompounded too. On that, there were pro and con and not one standard concensus. So divisions rose.

6 Abhidharmic Realism and the Rise of Nominalism

But the problem is that what seems logical on paper may not be always that reasonable in real life. So-called Pure Reason has a way of undercutting itself, which is what Kant demonstrated in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant so exposed these 'antinomies of reason'. A simple Biblical example is 'God created the World.' Kant had two columns

in his book: one side starts with 'God created the World' and the other side with 'God did not create the World.' He then allowed their internal logic to work itself out – logical step by logical step – until said logic concluded that, for the former case, 'God could not have created the World' and for the latter, 'God did create the World.' We will see later how the Mahayana philosopher Nagarjuna (龍樹) would, by employing the same logico-critical method, also expose the antinomies of his Abhidharmic opponents' reason. With that, Nagarjuna speaking up for Mahayana Emptiness, supposedly brought that whole Hinayana Abhidharma or Realist philosophy down. Mahayanists often take that as proven. To be fair to Hinayana, that reported death of Abhidharma is premature.

That is because Abhidharmic Realism, similar to medieval European scholastic Realism, was once a valid and helpful way of looking at the world. Such Realism could be moderate or extreme. In India as in Europe, moderate Realism was useful. It is extreme Realism that, by pushing its reason to the limit, would invite the Nominalist reaction. In Europe, that came with William of Occam. Although Occam's famous razor is good for modern (quantitative natural) science, it was not so good for the traditional cultivation of so-called spiritual ladders. Practitioners of such spiritual ascent had to, for very practical reasons, regard those steps on the ladders, leading to heaven or to *nirvana*, to be somehow 'real' – even countable in numbers or quantifiable. The steps marking the Christian angelic or the Buddhist bodhisattvic perfections could not just simply be 'in name only'.

Angels and Bodhisattvas were then very real. They were so for practical reasons. Angels at a certain rank or bodhisattvas at a specific stage of perfection edify the believer pursuing an ascent on the respective spiritual ladder. So angels and bodhisattvas could not just be arbitrary mental constructs. But granting these spiritual ideas or ideals their logical 'reality' could be confusing. It would be prudent not to be too literal about it; it is well to remain a moderate Realist. That is because keeping the ranks and the stages real facilitates gradual ascent. Voiding the steps on the ladder would lead to advocating a 'leap of faith' or a 'sudden enlightenment'. In the first debate on gradual and sudden enlightenment in China, the moderate camp would admit that the last step on that ladder, the Diamond Samadhi (trance state), could involve a 'sudden' exit from *samsara*. That last step would amount to a sudden breakthrough. But that concession to subitism should not translate into voiding all those steps that went before on the spiritual ladder. When extreme Realism insisted on counting every step on the way to be absolutely real, that would invite the extreme Nominalist to declare that all such realities are 'in name only'. That did happen within the history of Indian Abhidharma. Before Mahayana Emptiness philosophy came along, there was already a Nominalist Abhidharmic school advocating 'All is in name only.'

Abhidharmic rationality suffered further under the rise of Mahayana. The Mahayana Emptiness Sutras freely emptied or voided many and all Hinayana Realist assumptions. It declared, with utter economy, 'All Forms are Empty.' It redeemed itself as suddenly with 'Emptiness is Form.' Turning that sutra message into a sastric philosophy was left to Nagarjuna who systematically destroyed any and all Abhidharmic propositions. Nagarjuna took on especially the extreme Realists that

flourished in northern India. The Sarvastivada school there had pushed Realism to its logical limit. It proclaimed 'All is Real' and took the radical step in giving all three times (Past, Present, and Future) equal reality. It is as if they had frozen T ime into these three self-contained entities. They also cut Duration down into minuscule segments (atomistic *ksana*) so that nothing persists more than that one-sixteenth of a slap of the finger. Provoked by the extreme Realism, Nagarjuna launched his 'All is Empty' critique. Called Sunyavada (Emptiness) or Madhyamika (Middle Path), it promoted Adyaya (Not-Two, Non-Dual), it systematically negated any and all Abhidharmic thesis as to become the central and the founding principle in Mahayana.

7 The Central Mahayana Philosophy: Universal Emptiness

Mahayana rose around the first century BCE with the Emptiness Sutras that spoke of this Transcendental Wisdom. It offered up this dense wisdom formulas of 'Form is Empty; Emptiness is Form … and the same for all other elements. Samsara is Nirvana; and vice versa … the limit of one is the limit of the other'. Nagarjuna later (ca 150 CE) developed the first Mahayana philosophy and declared 'All is Empty' that undermined Abhidharma for good. This Emptiness philosophy was confused with ontological Nihilism when Europeans first heard of it. That perception was not new. The Hindus had caricatured it as such for centuries. And the Chinese at first confused it with Daoist Non-Being or Nothingness. That it is not Nihilism should be evident from the second half of that 'All is Empty' wisdom formula; it reverses the formula to proclaim that 'emptiness is (none other than) form'. The real world remains very real despite (and because of) Emptiness. This matter is better stated and easier to explain via the other formula 'Nirvana is Samsara; Samsara is Nirvana.' This formula was directed at the 'petty' Hinayanist who, trusting *nirvana* to be the opposite of *samsara*, thought only of his own personal deliverance and sought escape from one to the other. Condemning that lack of compassion, the Mahayana bodhisattva who crafted this Great Vehicle (a big boat) to help ferry all other sentient beings across, would reverse the formula and declare 'nirvana is samsara [viz. in the here and now]'. It is non-abiding, being anywhere and everywhere. Or as Candrakirti put it later, it is a state of mind. 'For the enlightened, even samsara is nirvana; but for the unenlightened, even nirvana is samsara.'

8 The Real Divide: The Meaning of the All

History written in Mahayana retrospect presents Nagarjuna as winning the debate for good. That is not true. Far from being the philosophy to end all philosophies, the Pali Buddhists feel perfectly contented and at home with Buddhaghosa's moderate Realism. Most presenters of Nagarjuna also think the issue separating the two representative camps was over 'All is Real' vs. 'All is Empty.' That is not true either. The real contention is over the one word they seem to share: the All. In truth, they were divided over what that All means.

The two sides were not talking about the same All. By 'all', the rational Sarvastivadins meant 'everything conceivable': in that system, the real is by necessity logical. Therefore Abhidharma can only admit a finite count of atoms in a finite number of possible combinations. In that sense, it knows only a finite All. It cannot admit an infinite All. If and when 'Infinity' comes up in a conversation, infinity will be counted as another item under the category of 'numbers'. With that, it would be accounted for as a 'number among numbers'. So when faced with empty space (*akasa*) which is boundless (infinite in extension: it cannot be cut up into tiny atoms), some Abhidharma schools have to classify space under the 'uncompounded' category. (It is better than counting Sanskrit alphabets in that same class. At least, space has some nirvanic use. The Northern Chan school used meditation on empty space to induce this sense of Emptiness or 'not a thing'.)

Nowadays, we know well enough not to count Infinity as a 'real number' nor to deem it 'empty'. But the basic difference between 'All is Real' and 'All is Empty' is that no Abhidharmist ever said knowing 'All is Real' would make a person into an enlightened arhat. But Mahayana does claim knowledge of 'All is Empty' to be more than just a drsti (opinion, one among many, a partial view). It is wisdom, transcendental prajna, the mark and gift of the Mahayana bodhisattva, such that anyone with knowledge of 'All is Empty' would be liberated. The two formulas are therefore qualitatively different – by virtue of the nature of the All.

This Mahayana 'All' is no longer the finite, countable, enumerable 'All' that Abhidharma counts on. We are tempted to render it as the Infinite All, but there are strong internal restrains in Madhyamika against calling it that. That is because it seems that Infinity is not part of the Emptiness Sutra's vocabulary. Furthermore, there are inherent problems of logic with this 'unreal' number, the Infinite that it would have invited Nagarjuna's censor had that idea so appeared. Infinity is not part of the Emptiness Sutra's rhetoric. Infinity of time and of space, as Sinitic Mahayana hermeneutics would make clear, is a token of the Avatamsaka or Huayan corpus. Its geo-cultural home was the Silk Road; it came along with the Gnostic sense of a fullness of Being (Pluroma), the presence of the Godness everywhere. The Emptiness Philosophy was spiritually not that extravagant; its home is still very much in the Indian subcontinent. The 'All' in 'All is Empty' is more than the Abhidharmic or finite All but it is short of the Infinite 'All is One; One is All' that is descriptive of the Net of Indra.

The Emptiness Sutra knew the All as the extent of the Bodhisattva's wisdom, that somehow he 'knows that the limit of Samsara is none other than the limit of Nirvana'. The use of the word 'limit' points to an admission of a boundary. But a knowledge that reaches to the limits of samsara and of nirvana and finding them to be one and the same is describing a knowing of all there is to know. It means seeing the all-inclusive Whole of both samsara and nirvana. This holistic vision went with a new claim made by Mahayana that was not there in Hinayana: that the Buddha is omniscient (*samjna*). Therefore unlike 'All is Real' which only describes one sectarian Buddhist (viz. human) perspective on reality, the 'All is Empty' state of mind describes knowing the limit of Reality as only the enlightened Buddha and Bodhisattva can know.

Mahayana evolved a host of words to describe this 'Whole of Wholes' using the -ta or -tva suffix that have no place (and make no sense) in Hinayana discourse: words like *Sunyata*, *Dharmata*, *Samata*, *Buddhata*. Instead of focusing on specific characteristics of particular realities, Mahayana claims now to know the essence prevailing one and all. One of these terms, Tathata (Suchness), has a specially distinctive career in Sinitic Mahayana discourse, in part due to its place in the *AFM*. The suggestion that it is the old Daoist *zi-ran* (自然 naturalness, spontaneity) slipping back into a Buddhist discourse of the given phenomenon or reality-as-is may prove all too true. To sustain this natural Whole of the Suchness Mind as it extends into the world of multiplicity is the task of the *AFM*:

> The One Mind in its Suchness Aspect
>   Contains the Two Aspects of Suchness and Life-and-Death
>   Each of which incorporating fully the elements of the other
>   The Suchness Mind is as such Empty and not Empty
>   Via its characteristic or form, the Tathagatagarbha
>   There rises the Mind of Life-and-Death,
>   Which when fused with beyond life and death
>   Is the Storehouse Consciousness

9 The Bonus of Metaphor: Concept-Matching

The ideological divide of Mahayana from Hinayana was real enough; but initially, China did not know any better. It had to wait for Kumarajiva to clear that up later. But Mahayana Emptiness had struck a chord in China in the fourth century CE. With the Neo-Daoist enchantment with Lao Zi's Nothingness. Thus began the so-called concept-matching phrase in Chinese Buddhism. Too often criticized for the obvious mismatch (*ge-yi* 格義) after Dao An called attention to it, the mixing of metaphors actually enriched the cultural exchange beyond even Dao An's critique. The *AFM* inherited that language of the south during the next century and a half. We saw that already. The *AFM* begins on this note of the One Mind having these two aspects of Suchness and Samsara, each aspect somehow encompassing in itself all the realities of the other. That is the *AFM*'s way of restating the formula of samsara is nirvana and how the Bodhisattva knew 'the whole of samsara is not other than the whole of nirvana'. But the *AFM* says more: it also reverses Emptiness. Under the Suchness aspect, there is Suchness that is Empty (*sunya*) and Suchness that is not empty (*asunya*). The Empty aspect is what helps to elevate the Mind to its transcendental height as to qualify for being the 'highest truth'. The Not-Empty aspect is that which would draw the Mind down to becoming actively involved in the mundane realm. In so doing, the *AFM* turns Nagarjuna's idea of the Non-Dual (which originally was anti-monistic) into an endorsement of the One subsisting behind the Two – and the Many.

A better understanding of Emptiness came with the translation of Nagarjuna's work by Kumarajiva in the early fifth century CE. That is when Seng Zhao (僧肇) would employ Emptiness to demolish three native representatives of the early Prajna

(Wisdom or Emptiness) school. There were actually six such schools seeking to explain how what seems real is actually empty. The reasons, good or bad, given for 'Forms are Empty' ran as follows. Form is Empty because:

1 the subsequent dispersal of the causal conditions would empty reality;
2 all beings came originally out of this primal Non-Being or Nothingness;
3 things appear empty when the mind that beholds them is duly emptied;
4 not so to (3): the mind remains; it is only the consciousness which is emptied;
5 like a magical illusion, reality is simultaneously both real and not real; and
6 there is a way to rove freely in Emptiness while still abiding in the world of Form.

I have lined these schools up in a logical sequence so as to bring out the successive advancement. Thesis (1) argues that since reality rose out of causal conditions, the dispersal of those conditions would erase said reality. This is the simplest thesis. Deemed too Hinayanist, it requires correction by Mahayana. Thesis (2) equates Emptiness with Daoist *ben-wu* or 'original nothingness'. Forms are Empty because, as Laozi puts it, 'All things came from Being; and Being came from Non-Being.' The Neo-Daoist thinker Wang Bi (王弼) had capitalized on this one line from the *Dao-De-Jing* (道德經). 'All things come from Being and Being comes from Non-Being.' Previous cosmogonies had postulated some *nebulum* or *prima materia*. Wang Bi is the first to propose a Nihilist beginning. He read *wu* (無) as a Zero. By coincidence, *sunya* is the Sanskrit for that mathematical Zero and was rendered into Chinese as *ben-wu for* 'is empty'. Wang Bi did not seem to have known that though. The confusion of *wu* and *sunya* was avoided by Kumarajiva who came up with the new standard translation: *se-ji-shi-kong* (色即是空) for 'Form, as such, is empty.' (Later, Guo Xiang 郭象 would challenge Wang Bi by noting, as Nagarjuna himself would, how Being cannot come from its opposite. If so, from where did things come? Guo Xiang answered: 'Things just are.' Or 'Clunk! In one piece – they appear.' The *AFM*'s gave a similar answer to the origin of Ignorance: Suddenly a (deluded) thought rose – and that is Ignorance.)

The early Prajna scholars were quite happy with this Original Nothingness thesis until the monk Min Du (愍度) came along and upset the applecart. Min Du simply reminded the others how 'Form is Empty' is only half the formula. The other half reads 'Emptiness is Form.' If so, the world before us is real; reducing it to nothing is not the intent of Mahayana wisdom. But how can a thing appear empty one minute and real the next? Min Du offered this answer: Objects out there co-arise with a mind (as subject) that perceives them. If so, things that appear real would vanish if the subject mind is emptied. Buddhism had long recognized subject–object interdependence. Sight works in tandem; it needs the eye organ, the form sighted, and the optical consciousness to be. Removing any one item (like shutting the eyes) would jeopardize the sighted object. What Min Du realized but what drew the ire of his Buddhist contemporaries is that he took *anatman* seriously. He proposed that the mind (soul, self, *atman*) is erasable. That was anathema to the majority who sincerely thought that the Buddha endorsed this idea of a transmigrating soul.

It took a correspondence between Kumarajiva and the monk Hui Yuan to correct the Chinese Buddhist mistake in thinking that there must be an immortal soul that in the end can go off to *nirvana*. This assumption was shared by Daoists and Buddhists alike as they combated the Confucians who argued against such a cult of immortality. With Min Du upholding *anatman*, the rest of the Prajna schools sought out ways to circumvent that thesis. The fifth school (5) accounts for how a thing can be both real and not real by employing the metaphor of Maya. Maya as illusion is at once real and not real. So the world as an illusion can be both Form and Emptiness. The fourth school (4) preserved the immortal soul by making a distinction between Mind and Consciousness. The pure mind as *psyche* is that immortal soul. It is a lower or lesser consciousness that is caught up in the subject–object interdependence. Emptying the subjective consciousness would indeed void the objective form, but that does not affect the continuance of the mind as the immortal soul. The school's thesis of *han-shi* (含識) has the Mind 'subsuming consciousness' under itself. That basic logic will appear in the *AFM*. The Mind is higher; it is always at one with Suchness. The Storehouse Consciousnesses is lower; it is what is drawn into the world of *samsara*. That distinction between mind and consciousness is possible in Chinese; it is not so with Tibetan. There Cittamatra (Mind Only) is Vijnaptimatra (Consciousness Only). In China, Mind Only is higher than Consciousness Only. Mind is cosmic like *Geist* in German; Consciousness is more like the Cartesian *cognito ego*.

The sixth school (6) is not just another school. It is the crowning summation of the whole dialectical exchange above. Credited to the monk Zhi Daolin (支道林), it describes a way of 'abiding in form while roving in the mysteries [of Emptiness]' (*ji-se-you-xuan* 即色遊玄). It paints this picture of a Daoist free spirit or a non-abiding Bodhisattva roving in spirit, ever so freely, in transcendental Emptiness. But how? The answer involves what was called a 'triple turn': first to realize All is Empty; then to realize All is As-Is-Real; and finally, by erasing that duality of Empty and Real (by emptying consciousness), let the Mind soar, here and now, into the heights of mystery. That 'triple turn' begins with the ontological (being vs. non-being), rises to the epistemological (subject vs. object); and ends with the transcendental or spiritual (being one with the One). This use of a three-step negation would inform this Chinese knack at pyramidal negation. We will see that later.

10 From the Non-Dual to the Union of Opposites

It is easy to criticize the early Prajna schools for not knowing Nagarjuna's patient *prasangika* critique of his opponents' theses. The early Prajna theories were simple, not critical in the Kantian sense. The spokesmen more often 'declared' than 'proved' their case. They relished in sharp repartees, a trait they inherited from the *bons mots* of the Neo-Daoists. But one can defend their 'declarative' style as being true to the spirit of the Law that is the *Emptiness Sutras*. Nagarjuna's *sastras* might be very patient in demonstrating how to 'avoid both extremes', but the shorter Emptiness sutras are best remembered for their blanket denials. They empty everything that comes their way.

So it is that whatever Sariputra (who represents Abdhidharma) says, Subhuti (acting as the mouthpiece for the Buddha) would empty. When asked why so, Subhuti credits it to the freedom due the Bodhisattva who is not attached to anything. So if we choose to criticize the early Prajna schools for insufficient attention to the rules of argument, we may. But we can also make that weakness their virtue. If the highest truth is indeed non-discursive, then what can be more non-discursive than *bons mots* that cut short all discursive conversation? Centuries later, some Chan Buddhists would make that into an art. And a century ago, this is how the West learned of Mahayana through Zen *koans* (公案) and *mondos* (問答) that D.T. Suzuki made famous. Deconstructionism has since faulted that whole 'mystical' enterprise as a modern seduction into this entity called Mysticism.

The above review of the six Prajna schools is not to deny the credit due Seng Zhao's critique of the six. Tutored by Kumarajiva, he did well in emulating Nagarjuna's more patient style at 'revealing the true by destroying the error' (of the opponents). But it can be argued that Nagarjuna's Madhyamika may only be as good as the opposition he confronted. After all, the Sarvastivadins by arguing radically for 'All is Real' is what prompted Nagarjuna to spell out just as sweepingly, how, in fact, 'All is Empty.' Transporting that particular critique of Sarvastivada verbatim to a China that had not even mastered basic tenets in Abhidharma might not work equally well. That would not be addressing the issues as those issues were perceived in China. It is not surprising then that Seng Zhao's emulation of Nagarjuna's critique was not always successful. In one essay, where Seng Zhao had to imagine possible Sarvastivada objections, he ended up sounding more like a Sarvastivadin.

The essay is titled 'On How Things do not Move'. It was supposed to address the Sarvastivada's radical move to (as it were) freeze time and to give to each, viz. past, present, and future, equal weight as distinct and discrete reality. Nagarjuna had exposed the antinomies that said reasoning would incur. Seng Zhao mimicked Nagarjuna but he did not complete the fourfold negation. The full fourfold involves Yes, No, Both, and Neither. Seng Zhao stopped short of that. He ended with noting how, although things appear to move, in actuality, they do not (*sic*). He had unwittingly ended up on the Sarvastivada side. But a more sympathetic reading might find that perhaps that is not the ultimate intent of his essay. Maybe the title, 'Things do not Move', was meant to collapse the distinction between apparent movement and actual non-movement, viz. 'Things that appear to move actually did not.' Therein, he might have revived the Daoist paradox of *wu-wei* (無為), non-active activity. So although that would not measure up to Nagarjuna's Madhyamika standard, that continual *ge-yi* mismatch had moved the negative dialectics forward in ways not foreseen by the two cultural parties in this India–China encounter.

11 The Overcoming of Negativity

Kumarajiva's career in China marks an ironic turning point. He had corrected this Chinese Buddhist mistake in needing an 'immortal soul' to go to *nirvana*. He had set up Nagarjuna's authority on Emptiness. He did not live to see a seeming reversal of

both stands. The southern Buddhists would soon embrace wholeheartedly the *Nirvana Sutra*'s teaching about a *mahatman*, a 'great self' that is Buddha-Nature. This seems to reverse the *anatman* doctrine and justify a return to the One. Kumarajiva did not know the existence of this *Nirvana Sutra* as to guide a resolution.

Appearing in northwest India, ca 300 CE, this scripture witnessed the Hindu revival under the Gupta rulers that threatened the prosperity once enjoyed by the Buddhist Sangha. Rumors of evil kings, corrupted monks, and weakening practices together helped fan the anxiety over an imminent Last Age. Apparently under Hindu influence, this *sutra* adopted the doctrine of an *atman* and lavish it with the classic Hindu *atman* attributes of 'permanence, selfhood, and bliss'. Realizing that similarity, the sutra was careful in also qualifying this 'real' self as being none other than Emptiness. It also insisted on it being this 'Buddha-seed' that would germinate into full Buddhahood only under the proper conditions. Facing persecution, the *sutra* was equally ambivalent towards its enemies: would they also have this seed of enlightenment? This text which justified the bearing of arms in defense of the Dharma, initially denied a hateful class called the *icchantika* any chance for enlightenment. It went so far as to permit the killing of an *icchantika*. But then, in the latest chapters, it openly endorsed 'universal Buddhahood' even for those godless *icchantika*. Dao Sheng (道生) would later build his theory of 'sudden enlightenment' on its proclamation of a universal seed of wisdom.

Because the Nirvana Sutra embraced so enthusiastically this positive Buddha-nature, the Nirvana school apparently felt the need to go beyond the 'universal emptiness' of Nagarjuna. Nagarjuna had dismissed that atman idea as well as any causal seed of enlightenment. So the Nirvana scholars had to look for and they thought they found a better authority in Harivarman whose treatise seemed to work at 'establishing some higher reality'. Harivarman assessed the third of the Four Noble Truths to be the One Truth, because it pertains to *nirvana*. The other three truths were considered the mundane truths. Harivarman also practiced just a reductionist Void. That is to say, he accepted those Abhidharmist atoms or 'real dharmas' but he split those atoms until a virtual void is reached. That resembles more Lao Zi's idea of minimizing action (*wei* 為) until non-action is attained. It brought Nihilism back into the Emptiness discourse. But the Nirvana school took that One Truth of nirvana and the Buddha-Nature as the highest truth of *paramartha* and went about with its own serial negation of the mundane truths. The detour through Harivarman is usually judged a mistake.

12 The Seduction of a Threefold Truth

By embracing a higher Buddha-Nature, the Nirvana school saw itself as advancing beyond this 'negative' Emptiness. Faced with this contradiction between *anatman* and this 'higher' *mahatman*, Dao Sheng had offered this justification. 'There is no self at the samsaric level; but there is this Buddha-Nature self (at the nirvanic level).' This is an acceptable exegesis. But it also discloses the Chinese tendency to read Nagarjuna's Two Truths theory – not as two ways of knowing the *same* reality, but – as two levels

of reality. This confusion of the ontological with the epistemological is again left to Ji Zang (吉藏) to clarify and criticize later. But this error also spurred a series of self-corrections.

That is because if the Two Truths were equated with samsara and nirvana, then the dictum 'samsara is nirvana' as this Union of the Two Truths would be a third truth that might qualify as the ultimate One Truth regarding the One Real (short for Reality). This resurrected the dialectics of the 'triple turn' present among the early Prajna schools already. Now the Nirvana school evolved its own formula of a 'triple negation'. Before, Min Du had negated first Form: then he negated Emptiness; finally, he considered both theses to be true – depending on the state of the beholder's consciousness. Others one-upped Min Du with their triple turns. Now the Nirvana school could first argue for this apparent self (*pudgala*); then correct that with no-self (*anatman*); but then top it with this absolute Buddha-Nature. Before long, we hear of multiple theories of 'threefold Two Truths'.

Was the Chinese ontologization of the Two Truths a mistake? Yes and no, for even Ji Zang, who exposed that as a mistake, went along with the pyramidal negation as to come up with a 'fourfold Two Truths' to one-up his predecessors. Nor were his predecessors blind to the distinction between ontological Nothingness and epistemological Emptiness. They knew the art 'to empty' is meant to void an opponent's thesis. So instead of *wu* as Non-Being, they turned to using the word *fei* (非 to deny, to negate, to say it is not). And we find ample use of this liberating rhetoric in a figure like Bao Liang (寶亮). In his 'threefold Two Truths', Bao Liang led off with the world of *you* (有) vs. *wu* (being and non-being). This is the first level of two truths. Against that is set then the higher truth of *fei-you-fei-wu* (非有非無 neither being nor non-being). This is the second level of two truths. But then to go beyond that dichotomy of *fei-you* and *fei-wu*, he employed another double denial viz. *fei-fei-you fei-fei-wu* (非非有非非無 not that there is not-being and not that there is not-non-being either). Now that tongue-twisting 'threefold negation' may not measure up to the standard of Nagarjuna's patient critique of pure reason. The emptying here is more 'declarative' than 'demonstrative'. But then, it is arguably true that as the highest truth is non-discursive and that the *Diamond Sutra* is more declarative then demonstrative of Emptiness.

The long and short of all this is that by the sixth century, there was this native proclivity towards truncating the classic four-cornered dialectics of India (viz. to say yes, no, both/and, neither/nor) into a threefold formula. The Chinese idea of the Mean replaced the Both/And and sidelined somewhat the Neither/Nor. The trio presumes a harmonious One. The result is a Three/One formula best perfected by the Tiantai school. The Triune (Three/One) formula functioned like Trinitarian thought in medieval Europe. Both served to curtail and mediate 'transcendental dualism'. Each in its own way reconciled God and Man or Buddha and Sentient Beings, Heaven and Hell or Samsara and Nirvana. It is not that the Buddhist Triune is identical with the Christian Triune. And even among the Chinese Buddhists, the Three/One formula came with a number of variations:

(a)   The Nirvana/Harivarman school opted for the pyramidal ascent as shown above.
(b)   The Sanlun (三論)/Madhymaika school went along with that but only in order to bring that pyramid down.
(c)   The Lotus/Tiantai school synthesized the above two into its own threefold aspects in one perfect round.
(d)   The *AFM* designed an emanation trio of substance, form or characteristics, and function.

In the end, Sinitic Mahayana came up with a classification of teachings (or philosophies) that is more than the 'three turning of the Wheel' in the Indian count. One such series goes something like this:

Hinayana Agamas	The phenomenal	Many and real
Emptiness Sutras	The phenomenal	All empty
Vimalakriti Sutra	The non-dual	Toward One
Nirvana Sutra	The noumenal	The One Real
Lotus Sutra	The noumenal	Three-in-One
Avatamsaka Sutra	The totalistic	All-in-One

The reader might notice the absence of Yogacara. That is because the broad scheme above was already in place before the arrival of Yogacara into China.

13 The Lotus *Ekayana*: The One as All

The special place in the above scheme occupied by the Lotus Sutra deserves some explanation. Its teaching of *Ekayana* (One Vehicle) holds the key to that Sinitic Mahayana progression of ideas and ideals. Ekayana also hides a key tension in the early history of Mahayana in India. The following is a very dense summary of that hidden scenario.

As alleged earlier, Mahayana is not a unitary movement but a mix of many traditions and cults. The *Emptiness Sutra* founded Mahayana because it came up with that self-identity. The *Lotus Sutra* joined it later and fused its own path to deliverance ('Buddhayana') to that *Emptiness Sutra*'s Bodhisattvayana. Bodhisattvayana was focused on the Dharma of the Unborn (Emptiness); Buddhayana was centered on the cult of Buddha relics. Subhuti was made the spokesman for Emptiness; he regularly mocked Sariputra by 'emptying' everything Sariputra put forward. Since among the disciples of the Buddha, Subhuti represented the forest monk and Sariputra the urbane abhidharma scholastic, that scenario above could indicate how Mahayana might have risen from out of the forest ascetic's protest against the eminence of the scholar–monk. The scholar–monk had called attention to himself after Asoka's royal patronage had endowed temples and nurtured learning. As new tensions rose between theory and practice as well as between city and forest, spokesmen for mystical experience due ardent practice were being held up and pitted against the theoretical analysis due rational study.

The *Lotus Sutra* was however not party to that post-Asokan tension within the monk Sangha. It rose out of the very early cultic worship of the Buddha's relics at various stupa or reliquary sites by monk and lay alike. It was separate and distinct enough from the *Emptiness Sutra* circle because the *Emptiness sutras* openly criticized the stupa-worship cult. Being committed to the Formless (viz. Empty) Dharmakaya, the *Emptiness sutras* disapproved of this fixation with the Rupakaya (Form Body) viz. the idolatry of the physical relics of the Buddha. (The distinction of the Two Bodies was formalized by Nagarjuna later. The *Lotus Sutra* did not know nor did it register the word 'Dharmakaya.' That word appeared only in the later inserted 'Devadetta' chapter.) Of course, to the worshippers, the relics, all very real and 'physical' (*rupa*: formal), had these 'spiritual' qualities and 'supernormal' powers. This is what would later inform the Trikaya (Three Bodies) theory; that theory had to accommodate a Samghogakaya, a Body of Bliss, that mediates the transcendental Dharmakaya and the physical Rupekaya. This 'third' body rightfully claims to combine qualities of 'transcendence' (Dharmakaya) and 'form' (Rupakaya).

After the *Emptiness Sutra* declared its own Bodhisattva project as the 'Great Vehicle', the *Lotus Sutra* circle joined the movement and pledged allegiance to Mahayana. But bearing witness to the *Bodhisattvayana*'s continuous contention with Hinayana (represented by the two lesser vehicles of the Listener and the Solitary Buddha), the *Lotus Sutra* took it upon itself to declare that contention among the Three Vehicles to be due just an expediency (*upaya*: it lacks ultimacy). It then offered its own Buddhayana as the Ekayana (One Vehicle). The One (Vehicle) stands for the one and only Truth. It promises eventual Buddhahood to all who care to join in its rather simple piety at Buddha-devotion. This generosity of spirit was harder for the Emptiness tradition to emulate, because to declare itself 'Mahayana', it had to initially oppose 'Hinayana'. Even should it later empty the distinction between the Three Vehicles, the Emptiness Gnostics had designed a Bodhisattva career known for its difficulties at being perfected. In contrast, the *Lotus Sutra* made deliverance much easier: even children piling sand into a stupa shape are counted to have attained the bodhisattvic perfections (just short of the final wisdom).

Nowadays, because the Lotus and the Emptiness tradition had been long fused into one Mahayana tradition of both faith and wisdom, it is hard even to call attention to that initial tension. But this tension was not lost to the early Chinese recipients of these two traditions. Kumarajiva granted the *Lotus Sutra* the special status of being the 'secret store of the Tathagata'. When Dao Sheng of the nascent Nirvana school fame jotted his fellow monks by postulating this thesis of 'sudden enlightenment', that was originally based on the Ekayana principle of the *Lotus Sutra*. If the One Vehicle tells of a single Buddha Reality, enlightenment into the One must also be one, viz. suddenly and totally. Drafted into opposing him was Seng Zhao, the authority on the Emptiness philosophy, who defended 'gradual enlightenment' based on the distinction of the Three Vehicles as well as the gradations of the seven or ten stages of the Bodhisattva career. Dao Sheng only brought in the Buddha-Nature to augment his subitist thesis later. At that point, Chinese exegetes would smooth out the two inspirations and argue that the (new) Buddha-Nature idea was anticipated by the

Lotus Sutra's acknowledgement of the existence of an all-pervasive Buddha-wisdom. In the long run, the tension between Emptiness and Buddha-Nature, no-self and great-self, was resolved in India and in China by the *Srimala Sutra*. A member of the Tathagatagarbha (Buddha-Nature) corpus, this sutra registered the Buddha-Nature as having both an Empty and a Not-Empty aspect. It is empty because it embodies the perfection of wisdom. It is not empty because it also possesses a multitude of marvelous *gunas* (attributes) that could help to deliver men from suffering and death. Emptiness describes the transcendental aspect; the Not-Empty aspect points to this power to aid and deliver; in conjunction, they capture Wisdom and Compassion. The latter aspect came ultimately out of Buddha devotion, because as the Buddha was idealized by the *Lotus Sutra*, he was no longer 'empty' but was endowed with extraordinary power to help those in need. In the later Trikaya system, this would amount to registering how it is the empowered Sambhogakaya and not the empty Dharmakaya that could better aid and help change the status of physical reality.

14 The Debut and Demise of Early Yogacara in China

Yogacara is a Mahayana school; it is the third Buddhist school of philosophy in India. The name suggests ties to Yoga masters. It allegedly rose in reaction to so much 'empty chatter' (and not enough practice) that developed in later Madhyamika. The Yogacara school still accepts the dictum 'Form is Empty'; but it now qualifies that with noting how Form is Empty because reality is just so much mental representations, *Vijnaptimatrata*. The world out there is now deemed a function of 'Consciousness Only'. Our minds construct the world we get to see. In so reinforcing Emptiness, Yogacara revived Abhidharmic analysis of reality but shifted to probing the depths of subjective, mental activity. The preliminaries are not that foreign to the West. Yogacara counts, as Western psychology also would, these five senses plus the mind. These make up six consciousnesses. But instead of postulating some higher soul or deeper *atman*, Yogacara attributes that presumption to an error that rests with this seventh 'ego-grasping' consciousness. This is where, upon receiving the mental images coming in, the mind, in error, presumes that there are these 'real things' out there and there is this 'persisting subject' or ego on this end. In truth, subject and object are not real: they are the products of this 'grasping ego' clinging on to self and other.

Digging deeper still, Yogacara came up, not with some Kantian 'transcendental ego' but rather, this quantifiable, eighth *alayavijnana* or storehouse consciousness. This base consciousness is essentially a dumb computer server, a data bank; it stores away all past impressions and any ideations that we had. Most of the information stored therein is useful but wrong-headed mundane truths; but there may be seeds of sound understanding and good deeds. These should be nurtured so they would flower into enlightenment and knowledge of the highest truth.

The Chinese got wind of this new Yogacara philosophy early in the sixth century; some diligent students arose. But the general reaction, especially in the south, was centered on one key concern. Is this *Alayavijnana* pure or impure? How is it related to

the Buddha-Nature? Confluence of the two ideas had occurred already in India. We can see that in a late Mahayana text, the *Lankavatara Sutra*. This work was translated into Chinese, for the first time in the fifth century and once again in the sixth. Neither offered a definitive answer to how *alayavijnana* and *tathagatagarba* should or should not be aligned. It is the *AFM* that gave us that 'step-by-step' solution summarized in the diagram below.

> The One Mind with Two Aspects
> Of Suchness and Life-and-Death
>   Suchness with Two Aspects
>   As Empty and as Not-Empty
>   Reliant on the Tathagatagarbha
>   There rises the Alayavijnana Consciousness
>   subject locus of the both phenomenal life-and-
>   death (samsara) and its transcendence (nirvana)

The *AFM* basically put the Tathagatagarbha (Buddha-Nature) midway between the Suchness Mind and the Alaya Consciousness. By setting Mind above Consciousness, the *AFM* upheld 'Mind Only' that outranks the 'Consciousness Only' that is the Yogacara philosophy. Note that because the *AFM* is a *sastra* and because all Buddhist schools should be based on the words of the Buddha that are in the sutras, there is not an *AFM* school as such. Although the Chan Buddhism at the time of Dao Xin (道信) might be more indebted to the *AFM*, Chan legends would come up with a line of *Lankavatara Sutra* Masters instead.

15 Immutable Mind, Mutable Consciousness

The *AFM* elevates a pure 'Mind Only' above a tainted 'Consciousness Only'. This solution to the problem of Mind and Consciousness, Tathagatagarbha and Alayavijnana, Huayan and Yogacara, is more Sinitic than Indic. The rationale given for that resonates with a (simpler but similar) structure in an essay written by the Asokan king of China, Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (梁武帝). A religious Daoist before (and after) his conversion to the Buddha Dharma, the Emperor sought to 'establish the immortal soul as that which would become enlightened Buddhahood'. On the surface, this just conflates the Daoist soul with the nirvanic Buddha-Nature. It misidentifies the consciousness that survives death and finds its way to the womb of its next rebirth with the seed of enlightenment. The Chinese word for soul, *shen-ming* (神明), is allowed to slide into meaning 'divine enlightenment'. The *AFM* knew better; it did not invoke any Daoist soul, but it faced a semantic dilemma, one not unknown to the *Nirvana Sutra* which proposed a new *mahatman* that seems to contradict the old *anatman*. The *AFM* had to negotiate between its share of a conflict between an immutable Suchness Mind and a mutable Storehouse Consciousness. The emperor fell back on a simpler solution of uniting the opposites into one. The logistic is as shown in the following diagram:

> Enlightenment (nirvana) is rooted in the Buddha-Nature
>   [germinating into enlightenment].
> Life-and-death (samsara) rose [as active function] out of the
>   substance of Ignorance.
> But whence came Ignorance (*wu-ming* 無明: lit. absence of light or
>   darkness)?
> It came from the immortal soul (*shen-ming*: soul, spirit,
>   wisdom, divine light).

Emperor Wu did not explain how 'dark' ignorance could emerge out of its logical opposite, 'bright' enlightenment. He treated that as if it was just another paradox like 'samsara is nirvana'. Perhaps there was an unspoken, poetic gloss. Darkness which describes ignorance is also a metaphor for the mysterious. *Wu-ming shen-ming* might just implicate some dark gnosis or mysterious light. The compound has all the aura, to whit, of some 'Cloud of the Unknowing'. The *AFM* will similarly seek out its own *coincidentum oppositorum*. More on the *AFM*'s serial structure later. We need to explore a fruitful digression.

   A confident Emperor Wu then publicized his thesis and solicited comments from his courtiers. Few would dare find fault with the royal thesis. The poet Shen Yue (沈約) offered a short commentary. The piece holds another key to unlocking the *AFM*'s frame of mind. Simply stated, Shen Yue noted how the enlightened mind (the soul) could devolve into becoming the deluded consciousness. This came about once the mind loses its innate composure. What triggers that is *nian* (念) which refers to an *incipient thought* and describes *active mentation*. But *nian* is used to render *vikalpa* (*wang-nian* 妄念: deluded thought; distorted ideation) and has other meanings in Chinese. It covers mindfulness in meditation (*smrti*). And one thing such mindfulness can induce is that it makes us aware of this moment-to-moment (*nian-nian* 念念) succession of the thought process. That split-second moment is, in Sanskrit, *ksana;* that too is rendered as *nian*. The end result of this polysemy is that, to the Chinese, the active working of the everyday, deluded consciousness is that it is caught up and is lost in the rise-and-fall (viz. life-and-death) of samsara. This *nian* psychology now informs much of the *AFM* discussion on Mind and Consciousness. Mind is above such momentary change; but Consciousness falls into and is trapped in samsaric flux. To end ignorance and delusion, the *AFM* advocates this art of *wu-nian* (無念 no-thought) and, in a lighter shade, *li-nian* (離念 dissociating oneself from the thought process). This cryptic pair of wisdom formulas was used later to characterize the difference between the Southern Chan of Hui Neng (慧能) as opposed to the Northern Chan of Shen Xiu (神秀): the former went with the subitism of No-Thought and the latter the gradualism of Disengaging-Thought.

16 Han Psychology and *AFM*'s Idealism

This psychology that endorses an eternal soul (Mind) and indicts a momentary series of thought (*nian* Consciousness) went back much further than the emperor's

essay. It can be traced back to Han Buddhist thought. The early translators of the *Anapana Sutra* (Mindfulness of Breath Sutra) in Han counseled this technique of being mindful (*shou-yi* 守意). This meant keeping a watchful guard over the first activity (the *yi* 意 or intent) of the mind. Religious Daoists of the time observed the same: it is the activity of the will that might derail an otherwise placid (*wu-wei*) mind. From that came the psychic trio of *xin* (心), *yi* (意), *shi* (識) 'mind, intent, conscious knowing'. The debate among the early Prajna scholars (see coverage above) presumes knowledge of that series. By a happy coincidence, that native trio of *xin*, *yi*, *shi* was used to render what in Sanskrit would be *citta, manas, mano/vijnana*. The sets did not overlap perfectly. The native, Sinitic reading of the trio evokes always a devolution. Left to itself, that non-active Mind does not know. (Seng Zhao's essay 'Prajna is Not-Knowing' drew on that native paradigm.) But this same Mind, when activated by intention or active mentation, would devolve into this Consciousness that acting as subject can now know the objects out there in the world. Cognition is what drags the once nirvanic Mind down into the world of fleeting realities, viz. the 'life and death' that is samsara.

The *AFM* paints a similar devolution of the Mind. It builds a much more sophisticated version of that trio in Han psychology, borrowing very loosely ideas from Indian Yogacara. The Suchness Mind is said to suffer 'three subtle and six gross defilements'. That happens as follows:

Three subtle	1	ignorance activates
	2	this turn-around to perceive
	3	a cognized object-realm
Six gross	4	discrimination gives rise to
	5	continuous succession and
	6	this grasping-after then
	7	constructs the false names
	8	karma formation follows
	9	suffering ensues

Attempts to correlate neatly this set of nine mentations with Indian Yogacara analysis of the eightfold consciousness has, to date, failed. It failed because the internal logic of the set is Sinitic and not Indic. The three/six division itself is peculiar and telling; it is informed by Daoist division of nine (a 'full' number') into three and six. Three and six accord with Daoist numerology. The three pertains to inner, quietist Yin stirrings; the six goes with outer, active Yang affects. The first three is 'pre-cognitive'; it is about (1) the placid Mind activated by ignorance (2) churning or turning into (3) subject–object Consciousness. Prior to that, the Mind is not-knowing. The rest, viz. the six, is 'post-cognitive'; it presumes correlation between subject and object. With the self now craving (for objects), there rose (4) likes and dislikes. These objects of desires now (5) self-perpetuate, from moment to moment. That then (6) drives this grasping after, this holding tight onto, subject and object. The temptation rises then (7) to assign them names, viz. falsify ontological

substance. (This is the everyday world that we know.) We respond to it with (8) action and karma is aroused. (9) Suffering duly follows.

Although commentators then and now have offered possible Yogacara parallels to this set of nine, the logic of the full set is inspired more by the classic teaching about the twelve chains of causation. For easy cross-reference, the twelve links are listed below in bold letters; the numbers in square brackets refer back to the nine counts in the *AFM*. The twelve are

Ignorance [=1],
will-to-be [=2],
consciousness [=3]

Consciousness survives death and is reborn as
name-and-form, an embryo, with now six new
senses, that by making
contact with objects, gives us this
sensation, and arouses
craving [=4], that
grasps after [=6] object of desire;
becoming with false names [=5 and 7]; causing
----
karmic **birth** [=8], and suffering thereby
old age and death [=9].

(Note: The twelve chains above have been divided into three sections of past, present, and future, following one exegetical standard.) The above schema offered itself as an alternative to the Yogacara understanding of the working of the *alayavijnana*. By clearly setting the Mind above the Consciousness – and putting the *Tathagatagarbha* below the Suchness Mind but above the *alayavijnana* – the *AFM* would permit Huayan Mind Only to claim superiority over Yogacara or Consciousness Only. The *AFM* as a Sinitic digest of Mahayana had openly displaced a key representation of Indic Mahayana.

17 The *AFM* as the End with a New Beginning

Looking back, we can see how the *AFM* came toward the end of the end of the Six Dynasties. We have recapitulated the ideas that had flowed into it over the backdrop of a history of Chinese reflection on the Buddha Dharma. The *AFM* has taken in the Han scheme of Mind and Consciousness and fashioned its own distinct psychology of *wu-nian* or No-Thought. It has incorporated the Prajna-ist exchange with Neo-Daoism, blended together Emptiness and Non-Being and building on the serial Negation of the Two Truths, fashioned its appreciation of the Emptiness dialectics. But as the Nirvana school would reverse that negative vocabulary, the *AFM* took care of the Not-Empty aspect of the Tathagatagarbha its own way: using it to mediate Mind and Consciousness. And as the *Lotus Sutra* spoke up for the One Vehicle that absolves

the Three Vehicles and all the distinctions among men, the *AFM* responded with its ideology of the principle of the One Mind present in all sentient beings. (To be more true to its scriptural lineage though, the *AFM* leaned here more on the *Avatamsaka Sutra* and what became the Huayan principle that 'The Three Realms are but only the creations of the One [True Suchness] Mind.') In this way, the *AFM* can be seen as the summation of Chinese Buddhist thought through the Six Dynasties.

But that marks only the end of this product. There would be a new beginning that followed. The *AFM* would anticipate the rise of the Sinitic Mahayana schools of Sui and Tang. (The one stream we did not mention due to lack of space is the Pure Land faith that the *AFM* did endorse as a most privileged expediency.) The reception of the *AFM* by the Buddhist community during that transition was far from smooth though. Its departure from Indian Yogacara thought soon became apparent, and the *AFM* was even accused by its most severe critics as a Chinese forgery. That controversy was rekindled in the modern period. The *AFM* proved a worthy opponent back then. Its 'Mind Only' stand eventually triumphed over the 'Consciousness Only' stand of Indic Yogacara. It challenged the Tiantai Lotus school that relied on Madhyamika and duly avoided any Idealist philosophy. The inclusion of the *AFM* in Tiantai by the Song dynasty would cause a schism therein. We have registered the Chan debt to the *AFM*, although this is a connection that later Chan ideology would seek to hide. If the *AFM* had risen above the old controversies, then it has, in a similar manner, also risen above the modern controversy over its authorship. In the end, its claim to Truth stands. As a voice of Sinitic Mahayana, the *AFM* is the Chinese Buddhists' faithful appreciation of the Dharma. Said Truth was never meant to be the monopoly of one culture, one author, or of the Indian subcontinent alone. The *AFM* remains, to this day, this medium for awakening the faith into the Truth that is Mahayana.

Notes

Introduction

Integrating Chinese Buddhist thought into a history of Chinese philosophy posts a challenge. Chinese Buddhism as a sub-field within Chinese Studies remains somehow an outsider. One reason is that the Confucian had stigmatized Buddhism as a 'foreign' intrusion that is a betrayal of the Dao of the classical sages. Apperception of that alien nature still underwrites some very sweeping characterization of Indianization and Sinicization. Within Buddhist studies itself, there are also two strong inclinations for the genealogical and the teleological criteria, viz. modern historical textualists who look to the earliest texts for a surer standard to judging later developments and traditional sectarian scholars who work towards supporting the final outcomes in their sects' creedal formulations. (Japan modernized their sectarian scholarship earliest and conjoins the two inclinations.) Coming up with a treatment of Chinese Buddhist thought that is specific *to the historical hour and the cultural space* is not easy. It means first giving the ideas their originary voice and their then intended outcome. It means not letting the prior, allegedly 'purer' standard and the later, supposedly 'wiser' judgment prejudice the appreciation of those ideations befitting to their time and place. The vision 'before' and realization 'after' will be taken care of in the study of historic succession itself. I have written other overviews of Chinese Buddhist thought before, some in other Routledge encyclopedias. See Lai 1997a, and more recently, Lai 2003. The latter is available on-line as one of the listed sample entries free to Internet users.

Instead of covering the topic by way of key figures and the major schools, the design here is to use the *Awakening of Faith in Mahayana* to telescope the development of ideas that went before it and that came after. The design is to show what flowed into this text and what flowed out of it. In order to track that history of ideas, there is a broader if also denser coverage of the origin of Buddhist system building in early and Sectarian Buddhism in India. Attention is also paid to the root causes for the rise of Mahayana and the extent of spiritual resources that China could tap for its own Sinitic Mahayana expression. The approach taken also draws on East/West comparisons; scholastic parallels and the reactions that it engenders; epochal mentalities due to specifiable paradigm shifts. The main text refers to such; the endnotes explain it a bit more; but because I often revised the received opinions, the accounting for my departures are only available in my previously published works noted herein. Those published essays can provide greater details on the thinkers, the issues, the scriptural references, and the debates on theory and method. In the end, it is the coherence of the presentation – how the story of ideas makes better sense when cast in a certain way – that I hope would validate its feasibility.

Section 1 'On the term "Sinitic Mahayana"'

The term is my coinage. It started with my 1975 Harvard doctoral dissertation on 'The Awakening of Faith in Mahayana: A Study of the Unfolding of Sinitic Mahayana Motifs.' The controversy over its authorship continues to this day. Because the *AFM* promises universal enlightenment, it seems to betray no eschatological anxiety. That linkage to an end-time threat might be hidden. For placing the *AFM* in that darker hour, see Lai 1986a and Lai 1990.

Section 2 'A rumor of Transcendence' with subsections 1, 2, and 3

The title, taken from 'A Rumor of Angels', is meant to paint a historical 'paradigm shift' from China's late classical era into its medieval period. Too often comparisons are made across such paradigmatic divides. By recognizing a historic discontinuity, we might see how the same word used in two different contexts from two time periods may hide their fundamental differences. So the subsections work to show how (1) Sutras are not like Classics; (2) the Soul has different depths and heights; and (3) one Middle Kingdom might lose out to another Middle Kingdom. Paradigm shifts are however hard to pin down, but one key lies with how new questions arose during the transition – questions that the new paradigm might just rephrase or even drop. On that, see Lai 1979a.

Section 3 'The *AFM* structure of One, Two, Three, Four, and Five'

The One-to-Five formula from the *AFM* is well known. The One-Two-Three formula was known within the Dasabhumika school in North China from within which the *AFM* is thought to have emerged. The Dasabhumika (On the Ten Stages) is a part of the Avatamsaka Sutra. It was famous for the dictum 'The Three Realms are of the One Mind'. The Sanskrit original intends that to mean 'The Three (illusory) Realms are of the deluded Mind'. The Chinese soon took that to mean 'The Three Realms are (created by/of) the One true Mind'. This is the assumption in the *AFM*. The One-to-Five scheme intends the One (Mind) to be behind the rest of the set. For that, I characterize as endorsing an emanative Monism similar to Plotinus' understanding of the One. The Indian position closest to such an emanative Monism would be the bhedabheda ('same yet different') position of Hindu Vedanta. There Brahman as the One Reality is 'same as and yet different from' the world of the manifested Many. That coincidence should, by a strict standard, disconnect the *AFM* from the design Indian Buddhists had intended for Abhidharma, Madhyamika, and Yogacara.

Section 4 'The three Buddhist philosophical systems in India'

This dense retrospective on the so-called 'three turnings of the wheel of Dharma' in Indian Buddhist thought is not meant to be exhaustive. There are volumes after volumes in libraries on these three schools in India. This section outlines just the large trends in order to set the stage for showing how, if the three Indian schools were based on three corresponding sets of scriptures, then the Chinese needed not abide with just these three options. Sinitic Mahayana basically evolved more sastric philosophies based on other canonical sutras in Indian Mahayana. The *AFM* is traditionally seen as a sastra growing out of the Lankavatara Sutra which brought together the Alayavijnana and the Tathagatagarbha tradition but failed to smooth out their tension. *AFM* succeeded.

Section 5 'From **Dharma** *to* **Abhidharma**'

This section explains how Abhidharma systematized the Dharma (Teachings) of the Buddha. It then offers a way to understanding that development – one that would help explain the later Chinese choice for a different route of development. The Buddha saw all realities as impermanent. Abhidharma chose to dissect the nature of impermanence. It did so by targeting for analysis the particularistic ingredients (the multiple atomic dharmas). But what if one chooses to work, not on the nature of impermanence that ended up with minute differences but instead, on recapturing the sense of the 'all': the universality in being impermanent? Could not the analysis of the Many be replaced by this apperception of the All? This is answered in section 7.

Section 6 'Abhidharmic Realism and the rise of Nominalism'

This section is inserted in order to bring in an East/West comparison. Of course, there are never exact East/West parallels. We so compare with an ulterior purpose: to unlock certain larger historical dynamics, like another 'paradigm shift' in late medieval Europe and late medieval China (not anything comparable in India). Abhidharma fits the rationality of scholastic Realism in one sense. And in pushing that to the extreme, the Sarvastivada ('All is Real') school would qualify as extreme Realism. But by pushing scholastic Reason to its limits, it would touch off a Nominalist reaction in India and it did in Europe. The school known for declaring 'All is Name Only' resembles scholastic Nominalism (which declares 'all is mere voice'). Both would charge all the fine distinctions made or the dharma categories postulated as just mental or verbal constructs. By a loose coincidence, there was among European scholastics, a school (not going as far as William of Occam) that would amount to Conceptualism (way short of Idealism). Now, Yogacara presented as Vijnaptimatrata (Representations Only) may, very loosely, be linked to that Conceptualist tendency.

Section 7 'The central Mahayana philosophy: Universal Emptiness'

The Emptiness philosophy empties, voids, undercuts the whole Abhidharmist's scholastic enterprise. As Abhidharma benefited from royal patronage and its scholar–monks in city settings rose in prominence, it is possible that there rose an anti-scholastic critique coming from the 'forest ascetic' tradition. I believe that such historical parallels and common social dynamics are important to the appreciation of philosophical developments. Some might not. But to counter that sociological observation by noting how Buddhism from the start knew such 'forest dwellers' (like the historical Subhuti) and how, like the early Church being urbane the Sangha too flourished largely in cities, that would ignore the history of increasing/decreasing tension between city and forest (farm and hill too). For example, Subhuti, the future mouthpiece of the Emptiness philosophy, rose in legendary status late, he was a 'new' post-Asokan icon. Like the rise of the Desert Fathers in post-Constantine times, there was in the Sangha a 'new' polarization of city clerics and forest ascetics. See Lai 1997b.

Section 8 'The real divide: The meaning of the All'

The standard view and mode of study is to see the contention between Sarvastivada and Sunyavada as a debate over the Real and the Empty. That difference stands out in their names, 'All is Real' and 'All is Empty'. Swimming against the tide (but following a Sinitic Mahayana judgment), I see the real divide as being over the common word of the All. As noted in section 6, Hinayana addresses 'All is Impermanent' by working on the particulars (the causes and the conditions) making up the impermanent. In contrast, I see Mahayana as choosing to recover the sense of the All – the feeling of impermanence before it became some mechanics of the discontinuous. (So, instead of 'cause and condition', a new sensitivity toward the interdependence in time and space as well as the interconnections among one and all.) Sunyavada highlights, not the atomic dharmas but rather, this common quality of Sunyata as Dharamta. In Hegelian terms, this means not the little, tiny wholes but the 'Whole of wholes'. Sinitic Mahayana recognized these shifts in nuance in its tenet-classification system much better than the Indian 'three turns of the Wheel'. There is no reason to consider the Indian the proper criterion to be solely true; there are plenty more reasons to follow the Chinese judgment of what went before.

Section 9 'The bonus of metaphor: concept-matching'

Dao An created and berated 'concept-matching' Buddhism. That is what was practiced supposedly by the early Prajna-ist schools. Even now, that is seen as a bad match: it mixes Taoist concepts (used in the translation) and the Sanskrit original (lost in transit). So when *sunya* (empty) was rendered as *ben-wu* (original nothingness), Wang Bi clouded Nagarjuna. But 'concept-matching' Buddhism did not end with Dao An. And sometimes a seeming mismatch may open up a new vista; new wine might burst old bottles with liberating effects. Yes, something might be lost in translation; but then something else might be gained thereby. There is also the recent interest in metaphors. There are arguments showing how all understanding of the new (the alien Other) relies on casting the unknown in light of the known. Such is naturally metaphoric which Aristotle defined as 'calling X by the name of Y'. Besides redeeming 'concept-matching' Buddhism, this section re-examines the classic examples of the early six Prajna schools. And it came up with a different picture of what actually transpired. The much-maligned 'Mind is Empty' school turns out to be the school that exposed the 'mismatch' that created the mainline '(Emptiness means) Original Nothingness' school. It also spurred a threefold dialectics. My reading being a departure from the norm, the details explaining and defending this departure are spelled out in previous publications. See Lai 1983a. For how that debate was revised in a keen exchange later, see Lai 1979b.

Section 10 'From the non-dual to the union of opposites'

The Chinese reading of the Two Truths is often measured against the original standard set up by Nagarjuna. The Chinese reading then often falls short. In a series of articles, I came around to appreciating the logic and intent of the Chinese exposition *in its time and place*. I once sided with the old judgment; see Lai 1978. In so doing, I was following the later judgment of Ji Zang (who by heading the Sanlun or Madhyamika school, is seen as following the standard of Nagarjuna). But all later judgments tell of a different time, even one that claimed to be truthful to Nagarjuna. To reconstruct the full and fruitful history of an idea, we must situate its 'truthfulness' in its time and space first. See Lai 1983b. A thesis could be true in its time and be falsified later – yet that falsifier might himself be forced to adjust his own rhetoric 'in keeping with the times'. See Section 12.

Section 11 'The overcoming of negativity'

The Chinese deviated from Nagarjuna's Sunyavada by endorsing this higher *atman* that is the Buddha-Nature. On the Chinese reception of ths Buddha-Nature doctrine, see Lai 1982a and 1982b. China by endorsing this 'real' Buddha-self then looked to Harivarman whose thesis on 'Establishing the Real' appeared at the time to be a better spokesman (for a positive core) than Nagarjuna's theme of universal emptiness.

Section 12 'The seduction of a threefold truth'

Instead of the four-cornered dialectics of Nagarjuna, China took to a threefold dialectic. The third truth was needed to resolve the Non-duality of the Two Truths; see Lai 1979c and 1980a. The Chinese were not always to err by ontologizing the Two Truths; they employed dialectical negation also. See Lai 1983c.

Section 13 'The Lotus Ekayana: the One as All'

The threefold truth merged into the One Truth of the Lotus Sutra which claims its *Ekayana* to be the One Vehicle that subsumes the Triyana. That the Lotus Sutra might claim a standing higher than the Emptiness Sutra was known very early on in China. See Lai 1981a. The Lotus Sutra did not subscribe to the Docetic presumption of Nagarjuna; see Lai 1981b. So in fact, it is the Lotus Sutra and not the Buddha-Nature teaching in the Nirvana Sutra that first inspired Dao Sheng to propose sudden enlightenment: see Lai 1987a. For an overall appraisal of the Lotus Sutra, see Lai 1987b.

Section 14 'The debut and demise of early Yogacara'

Yogacara known also as 'Consciousness Only' would be defeated in China by the 'Mind Only' philosophy of the *AFM*. But that distinction of Mind and Consciousness exists only in Chinese and not Tibetan. See Lai 1977. The defeat came with Fa Zang who played up the distinction between 'Dharma-Essence' in his own Huayan school against the lesser 'Dharma-Characteristics' position of Yogacara. See Lai 1986b.

Section 15 'Immutable Mind, mutable Consciousness'

The Chinese distinction of impassive Mind and activated Consciousness is found in the *AFM*. Part of that can be traced to a treatise by Liang Emperor Wu; see Lai 1981c. The commentary on the royal treatise by Shen Yue has been restored; see Lai 1981d. The psychology has Han roots; see Lai 1983c. There are scholastic refinements that are passed over in the process. For example, the alayavijnana is not mutable in the simple sense. By definition, it is itself the fusion of the mutable and the immutable (samsara and nirvana). That mix of opposites attends the tathagatagarbha also, but being a higher state of mind, it claims an affinity with Suchness that the alaya consciousness may not.

Section 16 'Han psychology and AFM Idealism'

The *wu-nian* (No-Thought) formula espoused by the *AFM* is dubious by strict Sanskrit standards. So it was edited out in a second 'translation' (sic: attributed to Siksananda) of the *AFM*: see Lai 1980a. This lends support to the thesis that the *AFM* (associated with Paramartha) was of Chinese origin. Further support came from the *AFM* account for how Ignorance first rose. 'Suddenly a *nian* rose – and that constitutes ignorance.' That 'suddenness' recalls the 'suddenness' in Guo Xiang's account for how the world began. Since being cannot come from Non-being, things just came into being suddenly in one piece: see Lai 1980b.

Section 17 'The AFM as the end and a new beginning'

The full history of *AFM*'s subsequent impact cannot be told here. Fa Zang's commentary on the *AFM* marks the apex of *AFM*'s influence. But Fa Zang actually leaned a lot on the Korean monk Wonhyo who commented at length on the *AFM*. Wonhyo gave the Buddha-Nature this fullness due the One (Suchness) Mind. That allowed him to absorb all the previous theories of Buddha-Nature into this self. See Lai 1985. For an example of Fa Zang's further interpretation of the One Mind, see Lai 1980d.

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IV

CLASSICAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY (III): FROM SONG THROUGH EARLY QING

Chapter 12
NEO-CONFUCIANISM (I): FROM CHENG YI TO ZHU XI

Shu-hsien Liu

1 Introduction

The first golden era of Chinese philosophy was in the late Zhou period when Zhou culture was in the decline. A hundred schools contended with one another to offer their solutions to problems. Therefore Chinese philosophies since that time have shown a practical character, quite different from the speculative nature of early Greek cosmologies. In the Han dynasty, study of Confucian Classics became the mainstream. During the Wei and Jin dynasties, intellectuals turned their interest to Neo-Daoism. Then Buddhism became prominent in the Sui and Tang dynasties. The Confucian scholars in the Song dynasty took up the challenge to respond to Daoism and Buddhism, formulated sophisticated philosophical theories, started the trend of Neo-Confucianism, in some ways not unlike the movement of the Renaissance in the modern West, which opened up as it were the second golden era of Chinese philosophy that covered the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. In this and the chapter which follows, I deal with two powerful trends of thought in Neo-Confucianism. But first I investigate the term and concept 'Neo-Confucianism'.

2 The Term and Concept "Neo-Confucianism"

I have long suspected that "Neo-Confucianism" was a term used first in the West and later adopted by Chinese scholars. After many years of investigation, my conjecture was confirmed by Fung Yu-lan (馮友蘭) as he said, "The term Neo-Confuciansim is a newly coined western equivalent for *Dao-xue*" (道學 Learning of *Dao*) (Fung 1948: 268). Actually Fung used the term "Neo-Confucianism" as early as 1922 in his dissertation, which applied to the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming (王陽明). But somehow he did not like the term. So after he went back to China, when he wrote his *Zhong-Guo-Zhe-Xue-Shi* (中國哲學史 History of Chinese Philosophy, 1934), he used the term *Dao-xue* instead. But when Derk Bodde translated the book into English, he rendered

the term into 'Neo-Confucianism' (Fung 1953).[1] Since then it has been accepted by leading scholars in the field, such as Carsun Chang (張君勱 1957), Wing-tsit Chan (陳榮捷 1963a), and de Bary (1975). Recently however, Hoyt Tillman (1992) thinks that the notion is ambiguous and virtually useless in historical description. There have been hot debates on the issue within the field. My position (Liu 1998: 128–9) is that it is not easy to replace a term that has been used for nearly half a century. But I would like to be more specific in order to avoid Tillman's charges. For me, Song-(Yuan)-Ming Neo-Confucianism is a general term that covers under it both *Cheng-Zhu-li-xue* (程朱理學 Cheng Yi's [程頤], and Zhu Xi's [朱熹] learning of principle) and *Lu-Wang-xin-xue* (陸王心學 Lu Jiu-yuan's [陸九淵] and Wang Yang-ming's [王陽明] learning of mind-heart). The last in line was Huang Zong-xi (黃宗羲). Other Qing philosophers such as Yan Yuan (顏元 1635–1704) and Dai Zhen (戴震 1723–77) would be excluded from the trend, as there was a paradigm shift in the transitional period from the late Ming to the early Qing (Liu 2003: Ch. 1). In my usage the term 'Neo-Confucianism' is not ambiguous. All Neo-Confucian philosophies without exception subscribe to the principle of *tian-dao-xing-ming-xiang-guan-tong* (天道性命相貫通 the interconnection between the Way of Heaven and human nature and destiny: Mou 1968: 69). But Qing philosophers such as Yan Yuan and Dai Zhen no longer subscribed to this principle. They had shifted to a totally naturalistic outlook. I am surprised that Fung Yu-lan missed the paradigm shift, his application of 'Neo-Confucianism' to those thinkers is not correct. My understanding of Neo-Confucianism has kept a transcendent perspective, while Qing philosophers showed only an immanent perspective. Hence they have nothing to do with the so-called *Dao-Tong* (道統 orthodoxy) as constructed by Zhu Xi.

3 The Orthodoxy as Constructed by Zhu Xi

The Neo-Confucian philosophers were teaching something new, as their expressions were quite different from those of the pre-Qin Confucians. For example, Confucius and Mencius talked about *ren* (仁 humanity) and *yi* (義 righteousness), while Song philosophers talked about *li* (理 principle) and *qi* (氣 material Force). And they primarily concerned themselves with *xin-xing-zhi-xue* (心性之學 the learning of mind-heart and human nature). But they were convinced that in spirit they were the same as pre-Qin Confucian philosophers such as Confucius and Mencius, as both were honored as sages by posterity. Zhu Xi went so far as to establish the orthodox line of transmission of the Way, the so called *Dao-Tong*. Wing-tsit Chan has reported that "the line, with minor variations, is this: Fu Xi … Sheng-nong … the Yellow Emperor … Yao … Shun … Yu … Tang … Wen … Wu … Duke of Zhou … Confucius … Zeng Zi … Zi Si … Mencius … Zhou … Chengs … Zhu Xi" (Chan 1973: 75). In a very influential essay, 'Zhong-Yong-Zhang-Ju-Xu' (中庸章句序 'Preface to the Commentary on the *Doctrine of the Mean*'), Zhu Xi said:

> The Orthodox line of transmission of the Way had a long history. It was reported in the Classics: Yao taught Shun that you must hold fast to the

Mean, and Shun taught Yu that the human mind is precarious, and the moral mind is subtle; have absolute refinement and singleness of mind, hold fast to the Mean … From then on, such insights were passed on from one sage to another … Even though our Master Confucius [551–479 BCE] did not have the position [of a king], yet he had succeeded the sages in the past, and opened up new courses for students in the future; his achievement was greater even than that of Yao or Shun. But in his time there were only Yan Yuan [?521–490 BCE] and Zeng Shen [?505–436 BCE] who had learned about the Way and transmitted the line. Then in the second generation of Master Tseng's disciples there was Confucius' grandson Zi Si [?492–421 BCE] … Still another two generations, there was Mencius … After Mencius (?372–289 BCE) died, the line of transmission was broken … It was not until the Cheng brothers [Cheng Hao 1032–88, and Cheng Yi 1033–1107], who studied and regained the insight, that the line of transmission which was discontinued for a thousand years was revived.

(Zhu-Zi-Wen-Ji, SPPY edn. 76:21–2b)

Chan pointed out that Zhu Xi was the first Neo-Confucian philosopher to use the term *Dao-tong*, and he excluded the Han and Tang Confucianists from the line of transmission for philosophical reasons. Chan said:

According to Zhu Xi's pupil Huang Kan [1152–1221], 'the transmission of the correct orthodox tradition of the Way required the proper men. From the Zhou dynasty [1111–249 BCE] on, there have been only several people capable of inheriting the correct tradition and transmitting the Way and only one or two could enable the Way to become prominent. After Confucius, Zeng Zi and Zi Si perpetuated it in its subtlety, but it was not prominent until Mencius. After Mencius, Zhou Dun-yi [1037–73], the two Chengs, and Zhang Zai [1020–77] continued the interrupted tradition, but only with our Master did it become prominent.' This view was accepted in the *History of Song* and by practically all Neo-Confucianists.

(Chan 1973: 75)

Some scholars made charges that Zhu was smuggling Daoist and Buddhist ideas in Confucianism; I find these charges groundless (Liu 1998: Ch. 10). Zhu did borrow certain expressions from Daoism and Buddhism, but he firmly committed himself ultimately to *Ren* and showed awe to *Tian* (Heaven), the creative origin of all. In spirit there is no doubt he was heir to the Confucian tradition. Then Qing scholars pointed out that "the human mind is precarious, and the moral mind is subtle; have absolute refinement and singleness of mind, hold fast to the mean", was a quotation from "Counsels of Great Yu" (大禹謨), *The Book of History* in the ancient script, now known to have been a fabricated document. This seems to have dealt a fatal blow to the claim of *Dao-Tong* by Zhu Xi. But Paul Tillich had made an important distinction between Jesusology and Christology (Tillich 1957): historical studies on

Jesus have only probability, while religious faith in Jesus as the Christ is absolute. The faith in *Dao-Tong* in the Confucian tradition is comparable to the Christian faith in Jesus as the Christ. It is based on the witness to the clear character of the sagely mind that found its manifestation among the ancient sage-emperors and that it is inherent in everybody. Hence accuracy of historical details is not that important for those who had faith in the manifestation of the sagely mind in the human world. The Neo-Confucian philosophers firmly believed that they could understand the sagely mind even though their time was behind the time of Confucius by more than a thousand years. And from Zhu's point of view, *Dao-Tong* is even more important than *Zheng-Tong* (政統 the tradition of politics), as Zhu said explicitly that even though Confucius did not have the throne, his achievement was greater than that of Yao or Shun, the sage-emperors. It is under the guidance of such spirit Zhu constructed the line of transmission in the Song dynasty through Lian (濂 i.e., Zhou Dun-yi), Luo (洛 i.e., the Cheng brothers), Guan (關 i.e., Zhang Zai), Min (閩 i.e., Zhu Xi). From then on we all see Song Neo-Confucianism through this line as constructed by Zhu Xi.

4 Zhou Dun-yi's Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate

Very few people had heard about Zhou Dun-yi (周敦頤, Lian-xi 濂溪, 1017–73), before he was honored as the first to start the trend of Neo-Confucianism by Zhu Xi, as he was the teacher of the young Cheng brothers. Zhu Xi and his friend Lu Zu-qian (呂祖謙, Dong-lai 東萊) compiled a Neo-Confucian anthology entitled *Jin-Si-Lu* (近思錄 *Reflections on Things at Hand*) (Chan trans. 1967) which selected the important sayings and writings by four Northern Song Neo-Confucian philosophers, Zhou, the Cheng brothers, and Zhang Zai, and put them together in a volume. This volume has been profoundly influential; as Thomas Wilson (1995) observed, like it or not an anthology like this, selecting some figures and excluding others, would inadvertently help to form the perspective of a school. Today we cannot see Neo-Confucianism except through the eyes of Zhu Xi.

Zhu Xi appreciated the most Zhou Dun-yi's "An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate" (太極圖說), as he said:

> The Ultimate of Non-being and also the Great Ultimate (*Tai-ji*)! The Great Ultimate through movement generates *yang*, when its activity reaches its limit, it becomes tranquil. Through tranquility the Great Ultimate generates *yin*. When tranquility reaches its limit, activity begins again …
>
> By the transformation of *yang* and its union with *yin*, the Five Agents of Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth arise. When these five material forces (*qi*) are distributed in harmonious order, the four seasons run their course.
>
> The Five Agents constitute one system of *yin* and *yang*, and *yin* and *yang* constitute one Great Ultimate. The Great Ultimate is fundamentally the Non-ultimate …
>
> When the reality of the Ultimate of Non-being and the essence of *yin*, *yang*, and the Five Agents come into mysterious union, integration ensues.

Qian (Heaven) constitutes the male element, and *kun* (Earth) constitutes the female element. The integration of these two material forces engenders and transforms the myriad things. The myriad things produce and reproduce, resulting in an unending transformation.

It is man alone who receives [the Five Agents] in their highest excellence, and therefore he is most intelligent. His physical form appears, and his spirit develops consciousness. The five moral principles of his nature (humanity or *ren*, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness) are aroused by, and react to, the external world and engage in activity; good and evil are distinguished; and human affairs take place.

The sage settles these affairs by the principles of the Mean, correctness, humanity, and righteousness [for the way of the sage is none other than these four], regarding tranquility as fundamental. [Having no desire, these will therefore be tranquility.] Thus he establishes himself as the ultimate standard for man.

(Chan 1963a: 463)

Because of the importance of this document, I quote extensively from the essay. Lu Xiang-shan and his brother had doubted the authenticity of this document,[2] because they were of the opinion that the term *wu-ji* (non-ultimate) only appeared in the text of the *Lao-Zi*, hence this article could not have been written by Zhou, or it was an immature work of his, not worth attaching any importance to it. But Zhu countered that a term not used by ancient sages should not be a problem. For example, Fu-Xi only invented the eight trigrams, King Wen further developed sixty-four hexagrams, and Confucius added ten Wings to *The Book of Changes*. So long as the spirit is the same, the addition of new terms and concepts should be more than welcome. Zhu interpreted the first statement of the article: "*wu-ji-er-tai-ji*" to mean "*wu-xing-er-you-li*" (formless but with principle). Zhu's interpretation may not be correct, but Lu's questioning was not very convincing. For example, Tang Jun-yi showed that the thought underlying this article was not different from Zhou's greater work: *Tong-Shu* (*Penetrating The Book of Changes*) (Tang 1966); Mou Zong-san concurred with Tang's understanding of Zhou's thought (Mou 1969). There is simply no ground to deny the importance attached to the essay by Zhu Xi. Zhou's originality lay in that he was the first Song scholar to put emphasis on *The Doctrine of the Mean* and *The Book of Changes*, instilled them with a new interpretation, incorporated the ideas of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Agents from Han philosophy and developed a comprehensive cosmological philosophy based on the idea of creativity without falling into the kind of determinism of Han philosophies that advocated a strict correlation between natural phenomena and human phenomena. His mind was broad. He took over the Diagram of the Great Ultimate from the Daoists. Its original purpose was to serve as a guide for the practice of Daoist transcendental meditation to induce the vital forces to return to the root. But Zhou turned it around, made use of the Diagram to give expression to a Neo-Confucian philosophy of creativity with an evolutionary perspective based on the insights of *The Book of Changes*. Furthermore, following the line of thought in

Mencius and *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Zhou explicitly took *cheng* (誠 sincerity) to be the ultimate metaphysical principle. In the very first chapter of his work *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, he said:

> Sincerity (*cheng*) is the foundation of the sage. "Great is the *qian* (乾), the originator! All things obtain their beginning from it." It is the source of sincerity. "The way of *qian* is to change and transform so that everything will obtain its correct nature and destiny." In this way sincerity is established. It is pure and perfectly good. Therefore "the successive movement of *yin* and *yang* constitute the Way (*Dao*). What issues from the Way is good, and that which realizes it is the individual nature." Origination and flourish characterize the penetration of sincerity, and advantage and firmness are its completion (or recovery). Great is Change, the source of nature and destiny.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 465–6)

Sincerity in this context should not be understood as merely a psychological or even a moral virtue. It means something that is forever true and without deceit; it stands for the Way of Heaven, which is the ultimate source of creativity for all things. When it is embodied in humans, it is the virtue that characterizes the sage who is in perfect union with the Way of Heaven. In self-discipline, Zhou regarded tranquility as fundamental, while tranquility and activity were seen to form an unceasing circular movement. Such thoughts profoundly influenced Song–Ming Neo-Confucian philosophies.

5 Zhang Zai's Correlation between the Way of Heaven and Human Nature and Destiny

Zhang Zai (張載, Heng-qu 橫渠, 1020–77) was an uncle of the Cheng brothers. But, according to some of his disciples, Zhang frankly admitted that he learned about the Way later than his nephews. Therefore Zhu placed him behind the Cheng brothers. Zhang specialized in *The Book of Changes* and the rites. He had many original ideas, sometimes immature, caused misunderstanding and invited criticisms from the Cheng brothers. But he had similar cosmological interests as Zhou, so his ideas are here discussed immediately after Zhou.

Zhang's approach was really extraordinary. He put a great deal of emphasis on *qi* (氣 material force), that which transforms into the myriad things in the world. But it is wrong to say that Zhang taught a materialistic philosophy. For Zhang, only that which is devoid of form but functions as spirit can be the origin of all things. He took the idea of *xu* (虛 vacuity) from the Daoists but transformed it into the ultimate creative ontological principle of Neo-Confucian philosophy. *Xu* and *qi* are a pair of complementary concepts that are indispensable for the understanding of change. They work together to form the Great Harmony (*Tai-he* 太和) that characterizes the Way. He said:

> The Great Harmony is called the Way (*Dao*). It embraces the nature which underlies all counter processes of floating and sinking, rising and falling, and

motion and rest. It is the origin of the process of fusion and intermingling, of overcoming and being overcome, and of expansion and contraction. At the commencement, these processes are incipient, subtle, obscure, easy, and simple, but at the end they are extensive, great, strong, and firm. It is *qian* (Heaven) that begins with the knowledge of Change, and *kun* (Earth) that models after simplicity. That which is dispersed, differentiated and can be expressed in form is material force (*qi*), and that which is pure, penetrating, and cannot be expressed in form is spirit. Unless the whole universe is in the process of fusion and intermingling like fleeting forces moving in all directions, it may not be called Great Harmony. When those who talk about the Way know this, then they really know the Way, and when those who study Change [or the *Book of Changes*] understand this, then they really understand Change. Otherwise, even though they possess the admirable talents of Duke Chou, their wisdom is not praiseworthy.

<div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 500–1)</div>

Because Zhang freely took ideas and expressions from the Daoists, the Cheng brothers had rather mixed feelings concerning his larger work *Zheng-Meng* (正蒙 *Correcting Youthful Ignorance*). Still, he made some important distinctions, which became the common heritage of the Neo-Confucian tradition. For example, the distinction between moral (ontological) knowledge and empirical knowledge (from seeing and hearing) (Chan 1963a: 515), and also the distinction between original nature and physical nature (Chan 1963a: 511). Zhu Xi especially appreciated Zhang's statement: "The mind commands man's nature and feelings" (Chan 1963a: 517). As for Zhang Zai's famous short essay, "Western Inscription", it drew the highest praise from Cheng Yi. As Wing-tsit Chan pointed out:

Just as Zhou Dun-Yi's short essay on the diagram of the Great Ultimate has become the basis of Neo-Confucian metaphysics, so Zhang's "Western Inscription" has become the basis of Neo-Confucian ethics. Cheng Yi was not exaggerating when he said that there was nothing like it since Mencius. It is important because, as Cheng said, it deals with the substance of humanity (*ren*). Its primary purpose, as Yang Shi [Yang Gui-shan: 1053–1135] pointed out, was to urge students to seek *ren*.

<div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 498)</div>

Indeed, it is here that Zhang Zai advanced beyond Zhou Dun-yi. In the beginning of the essay. Zhang said:

Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even a small creature as I find an intimate place in their midst.
     Therefore that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature.
     All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions.

<div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 497)</div>

And by the end of the essay, he concluded:

> Wealth, honor, blessing, and benefits are meant for the enrichment of my life, while poverty, humble position, and sorrow are meant to help me to fulfillment.
> In life I follow and serve [Heaven and Earth].
> In death I will be at peace.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 498)

Yang Shi (楊時) had questioned his teacher if Zhang was teaching the Mohist doctrine of Universal Love, and took care only of the substance but left out the function. Cheng Yi gave a clear-cut answer that the Mohists have two foundations (theory and practice) without making distinctions, while the Confucians including Zhang Zai taught that principle is one while manifestations are many. Wing-tsit Chan commented as follows:

> [A]s Cheng Yi explained to him [Yang Shi], it is precisely in harmonizing substance and function that the "Western Inscription" is of great significance to Confucian ethics. Underlying the essay, according to Ch'eng, is Chang's epoch-shaking theory that "Principle is one but its manifestations are many [*li-yi-fen-shu*]."
>
> (Chan 1963a: 499)

Furthermore, he said,

> Actually the "Western Inscription" does not say anywhere that "the principle is one but its manifestation are many" ... But in the views of Zhu Xi and others, the references to father, mother, and other human relations clearly point to differentiation. In any case, in this understanding of Neo-Confucianists, the "Western Inscription", in thus preserving the harmony of substance and function of *ren* and putting it on the metaphysical basis, carries the doctrine of *ren* to a level higher than before. It also paves the way for the culmination of Neo-Confucian theories of *ren* in Zhu Xi.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 500)

As a matter of fact, *li-yi-fen-shu* has provided guidance for all Neo-Confucianists since then, not just for the school of Cheng-Zhu. Moreover, Mou Zong-san pointed out that Zhang Zai had formulated the expression "the interconnection between the Way of Heaven and human nature and destiny", which has become the common characteristic of Neo-Confucianism.

6 Cheng Hao's Doctrine of One Foundation

The Cheng brothers elevated *li* (理 principle) into a metaphysical principle; since then Song–Ming Neo-Confucian philosophy has been known as *Song–Ming-li-xue* (study of principle). Cheng Hao (程顥) said, "Although I have learned some of my doctrines from others, the idea of *tian-li* (天理 heavenly principle), however, has been realized by myself" (Chan 1963a: 520). The term *tian-li* had appeared in the *Book of Rites*, but it was the first time that it was declared that it is to be captured by personal realization. In this sense Cheng Hao was the founder of the movement. His way of expression was citing some classics, add a few comments, and suddenly new meanings emerged. For example, he said:

> "The operations of Heaven have neither sound nor smell." Their substance is called Change; their principle, the Way; and their function, spirit. What Heaven imparts to man is called the nature. To follow our nature is called the Way (Dao). Cultivation according to the Way is called education … What exists before physical form [and is therefore without it] constitutes the Way. What exists after physical form [and is therefore with it] constitutes concrete things. Nevertheless, though we speak in this way, concrete things are the Way and the Way is concrete things. So long as the Way obtains, it does not matter whether it is present or future, or whether it is the self or others.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 527)

Thus, for Cheng Hao, the internal and the external, the transcendent and the immanent are united. Again, he said,

> The investigation of principle to the utmost, the full development of nature, and the fulfillment of destiny (*ming*) – these three things are to be accomplished simultaneously. There is basically no time sequence among them. The investigation of principle to the utmost should not be regarded merely as a matter of knowledge. If one really investigate principle to the utmost, even one's nature and destiny can be fulfilled.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 531)

Obviously, for Cheng Hao, investigation of principle has nothing to do with empirical generalization, it is enlightenment by personal realization of the Way. He found that "Principle and the mind are one, and man cannot put them together as one" (Chan 1963a: 536). He declared:

> There is one basis for the Way. Some have said that it is better to embrace the mind with sincerity than to embrace sincerity with the mind, and it is better to enter into man and things with sincerity than to become a triad with Heaven and Earth with it. That would mean two bases. To know that there

are not two bases is the way to be genuinely respectful and to bring peace to the world.

(Chan 1963a: 537)

Cheng Hao's wisdom was highly regarded by his peers. It was to reply to his uncle Zhang Zai's query that he wrote the famous letter on Calming Human Nature in which he said:

> By calmness of nature we mean that one's nature is calm whether it is in a state of activity or in a state of tranquility. One does not lean forward or backward to accommodate things, nor does he make any distinction between the internal and external. To regard things outside the self as external, and force oneself to conform to them, is to regard one's nature as divided into the internal and the external. Furthermore, if one's nature is conceived to be following external things, then, while it is outside what is it that is within the self? To conceive one's nature thus is to have the intention of getting rid of external temptations, but to fail to realize that human nature does not possess the two aspects of internal and external. Since one holds that things internal and things external form two different bases, how can one hastily speak of the calmness of human nature?
>
> The constant principle of Heaven and Earth is that their mind is in all things, and yet they have no mind of their own. The constant principle of the sage is that his feelings are in accord with all creation, and yet he has no feelings of his own. Therefore, for the training of the superior man there is nothing better than to become broad and extremely impartial and to respond spontaneously to all things as they come. The *Book of Changes* says, "Firm correctness brings good fortune and prevents all occasions for repentance. If he is hesitant in his movements, only his friends will follow his purpose." If one merely attempts to remove external temptations, then no sooner do some disappear in the east than others will arise in the west. Not only is one's time limited, but the source of temptation is inexhaustible and therefore cannot be removed.

(Chan 1963a: 525–6)

It is clear that Cheng Hao's emphasis had shifted from cosmological speculations to self-discipline. And what he said about calmness of nature was none other than calmness of mind-heart. And Cheng Hao was leading the way among his peers. For Cheng Hao, the concrete manifestation of *li* in humans is none other than the Confucian *ren* (仁). He wrote the famous essay "On Understanding the Nature of *Ren* (Humanity)" which may be quoted as follows:

> The student must first of all understand the nature of *ren*. The man of *ren* forms one body with all things without any differentiation. Righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness are all [expressions of] *ren*.

[One's duty] is to understand this principle (*li*) and preserve *ren* with sincerity and seriousness (*jing* 敬), that is all. There is no need for caution and control. Nor is there any need for exhaustive search. Caution is necessary when one is mentally negligent, but if one is not negligent, what is the necessity for caution? Exhaustive search is necessary when one has not understood principle, but if one preserves *ren* long enough, it will automatically dawn on him. Why should he have to depend on exhaustive search? Nothing can be equal to this Way (*Dao*, i.e, *ren*). It is so vast that nothing can adequately explain it. All operations of the universe are our operations. Mencius said that 'all things are already complete in oneself' and that one must 'examine oneself and be sincere [or absolutely real]' and only then will there be great joy. If one examines himself and finds himself not yet sincere, it means there is still an opposition between the two [the self and the non-self]. Even if one tries to identify the self with the non-self, one still does not achieve unity. How can one have joy? The purpose of [Zhang Zai's] "Western Inscription" is to explain this substance [of complete unity] fully. If one preserves it (*ren*) with this idea, what more is to be done? 'Always be doing something without expectation. Let the mind not forget its objective, but let there be no artificial effort to help it grow.' Not the slightest effort is exerted! This is the way to preserve *ren*. As *ren* is preserved, the self and the other are then identified.

For our innate knowledge of good and innate ability to do good are originally not lost. However, because we have not gotten rid of the mind dominated by habits, we must preserve and exercise our original mind, and in time old habits will be overcome. This principle is extremely simple; the only danger is that people will not be able to hold on to it. But if we practice it and enjoy it, there need be no worry of our being unable to hold on to it.

(Chan 1963a: 523–4)

Strangely enough, Zhu Xi left this essay out of his anthology, because he felt it is too broad and may easily be misunderstood. Perhaps it is because Zhu Xi favored the gradual approach in self-discipline, while Cheng Hao was taking the sudden approach. While Cheng Hao was short in analytical skills, he excelled in personal realization of *ren* in his life. Only one who has had firsthand experience practicing *ren* could write an essay like this. For him, *ren*, *li*, and *dao* are but different names for the same thing; in effect, even righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness are nothing but the manifestations of *ren*. He had strong faith in the human ability to realize *ren* in one's life. There is no cleavage between Heaven and human, and there is no gap between knowledge and action. Mou Zong-san listed seven quotations that best characterized Cheng Hao's understanding of *ren* (Mou 1969: 3.231):

1 "The man of *ren* forms one body with all things without any differentiation" (Chan 1963a: 523).
2 "A book on medicine describes paralysis of the four limbs as absence of *ren*. This is an excellent description" (Chan 1963a: 530).

3 "A student should understand the substance of *ren* and make it concretely part of his own self. Then all that is necessary is to nourish it with moral principles" (Chan 1963a: 531).
4 'Feeling the purse is the best way to embody *ren*" (Chan 1963a: 535).
5 "Observe the chicks. (One can see *ren* in this way.)" (ibid.)
6 "Observe the way that Heaven and Earth produce all things" (Liu 1998: 118).
7 "The most impressive aspect of things is their spirit of life. This is what is meant by origination being the chief quality of goodness. This is *ren*" (Chan 1963a: 539).

7 Cheng Yi's Dualistic Philosophy

Cheng Yi was only one year younger than Cheng Hao, but he had always followed the lead of his elder brother. It appeared that both had the same aspiration toward personal realization of the sagely way. Because they were seen by themselves and by their disciples to be in basic agreement, many of the recorded sayings by them did not specify who said what. This posed a serious problem for students of intellectual historians. As was well known, the temperaments of the two brothers were completely different: while Cheng Hao was like gentle spring breeze, Cheng Yi was like rough autumn wind. Cheng Hao praised his brother as a great teacher, because he was strict. And since Cheng Yi survived Cheng Hao by more than twenty years, it should be no surprise that his influence was greater than his brother's. On closer scrutiny, however, despite their agreement in strong commitment to *ren* and to *li*, there were subtle and essential differences in their thoughts that escaped their own notice. Mou Zong-san for the first time captured these differences and put them in bold relief (Mou 1969: 3.232). Cheng Yi's understanding of *ren* in contrast to Cheng Hao is best characterized by the following statements:

1 "But love is feeling whereas humanity is the nature" (Chan 1963a: 559).
2 "Essentially speaking, the way of *ren* may be expressed in one word, namely, impartiality. However, impartiality is but the principle of *ren*; it should not be equated with *ren* itself. When one makes impartiality the substance of his person, that is *ren*" (Chan 1963a: 556).
3 "For humanity is nature, while filial piety and brotherly respect are its function. There are in our nature only humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, where do filial piety and brotherly respect come in?" (Chan 1963a: 559–60).
4 "The mind is the principle of production. As there is the mind, a body must be provided for it so it can produce. The feeling of commiseration is the principle of production in man" (Chan 1963a: 569).
5 "The mind is comparable to seeds of grain. The nature of growth is *ren*" (Chan 1963a: 560).

As can be seen, Cheng Yi was highly analytical in his thought. Without realizing it, Cheng Yi opened up a new direction in Neo-Confucian thought that was further developed by, and found mature expression in, Zhu Xi's works. Such a remarkable

phenomenon has not been studied extensively until Mou Zong-san published his monumental work on Neo-Confucian philosophy, *Xin-Ti-Yu-Xing-Ti* (Mou 1968–9). According to him, even though Cheng Yi also took *ren* to be the principle of production (creativity), he was not satisfied with *ren* as the ultimate source of all values; rather, he drew a sharp distinction between the substance and the function of *ren*. For him, *ren* pertains to nature, while love, the manifestation of *ren*, pertains only to feeling. While nature is principle (*li*), which is universal and eternal, feeling is material force (*qi*), which is concrete and subject to change. Principle and material force are inseparable, but they must be kept distinct from each other and should not be confused with each other. For Cheng Hao, what is metaphysical and what is concrete are two sides of the same coin: one is in the other, and the other is in the one. For Cheng Yi, however, what is metaphysical must be embodied in what is concrete, but the two have completely different characteristics and should never be confused with each other.

Mou finds that for Cheng Hao, *li* is both existing and also dynamic, it is the unitary source of all beings; while for Cheng Yi, *li* is the metaphysical principle behind change, it is itself eternal and beyond change (Mou 1968: 1.44–5). As *li* only exists and does not change, there must be a material basis for change, *qi* is that which actually changes according to *li*. For Cheng Hao, there is only one foundation. For Cheng Yi, however, *li* is metaphysical and *qi* is concrete, the two work intimately together to form the universe, but they must be kept distinct and should never be confused with each other. In effect, a dualism surreptitiously replaces the monism of Cheng Hao, which Mou believes characterizes the orthodox way of Confucian thinking from Confucius and Mencius to Zhou Dun-yi and Zhang Zai. Ironically, however, Zhu Xi, following the lead of Cheng Yi, developed a grand system of thought, honored as the orthodoxy since the Yuan dynasty. Actually it was the side branch that took the position of the orthodoxy (Mou 1968: 1.41–60). Thus, *Cheng-Zhu-li-xue* can only be referred to the study of principle according to Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, not applicable to Cheng Hao. This trend of thought was later countered by *Lu-Wang-xin-xue*, the study of mind-heart, which became the main stream in Ming Neo-Confucian philosophy (Mou 1979).[3]

Now more details on Cheng Yi's understanding of *li* and *qi*. He said:

> "The successful movement of *yin* and *yang* (passive and active cosmic forces) constitutes the Way (*Dao*)." The Way is not the same as *yin* and *yang* but that by which *yin* and *yang* succeed each other. It is like Change, which is the succession of closing (contracting) and opening (expanding).
>
> (Chan 1963a: 552)

Yin and *yang* are the two material forces, they work incessantly according to the Way, i.e., the transcendent *li* (principle). Cheng Yi elaborated as follows:

> "The successive movement of *yin* and *yang* constitutes the Way." This principle is very profound and cannot be explained. The Way is that

through which *yin* and *yang* operate. The very term "material force" implies a duality, and the very expression "opening and closing" implies one thing acting on another. Wherever there is a duality, there is always such an action. The Way is that through which opening and closing operate, and opening and closing are the same as *yin* and *yang*. It is wrong for the Daoists to say that material force comes from the vacuity. There is no time sequence in *yin* and *yang* or in opening and closing. It should not be said that there is *yin* today and *yang* tomorrow. Take, for example, man's body and shadow. As they are simultaneous, it should not be said that a man has his body today and his shadow tomorrow. To have them is to have them at the same time.

(Chan 1963a: 557)

In other words, according to principle, the dual forces of *yin* and *yang* always work as a team without beginning or end. Furthermore, the material forces come and go, they perish and never return, as he said:

If we say that the material force which has already returned [to nature] must be needed to become once the expanding material force, such a theory would be entirely at odds with the transformation of Heaven and Earth. The transformation of Heaven and Earth naturally produces and reproduces without end. What is the need for any physical form that has perished or material force that has returned [to nature] to constitute creation? Let us take an example near at hand in our own body. The opening and closing, going and coming [of the material or vital force] can be seen in breathing. It is not necessary to depend on inhaling the already exhaled breath for the second time in order to breath out. Material (vital) force naturally produces it. The material force of man is produced from the true source (*zhen-yuan*, true origin). The material force of Nature also naturally produces and reproduces without end. Take, for example, the case of tides. They dry up because *yang* (the sun) is very strong. When *yin* (the moon) is strong and tides are produced, it is not that the dried-up water is used to produce them. They are produced by themselves. Going and coming, and expansion and contraction, are but principle. As there is growth, there is decline; as there is morning, there is evening; and as there is going, there is coming. The universe is like a vast furnace. What cannot be burned up?

(Chan 1963a: 553)

Cheng Yi, however, was not interested in cosmological speculation at all; all he cared was that *li* and *qi* worked as a team in the universe and in human lives. To apply his understanding of *li* and *qi* to human lives, he had this to say about humanity:

It is up to you gentlemen to think for yourselves, gather and examine what the sages and worthies have said about it, and personally realize what

humanity is. Because Mencius said, "The feeling of commiseration is what we call humanity," later scholars have therefore considered love to be humanity. The feeling of commiseration is of course [an expression of] love. But love is feeling whereas humanity is the nature. How can love be taken exclusively as humanity? Mencius said that the feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity. Since it is called the beginning of humanity, it should not be called humanity itself. It is wrong for Han Yu to say universal love is humanity. A man of humanity of course loves universally. But one may not therefore regard universal love as humanity.

(Chan 1963a: 559)

Chang Yi highly praised Zhang Zai's distinction between physical nature (*qi*) and moral nature (*li*): "It would be incomplete to talk about the nature of man without including material force and unintelligible to talk about material force without including nature" (Chan 1963a: 552).

For Cheng Yi, the moral nature is always good, the physical nature is not evil in itself, but when feelings are followed not according to principle, then evil ensues. In this way he made the distinction between *tian-li* (heavenly principle) and *ren-yu* (human desires):

If one does not look, listen, speak, or move in violation of principle, that is propriety, for propriety is none other than principle. What is not according to heavenly principle, is human (selfish) desire. In that case, even if one has the intention to do good, it will still be contrary to propriety. When there is no human (selfish) desire, then all will be heavenly principle.

(Chan 1963a: 553)

Cheng Yi also endorsed Zhang Zai's distinction between empirical (ordinary) knowledge and moral (personal) knowledge:

The knowledge obtained through hearing and seeing is not knowledge obtained through moral nature. When a thing (the body) comes into contact with things, the knowledge so obtained is not from within. This is what is meant by extensive learning and much ability today. The knowledge obtained from moral nature does not depend on seeing and hearing

(Chan 1963a: 570)

He gave a vivid illustration as follows:

True knowledge and ordinary knowledge are different. I once saw a farmer who had been wounded by a tiger. When someone said that a tiger was hurting people, everyone was startled. But in his facial expression the former reacted differently from the rest. Even a young boy knows that tigers can hurt people, but his is not true knowledge. It is true knowledge only if it is like the

farmer's. Therefore when men know evil and still do it, this also is not true knowledge. If it were, they would surely not do it.

(Chan 1963a: 551)

The Great Learning taught that "The extension of knowledge consists in the investigation of things." And Cheng Yi elaborated as follows:

To investigate things in order to understand principle to the utmost does not mean that it is necessary to investigate all things in the world. One has only to investigate the principle in one thing or one event to the utmost and the principle in other things or events can then be inferred. For example, when we talk about filial piety, we must find out what constitutes filial piety. If principle cannot be investigated to the utmost in one event, investigate another. One may begin with either the easy or the most difficult, depending on the degree of one's capacity. There are thousands of tracks and paths to go to the capital. Yet one can enter if he has found just one way. Principle can be investigated to the most [in this way] because all things share the same principle. Even the most insignificant of things and events has this principle.

(Chan 1963a: 557)

Clearly, what Cheng Yi pursued was not accumulation of empirical knowledge, as he said, "If one extends knowledge to the utmost, one will have wisdom. Having wisdom, one can then make choices" (Chan 1963a: 552). What he valued was some kind of enlightenment. Then even the extension of knowledge applies only to the state after the feelings are aroused, there is the need to discipline the mind before the feelings are aroused, as intimated by *The Doctrine of the Mean*. Cheng Yi's answer to the problem was his famous statement that "Self-cultivation requires seriousness; the pursuit of learning depends on the extension of knowledge" (Chan 1963a: 562). These are like the two wings of a bird and two wheels of a cart. Cheng Yi had elaborated on self-cultivation by saying: "If one concentrates on one thing and does not get away from it and be serious in order to straighten the internal life, he will possess strong, moving power" (Chan 1963a: 552). Again: "Seriousness without fail is the state of equilibrium before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused. Seriousness is not equilibrium itself. But seriousness without fail is the way to attain equilibrium" (Chan 1963a: 552).

Cheng Yi's gradual approach in distinction from Cheng Hao's sudden approach in the end may also reach the state that mind and principle are one: "The mind of one man is one with the mind of Heaven and Earth. The principle of one thing is one with the principle of all things" (Chan 1963a: 551). And he was able to declare: "Substance and function come from the same source, and there is no gap between the manifest and the hidden" (Chan 1963a: 570). Finally Cheng Yi had also found expression for his understanding of the one thread running through all:

Empty and tranquil, and without any sign, and yet all things are luxuriantly

present. The state before there is any response to it is not an earlier one, and the state after there has been response to it is not a later one. It is like a tree 100 feet high. From the root to the branches and leaves, there is one thread running through all. We should not say that the state described above, which has neither form nor sign, depends on man to manipulate it when the occasion requires, in order to pull it into a track. Tracks are, after all, tracks. Actually there is only one track. [That is to say, all specific principles or tracks come from the same source.]

<div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 555–6)</div>

8 Zhu Xi's Search for Equilibrium and Harmony

Zhu Xi was born in Fujian. At a tender age he had already concerned himself with learning for one's self. He studied with Li Tong (李侗, Yan-bing 延平, 1093–1163), his father's friend, whose teacher's teacher was Yang Shi, a disciple of the Cheng brothers, and committed himself to the sagely way, no longer attracted by Buddhism and Daoism. Li Tong taught him that principle is one and manifestations are many, and in self-discipline one must sit quietly to clarify one's mind in order to realize the heavenly principle. But Zhu Xi was more interested in searching for meaning in the classics. After Li Tong died, however, Zhu Xi was troubled by problems of self-discipline without being able to receive guidance from his teacher. So he looked for help from his friend Zhang Shi (張栻, Nan-xian 南軒, 1133–80), who told him about what he had learned from his teacher Hu Hong (胡宏, Wu-feng 五峰, 1100–55), the leader of the Hunan school. Greatly inspired, Zhu Xi decided to meet with Zhang Shi in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the Hunan approach, which taught that "one must first examine and reflect before one can practice self-cultivation." This approach appeared to be in contrast to Li Tong's instruction that "one must first practice self-cultivation before one examines and reflects" (Liu 1998: 134–6).

As Zhu Xi's temperament tended to be dynamic, at first he followed the Hunan approach with great enthusiasm. But soon he found that at times he was caught by violent torrents and could not get a moment of rest. Thus, he recalled Li Tong's teaching "to realize equilibrium through temporary separation from daily activities", that put emphasis on practicing meditation until one has achieved equilibrium that would resist all interference by selfish desires. It was at this juncture that Zhu Xi rediscovered Cheng Yi's teachings, which helped him to form his own views that resolved all the conflicts in his mind. Zhu's mature conception was formulated in his "First Letter to the Gentleman of Hunan on Equilibrium and Harmony". This letter will be cited in its entirety because of the importance of its content.

> Concerning the meaning in the *Doctrine of the Mean* that equilibrium (*zhong*, centrality, the Mean) is the state before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused and that harmony is that state after they are aroused, because formerly I realized the substance of the operation of the mind, and, furthermore, because Master Cheng Yi had said that "whenever we talk about

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the mind, we refer to the state after the feelings are aroused," I looked upon the mind as the state after the feelings are aroused and upon nature as the state before the feelings are aroused. However, I have observed that there are many inconsistencies in Master Cheng's works, I have therefore thought the matter over, and consequently realized that in my previous theory not only are the [contrasting] terms "mind" and "nature" improper but the efforts in my daily task also completely lack a great foundation. Therefore the loss has not been confined to the meaning of words.

The various theories in Master Cheng's *Wen-Ji* (Collection of literary works) and *Yi-Shu* (Surviving works) seem to hold that before there is any sign of thought or deliberation and prior to the arrival of [stimulus] of external things, there is the state before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused. At this time, the state is identical with the substance of the mind, which is absolutely tranquil and inactive, and the nature endowed by Heaven should be completely embodied in it. Because it is neither excessive nor insufficient, and is neither unbalanced nor one-sided, it is called equilibrium. When it is acted upon and immediately penetrates all things, the feelings are then aroused. In this state the functioning of the mind can be seen. Because it never fails to attain the proper measure and degree and has nowhere deviated from the right, it is called harmony. This is true because of the correctness of the human mind and the moral character of the feelings and nature.

However, the state before the feelings are aroused cannot be sought and the state after they are aroused permits no manipulation. So long as in one's daily life the effort at seriousness and cultivation is fully extended and there are no selfish desires to disturb it, then before the feelings are aroused it will be as clear as a mirror and as calm as still water, and after the feelings are aroused it will attain due measure and degree without exception. This is the essential task in everyday life. As to examination when things occur and seeking understanding through inference when we come into contact with things, this must also serve as the foundation. If we observe the state before the feelings are aroused, what is contained in the state before the feelings are aroused can surely be understood in silence. This is why in his answers to Su Ji-ming, Master Cheng discussed and argued back and forth in the greatest detail and with extreme care, but in the final analysis what he said was no more than the word 'seriousness' (*ching* 敬). This is the reason why he said, "Seriousness without fail is the way to attain equilibrium," and "For entering the Way there is nothing better than seriousness. No one can ever extend knowledge to the utmost without depending on seriousness," and again, "Self-cultivation requires seriousness; the pursuit of learning depends on the extension of knowledge."

All along in my discussions and thinking I have simply considered the mind to be the state after the feelings are aroused, and in my daily affairs I have also merely considered examining and recognizing the clues [of activity of feelings] as the starting points. Consequently I have neglected daily self-

cultivation, so that my mind is disturbed in many ways and lacks depth and purity. Also, when it is expressed in speech or action, it is always characterized by a sense of urgency and lacking in reserve; and there is no longer any disposition toward ease or profundity. For a single mistake in one's viewpoint can lead to as much harm as this. This is something we must not overlook.

When Master Cheng said, "Whenever we talk about the mind we refer to the state after the feelings are aroused," he referred [only] to the mind of an infant [whose feelings have already been aroused]. When he said, "Whenever we talk about the mind . . ." he expressed it mistakenly and therefore admitted this and corrected himself [by saying, "This is of course incorrect, for the mind is one. Sometimes we refer to its substance (namely, the state of absolute tranquility and inactivity) and sometimes we refer to its function (namely, its being acted upon and immediately penetrating all things). It depends on one's point of view."] We should not hold on to something which he had already corrected and on that basis doubt the correctness of his various theories, nor simply dismiss it as incorrect without examining the fact that he was referring to something else. What do you gentleman think about this?

(Chan 1963a: 600–2)

From this letter, we can see that Zhu Xi's striving after a way to realize equilibrium and harmony is indeed a paradigmatic case. Contrary to the popular notion that traditional Chinese scholars had a tendency to obey authority and conform to accepted social norms, the great thinkers in the Neo-Confucian tradition, like Zhu Xi, were fiercely independent men who engaged in personal quests for the truth by raising issues on a conscious level. The purpose of learning was self-realization. The emphasis was on existential and practical solutions for problems to be faced by one who pursued the sagely way. Neo-Confucian philosophies show very different characteristics from ancient Greek philosophies which put emphasis on cosmological and metaphysical speculations. No doubt Neo-Confucian philosophies also had their worldviews, but they came after the reflections on *xin* (心 mind-heart) and *xing* (性 nature). By going back to Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi believed that he had been able to work out a synthesis that balanced the two approaches by Li Tong and Hu Hong. Many later scholars endorsed Zhu Xi's view as representing the orthodox transmission of the teachings of the sages, until Mou Zong-san showed that such was really not the case.

Mou Zong-san pointed out that both Li Tong's and Hu Hong's approach can be traced back to Cheng Hao, though they took different routes to reach the same destination. Li practiced sitting in meditation that allowed him to temporarily separate from daily activities in order to realize equilibrium that finds correlation with the ultimate creative ontological principle. Zhu Xi, however, mistook Li's sitting in meditation as merely a means to calm one's mind. Likewise he failed to understand Hu Hong, whose examination of the mind was just another way to recover the original mind as taught by Mencius, not to examine and reflect after the feelings are aroused. These two approaches presuppose that by realizing the ontological principle of creativity within ourselves, whether it is called *zhong* (中 centrality or equilibrium),

ren (仁 humanity), or *cheng* (誠 sincerity), they amount to the same thing, the rest will follow. But Cheng Yi did not think along these lines. His mind was analytical, for him *zhong* was an adjective, which means holding the middle position. In tranquility the mind maintains its equilibrium, then in activity the mind follows the principle to respond to different situations. Thus Cheng Hao's doctrine of one foundation was transformed into a dualistic philosophy. And Zhu Xi followed Cheng Yi's lead to further develop a dualistic metaphysics of *li* (principle) and *qi* (material force), which are neither separable from nor mixed with each other with a tripartite division of *xin* (mind-heart), *xing* (nature), and *qing* (feelings). For Cheng Hao and his followers, *ben-xin* (the original mind) and *xing* (nature) are originally one. But for Chen Yi and Zhu Xi, it is only after a long process of self-discipline that mind and principle can become one. Therefore Mou Zong-san was right to point out that Zhu did not work out a real synthesis of Li Tong and Hu Hong's approaches, but rather followed Cheng Yi to develop a very different approach in the pursuit of the sagely way.

9 Zhu Xi's Quest for Humanity

At about the same time that Zhu Xi and Zhang Shi discussed problems relating to *The Doctrine of the Mean*, they also engaged themselves in the quest for humanity (*ren*). Both wrote articles on humanity, and exchanged many letters on the subject, until finally Zhu Xi produced his famous essay on humanity, which will be quoted extensively as follows:

> "The mind of Heaven and Earth is to produce things." In the production of man and things, they receive the mind of Heaven and Earth as their mind. Therefore, with reference to the character of the mind, although it embraces and penetrates all and leaves nothing to be desired, nevertheless, one word will cover all of it, namely, *ren* (humanity). Let me try to explain fully.
>
> The moral qualities of the mind of Heaven and Earth are four: origination, flourish, advantages, and firmness. And the Principle of origination unites and controls them all. In their operation they constitute the course of the four seasons, and the vital force of spring permeates all. Therefore in the mind of man there are also four moral qualities – namely, *ren*, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom – and *ren* embraces them all. In their emanation and function, they constitute the feeling of love, respect, being right, and discrimination between right and wrong – and the feeling of commiseration pervades them all. Therefore in discussing the mind of Heaven and Earth, it is said, "Great is *qian* (Heaven), the originator!" and "Great is *kun* (Earth), the originator!" Both substance and function of the four moral qualities are thus fully implied without enumerating them. In discussing the excellence of man's mind, it is said, "*Ren* is man's mind." Both substance and function of the four moral qualities are thus fully presented without mentioning them. For *ren* as constituting the Way (*Dao*) consists of the fact that the mind of Heaven and Earth to produce things is present in everything. Before feelings are aroused this

substance is already existent in its completeness. After feelings are aroused, its function is infinite. If we can fully practice love and preserve it, then we have in it the spring of all virtues and the root of all good deeds. This is why in the teachings of the Confucian school, the student is always urged to exert anxious and unceasing effort in the pursuit of *ren*.

<div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 593–4)</div>

This essay shows clearly the synthetic character of Zhu Xi's mind. The Neo-Confucian philosophers identified humanity with *sheng* (creativity), and believed in the unity between Heaven and Earth on the one hand and humanity on the other. Zhu Xi absorbed Han cosmology into his system and worked out an organic naturalism lauded by Joseph Needham (Needham 1956). *Ren* is seen here as "character of the mind", which correlates to the mind of Heaven and Earth characterized by creativity. In the second half of the essay, Zhu Xi clarified his relation to Cheng Yi:

> *Someone said*: According to our explanation, is it not wrong for Master Cheng to say that love is feeling while *ren* is nature and love should not be regarded as *ren*?
>
> *Answer*: Not so. What Master Cheng criticized was the application of the term to the expression of love. What I maintain is that the term should be applied to the principle of love. For although the spheres of man's nature and feelings are different, their mutual penetration is like the blood system in which each part has its own relationship. When have they become sharply separated and been made to have nothing to do with each other? I was just now worrying about students' reciting Master Cheng's words without inquiring into their meaning, and thereby coming to talk about *ren* as clearly apart from love. I have therefore purposely talked about this to reveal the hidden meaning of Master Cheng's words, and you regard my ideas as different from his. Are you not mistaken?

<div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 595)</div>

Here *ren* is said to be the "principle of love". Since then Zhu Xi settled into the formula that "*ren* is character of the mind and principle of love". Zhu Xi followed Cheng Yi's lead to adopt a tripartite division of *xin* (mind), *xing* (nature), and *qing* (feelings). *Ren* is nature, love is feeling, and the mind unites nature and feelings. In the meantime, nature is principle, while feelings are material force. What about the mind, then? For Cheng Yi, principle only exists and does not change, thus the highly active mind cannot be principle. Following this line of thought Zhu Xi sees the mind as made of the most refined and subtle kind of material force, which has the ability to penetrate into principles. In this fashion Zhu Xi further developed a metaphysics of *li* and *qi*, which will be elaborated later. Suffice it to say here that Cheng-Zhu's principle and material forces work intimately as a team, it simply does not have the problem of separation between ideas and things as in a Platonic dualism. Once Zhu Xi reached his own understanding of humanity, he was ready to criticize rival theories.

Someone said: The followers of Master Cheng have given many explanations of *ren*. Some say that love is not *ren*, and regard the unity of all things and the self as the substance of *ren*. Others maintain that love is not *ren* but explain *ren* in terms of the possession of consciousness by the mind. If what you say is correct, are they all wrong?

Answer: From what they call the unity of all things and the self, it can be seen that *ren* involves love for all, but unity is not the reality which makes *ren* a substance. From what they call the mind's possession of consciousness, it can be seen that *ren* includes wisdom, but that is not the real reason why *ren* is so called. If you look up Confucius' answer to (his pupil) Zi Gong's question whether conferring extensive benefit on the people and bringing salvation to all (will constitute *ren*) and also Master Cheng's statement that *ren* is not to be explained in terms of consciousness, you will see the point. How can you still explain *ren* in these terms?

<div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 595–6)</div>

The two theories that Zhu Xi rejected were transmitted by Yang Shi and Xie Shang-cai (謝上蔡 1050–1103) respectively. Both had their origin in Cheng Hao's essay: "On Understanding the Nature of *Ren* (Humanity)". Zhu Xi's criticisms of both were hard:

[T]o talk about *ren* in general terms of the unity of things and the self [by Yang] will lead people to be vague, confused, neglectful, and make no effort to be alert. The bad effect – and there has been – may be to consider other things as oneself. To talk about love in specific terms of consciousness [by Xie] will lead people to be nervous, irascible, and devoid of any quality of depth. The bad effect – and there has been – may be to consider desire as principle. In one case, (the mind) forgets (its objective). In the other (there is artificial effort to) help (it grow). Both are wrong.

<div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 596)</div>

Zhu Xi did not name any names in his criticisms. But we all know whom he referred to. These criticisms were totally consistent with his reservations about Li Tong's and Hu Hong's approaches. Li Tong's way of self-discipline can be traced back to Yang Shi, while Hu Hong's family tradition was greatly indebted to Xie Shang-cai. As Yang and Xie both derived their ideas from Cheng Hao, now we can see more clearly why Zhu Xi did not want to include Cheng Hao's essay "On Understanding the Nature of *Ren*" in his anthology.

10 Zhu Xi's Metaphysics of Principle and Material Force

It was only in Zhu Xi that the dualistic view was developed into a comprehensive philosophy. For Zhu Xi, principle is "incorporeal, one, eternal and unchanging, uniform, constituting the essence of things, always good, but it does not contain a

dichotomy of good and evil, does not create things" (Chan 1963a: 590). In contrast, material force is "physical, many, transitory and changeable, unequal in things, constituting their physical substance, involving both good and evil (depending on whether its endowment in things is balanced or partial), and is the agent of creation" (ibid.). It is the interplay of principle and material force that produces the world order.

> Throughout the universe there are both principle and material force. Principle refers to the Way, which exists before physical form [and is without it] and is the root from which all things are produced. Material force refers to material objects, which exists after physical form [and is with it]; it is the instrument by which things are produced. Therefore in the production of man and things, they must be endowed with principle before they have their nature, and they must be endowed with material force before they have physical form.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 636)

Principle is without any doubt ontologically prior. And it is only because this principle is a principle of creativity that things in the world, including material force, would come into being. But the world of principle or principles is a pure, clean, vast but vacuous world. It is the indispensable ground for the present world order to emerge. But left in itself, it cannot do anything. Principle must attach to material force in order to be realized in the world. Zhu Xi finds that in a sense material force is strong, while principle is weak. Not only is material force needed for principle to be actualized, it also imposes its character on things in the process of creation and transformation. The origin of evils and limitations, for Zhu Xi, lies certainly in material force, not in principle itself. In the process of transformation, myriad things are created and values are achieved, but principle in its purity cannot be fully realized in an actual world order – hence, evils and limitations become the results. For Zhu Xi, principle or nature is not different in man and other living species in the world. The only difference lies in that in other living species the material force received is turbid, so that they are not in a position to manifest principles in a conscious fashion. He said,

> Nature is like water. If it flows in a clean channel, it is clear, if it flows in a dirty channel, it becomes turbid. When physical nature that is clear and balanced is received, it will be preserved in its completeness. This is true of man. When physical nature that is turbid and unbalanced is received, it will be obscured. This is true of animals. Material force may be clear or turbid. That received by men is clear and that received by animals is turbid. Men mostly have clear material force; hence the difference between them and animals. However, there are some whose material force is turbid, and they are not far removed from animals.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 625)

Clearly, there was a strong empirical tendency in Zhu Xi's thought. By adding material force in his conceptual framework, Zhu Xi was able to provide rational

explanations for many seemingly puzzling phenomena. Under his guidance, a student of his worked out a very sophisticated theory concerning the nature of man and the nature of things. It is worthwhile to quote the lengthy discussion as follows:

Chi [Chen Chi] submitted to the teacher the following statement concerning a problem in which he was still in doubt: The nature of man and the nature of things are in some respects the same and in other respects different. Only after we know wherein they are similar and wherein they are different can we discuss nature. Now, as the Great Ultimate begins its activity, the two material forces (*yin* and *yang*, passive and active cosmic forces) assume physical form, and as they assume physical form, the myriad transformations of things are produced. Both man and things have their origin here. This is where they are similar. But the two material forces and the Five Agents, in their fusion and intermingling, and in their interaction and mutual influence, produce innumerable changes and inequalities. This is where they are different. They are similar in regard to principle, but different in respect to material force. There must be principle before there can be that which constitutes the nature of man and things. Consequently, what makes them similar cannot make them different. There must be material force before there can be that which constitutes their physical form. Consequently, what makes them different cannot make them similar. For this reason in your *Da-Xue-Huo-Wen* (Questions and Answers on the Great Learning), you said, "From the point of view of principle, all things have one source, and of course man and things cannot be distinguished as higher and lower creatures. From the point of view of material force, that which receives it in its perfection and is unimpeded becomes man, while those that receive it partially and are obstructed become things. Because of this, they cannot be equal, but some are higher and others are lower." However, while in respect to material force they are unequal, they both possess it as the stuff of life, and while in respect of principle they are similar, in receiving it to constitute his nature, man alone different from other things. This consciousness and movement proceed from material force while humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom proceed from principle. Both man and things are capable of consciousness and movement, but though things possess humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, they cannot have them completely. Now Gao Zi [ca 420–ca 350 BCE] pointed to material force and neglected principle. He was confined to what is similar and ignorant of what is different, and was therefore attacked by Mencius. In your [*Meng-Zi*] *Ji-Zhu* (Collected Commentaries on the *Book of Mencius*) you maintain that "in respect to material force, man and things do not seem to differ in consciousness and movement, but in respect to principle, the endowment of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are necessarily imperfect in things". Here you say that man and things are similar in respect to material force but different in respect to principle, in order to show that man is higher and cannot be equaled by things. In the *Da-Xue-Huo-Wen*, you say that

man and things are similar in respect to principle but different in respect to material force, in order to show that the Great Ultimate is not deficient in anything and cannot be interfered with by any individual. Looked at in that way, there should not be any question. When someone was puzzled by the discrepancies in the *Da-Xue-Huo-Wen* and *Ji-Zhu,* I explained it in this way. Is this correct? The Teacher commented: On this subject you have discussed very clearly. It happened that last evening a friend talked about this matter and I briefly explained to him, but not as systematically as you have done in this statement.

(Chan 1963a: 621–2)

Zhu Xi's ideas were well thought out, a comprehensive picture of nature can only be brought out by combining these two perspectives. Once he developed a comprehensive theory of nature, other related problems also popped up. He was engaged in a rather interesting debate on whether dry and withered things also have nature. As Zhu Xi identified nature with principle, he had to say that dry and withered things also possess nature. From his viewpoint, not only is the Great Ultimate in everything, but each and everything has a specific principle embodied in it (Liu 1998: 166–7). Zhu Xi also made some very interesting remarks on the problem of consciousness:

Question: Man and birds and animals all have consciousness, although with varying degrees of penetration or impediment. Do plants also have consciousness?

Answer: Yes, they also have. Take a pot of flowers, for example. When watered, they flourish gloriously, but if broken off, they will wither and drop. Can they be said to be without consciousness? Zhou Mao-shu (Zhou Dun-yi) did not cut the grass growing outside his window and said that he felt toward the grass as he felt toward himself. This shows that plants have consciousness [insofar as it has the spirit of life]. But the consciousness of animals is inferior to that of man, and that of plants is inferior to that of animals. Take also the example of the drug rhubarb, which, when taken, acts as a purgative, and the drug aconite, which, when taken, produces heat (vitality and strength). In these cases, the consciousness acts in one direction only.

When asked further whether decayed things also have consciousness, the Teacher said: They also have, as when burned into ashes, made into broth, and drunk, they will be caustic or bitter.

(Chan 1963a: 623)

Not only may these ideas be compared to Leibniz's; they are even closer to Whitehead's ideas. A whole cosmology may be constructed out of Zhu Xi's speculations.

11 Zhu Xi's Approach to Investigate Things and Principles

In the above we have learned that Zhu Xi started with an existential concern and ended with a comprehensive metaphysics of principle and material force. Though he did not shy away from theoretical considerations, his primary concern was still personal realization of the Way. Now we try to combine the theoretical and practical perspectives, study in depth the implications of the tripartite division of mind, nature, and feelings through his dualistic philosophy. His ideas were succinctly put in the following statement:

> The mind embraces all principles and all principles are complete in this single entity, the mind. If one is not able to preserve the mind, he will be unable to investigate principle to the utmost. If he is unable to investigate principle to the utmost, he will be unable to exert his mind to the utmost.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 606)

This statement is short, but the implications are rich. For Zhu Xi, the mind and principle do have a very close relation between them, even though it falls short of identity. He said, "Without the mind, principle would have nothing in which to inhere" (Chan 1963a: 628). From the very start they pervade each other. The essence of the mind is that it can know principles and it can be the master of itself. But in actuality, it is often obstructed by selfish desires endowed by material force. Therefore, no effort can be spared to preserve the mind. The mind is where the principle of consciousness comes into union with material force so as to make consciousness possible. As consciousness is always consciousness of something, the way to preserve the mind is not just to contemplate on the mind but to investigate principle. When principle is investigated to the utmost, the mind will also be exerted to the utmost. Zhu Xi particularly appreciated one of the sayings by Shao Yong (邵雍) and interpreted the metaphor Shao used in such a way to illustrate his own point of view:

> Shao Yao-fu [Shao Yong, 1011–77] said that "nature is the concrete embodiment of the Way and the mind is the enclosure of the nature." This theory is very good. For the Way itself has no physical form or body; it finds it only in man's nature. But if there were no mind, where could nature be? There must be mind before nature can be gotten hold of and put forth into operation, for the principles contained in man's nature are humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, and these are concrete principles. We Confucianists regard nature as real, whereas Buddhists regard it as unreal. However, it is incorrect to equate mind with nature.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 615–6)

For Zhu Xi, the relation between nature and mind is exactly parallel to that between principle and material force; they are not to be mixed up with each other,

and yet they are not to be separated from each other. But this is not all there is to it; Zhu Xi followed Cheng Yi's lead, still had feelings to account for. He said:

> Some time ago I read statements by Wu-feng (Hu Hong) in which he spoke of the mind only in contrast to nature, leaving the feelings unaccounted for. Later when I read Heng-qu's (Zhang Zai's) doctrine that "the mind commands [unites] man's nature and feelings", I realized that it was a great contribution. Only then did I find a satisfactory account of the feelings. His doctrine agrees with that of Mencius. In the words of Mencius, "the feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity". Now humanity is nature, and commiseration is feeling. In this, the mind can be seen through the feelings. He further said, "Humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are rooted in the mind." In this, the mind is seen through nature. For the mind embraces both nature and the feelings. Nature is substance and feelings are function.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 631)

What is interesting here is that Mencius himself never made a sharp distinction between *xin* (the mind) and *qing* (feelings), and the term *qing* used by Mencius means only *qing-shi* (as is the case), which has nothing to do with feelings, even though it is not wrong to interpret commiseration as a feeling. Likewise, mind and nature were not sharply differentiated in Mencius' thought: the essential goodness of nature is seen through the essential goodness of mind-heart. For Zhu Xi, however, only the transcendent nature (principle) is good; the empirical mind (material force) can be either good by following principles or evil by acting against the principles (Liu 1982: 239–40). The tripartite division of mind, nature, and feelings was actually something new and quite original developed by Zhu Xi. To sum up, he said:

> Nature is the state before activity begins, the feelings are the state when activity has started, and the mind includes both of these states. For nature is the mind before it is aroused, while feelings are the mind after it is aroused as is expressed in [Zhang Zai's] saying, "The mind commands man's nature and feelings." Desire emanates from feelings. The mind is comparable to water, nature is comparable to the tranquility of still water, feeling is comparable to the flow of water, and desire is comparable to its waves. Just as there are good and bad waves, so there are good desires, such as "I want humanity," and bad desires which rush out like wild and violent waves. When bad desires are substantial, they will destroy the Principle of Heaven, as water bursts a dam and damages everything. When Mencius said that "feelings enable people to do good", he meant that the correct feelings flowing from our nature are originally all good.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 631)

As Zhu Xi had a strong empirical bent in his thought, in self-discipline, he followed Cheng Yi's gradual or aposteriori approach, not Cheng Hao's sudden or *a priori*

approach. The mind indeed owns an important place in Zhu Xi's philosophy. When the mind is alienated from nature and principle, feelings and desires will overflow and become totally out of control; evils will ensue as the inevitable consequences. It is no exaggeration to say that for Zhu Xi moral discipline is none other than discipline of the mind so that the mind will become one or united with principle and good feelings. A person will do good only when one's mind follows the lead of principle; hence seeking knowledge of principle becomes a most crucial issue in his philosophy. His approach in this sense is intellectual in character, even though he believes that knowledge and action always go together. It also appears that he does not see a sharp distinction between moral knowledge and natural knowledge, or knowledge of the 'ought' and knowledge of the 'is'. He interpreted the approach taught in *The Great Learning* precisely in this vein. He firmly believed that there is a correlation between the universe at large and the human mind. And the way to accumulate knowledge and to discipline the mind is a long and gradual process. As he saw it, the fifth chapter of commentary explaining the meaning of the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge was missing in the text of *The Great Learning*, and he ventured to supplement it with his own words as follows:

> The meaning of the expression "The perfection of knowledge depends on the investigation of things (*ge-wu*)" is this: If we wish to extend our knowledge to the utmost, we must investigate the principles of all things we come into contact with, for the intelligent mind of man is certainly formed to know, and there is not a single thing in which its principles do not inhere. It is only because all principles are not investigated that man's knowledge is incomplete. For this reason, the first step in the education of the adult is to instruct the learner, in regard to all things in the world, to proceed from what knowledge he has of their principles, and investigate further until he reaches the limit. After exerting himself in this way for a long time, he will one day achieve a wide and far-reaching penetration. Then the qualities of all things, whether internal or external, the refined or the coarse, will all be apprehended, and the mind, in its total substance and great functioning, will be perfectly intelligent. This is called the investigation of things. This is called the perfection of knowledge.
>
> <div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 89)</div>

It is amazing that Zhu Xi was confident enough to supplement his own words in place of the words of the sages and worthies. Since then there have been no end of controversies on these issues; we will not go into them for the time being. Let us try our best to understand what Zhu Xi meant to convey to us in this famous paragraph. Apparently he did not mean to establish a system of empirical knowledge, nor did he make the absurd claim of omniscience. As principle is one, manifestations (concrete principles) are many, by taking the gradual approach, up to a certain point, there is a leap so that there is the enlightenment about the ontological principle of creativity, which provides us guidance for personal realization of the Way. And we will hold on

to it without deviation from our ultimate commitment to the principle and act accordingly throughout the rest of our lives.

Postscript

In the above, I have made exposition of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism according to the line of thought constructed by Zhu Xi. Zhu Xi's scholarship is vast and profound, and his activities broad and influential. Within the space available, I can only keep to the basics of his philosophical thought.[4] When Zhu Xi died, his teachings were condemned as false learnings. But soon his reputation was rehabilitated. In the Yuan dynasty his Commentaries on the Four Books were adopted as the basis of civil examinations until near the end of the last dynasty (Qing dynasty). None has exerted greater influence than him on Chinese intellectuals since Confucius. And only he had constructed a grand system of philosophy. His influence also spread to Korea and Japan, though naturally such is beyond the scope of our discussion. Zhu Xi has been the most controversial figure since his lifetime; some of the issues will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Derk Bodde had good reasons to translate *Dao-xue* (道學 Learning of *Dao*) into Neo-Confucianism, as he did not want to confuse it with *Dao-jia* (道家 Daoist philosophy) or *Dao-jiao* (道教 Daoist religion).
2. I have studied the debates between Zhu and Lu on the document in great detail, see Liu (1995).
3. Mou Zong-san believes that in the Northern Song, the three masters Zhou Dun-yi, Zhang Zai, and Cheng Hao all believed that *li* is both existing and dynamic. There was no division in Neo-Confucianism at that time. But once Zhu Xi followed Cheng Yi to form the school of Cheng-Zhu *li-xue*, it was countered by Lu-Wang *xin-xue*. Mou Zong-san believes further that Hu Hong made the attempt to return to the three masters in the Northern Song to put the emphasis again on *The Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Book of Changes*, and developed the idea that *xin* (the mind-heart) is the

manifestation of *xing* (the nature), and the two are actually one. But Zhu Xi criticized sharply Hu Hong's ideas. It was in the late Ming that Liu Zong-zhou (劉宗周 1578–1645), who had no connection with Hu Hong, developed similar ideas. Mou Zong-san thinks Hu-Liu formed the third school in Neo-Confucianism. But this is a controversial issue, which will not be covered in this chapter.

4.   Many things are left out in our treatment of Zhu Xi. For example, Zhu Xi's study of classics, see *Zhu-Zi-Xin-Xue-An* by Qian Mu (錢穆) (1971). Zhu Xi was also an influential political leader in his time, Yu Ying-shi (余英時) had done extensive research on this aspect, see his *magnum opus*: *Zhu-Xi-De-Li-Shi-Shi-Jie* (2003). In philosophy, Zhu Xi offered a naturalistic explanation of ghosts and spirits; interested readers may consult Wing-tsit Chan's *Source Book* (1963a) and my book on Zhu Xi in Chinese (Liu 1998) for other aspects of his world and life views.

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Chapter 13
NEO-CONFUCIANISM (II): FROM LU JIU-YUAN TO WANG YANG-MING

Shu-hsien Liu

1 Introduction

As has been shown, Neo-Confucianism is understood to be the mainstream thought through the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties; the two major schools were *Cheng-Zhu li-xue* (理學 learning of principle) and *Lu-Wang xin-xue* (心學 learning of mind-heart). In the last chapter we studied *li-xue*, in the present chapter we shall discuss *xin-xue*. Obviously the difference between the two schools does not lie in that the former emphasizes exclusively on principle, while the latter on mind-heart, as *xin* occupied a pivotal position in Zhu Xi's philosophy, while *li* was also a central idea in Lu Jin-yuan's thought. To be more precise, Cheng-Zhu's position is that the mind comprises principles, while Lu-Wang's position is that the mind is principle. Lu Jiu-yuan's thought and Wang Yang-ming's philosophy in particular will be discussed extensively in this chapter, followed by in-depth analysis of the thoughts of Wang Yang-ming's disciples. When Zhu Xi died, his followers just concentrated their efforts on promoting the grand master's teachings. But Wang Yang-ming not only taught different things in different areas and different periods of his life, but allowed his disciples to develop their own ideas. Therefore, after he died, his disciples gave very different interpretations of his thought, and were engaged in serious debates without reaching consensus. Eventually the conflicts of thought, meaningless empty talks, and unruly behaviors caused the downfall of the Neo-Confucianist movement. There was also a paradigm shift in the transitional period between the Ming and Qing dynasties.

2 The Debates at the Goose Lake Temple between Zhu Xi and Lu Jiu-yuan

First, let us start with Lu Jiu-yuan (陸九淵, 象山 Xiang-shan or Hsiang-shan, 1139–93), the initiator of the movement of *xin-xue*. Lu was a younger contemporary of Zhu Xi (1130–1200). At a very tender age he had already realized that 'the universe

is my mind, and my mind is the universe' (Chan 1963a: 579). As a young scholar, he had already built up his reputation in the circle of sagely learning. Lu Zu-qian was his examiner when he passed his civil service examinations. In 1175 after Zhu Xi and Lu Zu-qian worked together to compile the Neo-Confucian anthology: *Reflections of Things at Hand* (Chan trans. 1967), they stopped by Goose Lake Temple. Lu Zu-qian invited Lu Xiang-shan and his brother Fu-zhai (復齋) to come along for a gathering of scholars devoted to promote the sagely learning.[1] The purpose was to try and resolve differences in doctrines among those with similar goals. But the meeting was a failure, as Lu Xiang-shan recorded:

> Lu Bo-gong (呂伯恭, Lu Zu-qian, 1137–81) arranged a meeting at the Goose Lake Temple. My late elder brother Fu-zhai said to me, 'Bo-gung has invited Yuan-hui (Zhu Xi) to meet us particularly because we differ from him in doctrines' ... [Zhu Xi] was debating with my brother. I said, 'On the way I wrote a poem ...
>
>> Work that is easy and simple will in the end be lasting and great,
>> Understanding that is devoted to isolated details [or fragmented work] will end up in aimless drifting ...'
>
> When I recited my poem up to these lines, Yuan-hui's face turned pale.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 583)

Wing-tsit Chan's comment was as follows:

> This meeting in 1175 was one of the most celebrated in Chinese history. It was a dramatic meeting of the three leading scholars of the time. More important, it was an encounter of two sharply different ways of life – one for 'honoring the moral nature' and the other for 'following the path of inquiry and study'.
>
> (Ibid.)

Again, he said:

> These philosophical differences are as sharp as they are incompatible. Their opposition in the way of life, however, is even more direct. In Lu's opinion, the way of Zhu Xi was one of divided mind, aimless drifting, and devotion to isolated details that meant little to life. Instead, he advocated the simple, easy, and direct method of recovering one's original good nature, by having a firm purpose, by establishing the nobler part of one's nature, and by coming to grips with fundamentals.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 573)

After many years, when Zhu Xi looked for a compromise between the two positions, Lu's response was as follows:

> Zhu Yuan-hui (Zhu Xi) once wrote to one of his students saying, 'Lu Zi-jing (Lu Xiang-shan) taught people only the doctrine of "honoring the moral nature". Therefore those who have studied under him are mostly scholars who put their beliefs into practice. But he neglected to follow the path of study and inquiry. In my teaching is it not true that I have put somewhat more emphasis on "following the path of study and inquiry"? As a consequence, my pupils often do not approach his in putting beliefs into practice.' From this it is clear that Yuan-hui wanted to avoid two defects (failure to honor the moral nature and failure to study) and combine the two merits (following the path of study and inquiry and practicing one's beliefs). I do not believe this to be possible. If one does not know how to honor his moral nature, how can he talk about following the path of study and inquiry?
>
> (Chan 1963a: 582)

If the only issue was practice of virtues in sagely learning, certainly it was to Lu's advantage. No wonder Lu was super-confident on his own position. But real life often has to face more complicated issues than he thought, and Lu had a tendency to oversimplify issues. However, let us try our best to understand his position first, and suspend our criticisms for the time being.

3 Return to Mencius: Lu's Monistic Metaphysics and Its Implications

Lu Xiang-shan's approach was different not only from Cheng-Zhu's, but also from Zhou Dun-yi's, Zhang Zai's and Cheng Hao's. He went straight back to Mencius, as he said:

> My learning is different from that of others in the fact that with me every word comes spontaneously. Although I have uttered tens of thousands of words, they all are expressions of what is within me, and nothing more has been added. Recently someone has commended of me that aside from [Mencius'] saying, 'First build up the nobler part of your nature,' I had nothing clever. When I heard this, I said, 'Very true indeed'.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 582)

Mou Zong-san pointed out that Lu concentrated his effort on practice of virtues, lacked theoretical analysis, and found it difficult to talk about his philosophy. Consequently Mou did not write anything on Lu Xiang-shan's thought in his *magnum opus*: *Xin-Ti-Yu-Xing-Ti* (心體與性體 The Metaphysical Principle of the Mind and Nature) (Mou 1968–9) until ten years later. In *Chong-Lu-Xiang-Shan-Dao-Liu-Ji-Shan* (從陸象山到劉蕺山 From Lu Xiang-shan to Liu Ji-shan) (Mou 1979) Mou summarized Lu's thought in the following six items:

1 setting one's mind-heart to the Way;
2 building up the nobler part of one's nature;
3 manifesting the original mind;
4 mind is principle;
5 the easy and simple approach;
6 preservation and cultivation.

Mou pointed out that all these were based on Mencius. Therefore Zhu Xi's charges against Lu teaching Chan (Zen) Buddhism are totally groundless.

Now more details on Lu's thought. In contrast to Zhu's dualistic philosophy Lu taught a monistic metaphysics, as he said:

> The mind is one and principle is one. Perfect truth is a unity; the essential principle is never a duality. The mind and principle can never be separated into two. That is why Confucius said, 'There is one thread that runs through my doctrines,' and Mencius said, 'The Way is one and only one.'
>
> (Chan 1963a: 574)

There is a correlation between the cosmic Way and the human Way. For Lu,

> The Way fills the universe. It does not hide or escape from anything. With reference to Heaven, it is called *yin* and *yang* (passive and active cosmic forces). With reference to Earth, it is called strength and weakness. With reference to man, it is called humanity and righteousness. Thus humanity and righteousness are the original mind of man. Mencius said, 'Is there not a heart of humanity and righteousness originally existing in man?' He also said, 'We originally have them with us (the senses of humanity and righteousness, propriety, and wisdom)' and 'they are not drilled into us from outside.'
>
> (Chan 1963a: 575)

Such was what Lu taught his disciples, it was reported that 'The Teacher said that all things are luxuriantly present in the mind. What permeates the mind, emanates from it, and extends to fill the universe is nothing but principle' (Chan 1963a: 583). To elaborate further, Lu said:

> The four directions plus upward and downward constitutes the spatial continuum (*yu*). What has gone by in the past and what is to come in the future constitute the temporal continuum (*zhou*). The universe (these continua) is my mind, and my mind is the universe. Sages appeared tens of thousands of generations ago. They shared this mind; they shared this principle. Sages will appear tens of thousands of generations to come. They will share this mind; they will share this principle. Over the four seas sages appear. They share this mind; they share this principle.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 579–80)

Under such a perspective, Lu declared that 'The affairs in the universe (*yu-zhou*) are my own affairs. My own affairs are affairs of the universe' (Chan 1963a: 580). Lu's disciple Yang Jian (楊簡 1140–26) even developed the doctrine of *Ji-yi* (self-change) which exaggerated Lu's claim that the affairs in the universe are my own affairs. Of course *ji* (self) in this context should never be understood to be one's ego which is opposite to the self that transforms with the cosmic process (Fung 1953: 579–82).

For Lu, even though there is no separation between the self and the universe, lack of wisdom causes alienation from the universe, as he said, 'The universe has never separated itself from man. Man separates himself from the universe' (Chan 1963a: 582). Therefore, self-discipline to recover the lost mind is necessary. Lu went straight back to Mencius, he told us that,

> Mencius said, 'That whereby man differs from the lower animals is but small. The ordinary people cast it away, while the superior man preserves it.' What is cast away is the mind. That is why Mencius said that some people 'cast their original mind away'. What is preserved is this mind. That is why Mencius said that 'The great man is one who does not lose his child's heart.' (What Mencius referred to as) the Four Beginnings (of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, that is, the sense of commiseration, the sense of shame, the sense of deference and compliance, and the sense of right and wrong) are this mind. It is what Heaven has endowed in us. All men have this mind, and all minds are endowed with this principle. The mind is principle.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 579)

Based on Mencius, Lu said even more explicitly: 'Principle is endowed in me by Heaven, not drilled into me from outside. If one understands that principle is the same as master and really makes it his master, one cannot be influenced by external things or fooled by perverse doctrines' (Chan 1963a: 574).

In self-discipline, Mencius had already pointed to the right direction:

> When our senses of sight and hearing are used without thought and are thereby obscured by material things, the material things are on the material senses and lead them astray. That is all. The function of the mind is to think. If we think, we will get it [principle]. If we do not think, we will not get it. This is what Heaven has given to us. If we first build up the nobler part of our nature, then the inferior part cannot overcome it. It is simply this that makes a man great.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 59)

Our senses always chase after external objects, but the greatest resource of ours is inside the self. If we can exercise the function of the original mind, there will be realization of principle. Wisdom that leads to action is different from book learning which often leads to fragmented work. Lu made the daring statement: 'If in our study we know the fundamentals, then all the Six Classics are my footnotes' (Chan 1963a:

580). Lu questioned what books people could read at the time of sage-emperors Yao and Shun in the ancient era. Hence the only thing constant is the mind within us, which is no different from that of Yao and Shun. Likewise preservation and cultivation are nothing but preservation and cultivation of this mind. Mencius said:

> He who exerts his mind to the utmost knows his nature. He who knows his nature knows Heaven. 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*) to take its own course] is the way to fulfill one's destiny.
>
> (Chan 1963a: 78)

It was indeed marvelous that Mencius found someone taking his message to heart after the lapse of more than one thousand years. Lu's thought just gave a new expression to Mencius' philosophy. It does not seem to make sense that Zhu Xi criticized Lu as spreading the message of Chan (Zen) Buddhism. We need to probe into this matter a little further.

In contrast to Lu, Zhu Xi had a very different understanding of the mind as has been shown in the last chapter. The mind is an active agent made of the most refined and subtle kind of material force, while principle only exists, does not act, and is purely good. Evils ensue from the empirical mind, the so called *ren-xin* (人心 the human mind), which is in contrast to *dao-xin* (道心 the mind of the Way), acting in accordance with principle. In self-discipline, one has to take the gradual approach, investigating things in order to have better understanding of principles up to a certain extent that there is an enlightenment to get hold of the principle, the origin of various principles. The classics embody the experiences of the sages and worthies that lead to the understanding of this principle. For Zhu Xi, the mind always directs itself to principle. He denounced the approach to seek mind by mind (*Yi-Xin-Mi-Xin* 以心覓心), such is the approach of Chan Buddhism, by extension also Lu Xiang-shan's approach. In this way he put the two under the same category. Interestingly enough, Lu on his part also attacked Zhu following the practice of Chan Buddhism, as Zhu favored quiet-sitting as a way to calm the mind in order to investigate principle. Lu also found that book learning, including study of the Classics, did not have much relevance to the practice of virtues, which follows nothing but the command of the original mind within the self. Lu once said of Zhu that he could be compared to the sublime Mount Tai, 'but unfortunately, in spite of his [great] learning, has not seen Dao. He merely wastes his own energy' (Ching 1976: 173–4). Zhu admitted to some extent his approach indeed had the defect of fragmented work, but he insisted that such a defect can be overcome. In the meantime he criticized Lu's approach to denounce book learning as too radical to be accepted. Moreover, Zhu found that Lu's followers very often had too much confidence in their efforts to promote the Way by action. Unfortunately, however, in the make-up of a human being, there is not only the moral nature, but also the physical nature. Following the idiosyncrasies of a person without study and inquiry may result in a great deal of evils. Therefore it was

absolutely necessary to check the unruly behavior of some followers of Lu (Liu 1982: 450-1, 462-6). In sum, the sudden approach of Lu and the gradual approach of Zhu in self-discipline both have their merits as well as defects; we need to learn from and look beyond both approaches in order to find a deeper understanding of the middle way implicit in Confucian philosophy.

4 The General Characteristics of Ming Neo-Confucianism

As Zhu Xi's *Commentaries on the Four Books* was adopted as the basis for civil service examinations since the Yuan dynasty in 1313 until 1905 near the end of the Qing dynasty, Zhu Xi became the most influential Confucian thinker since Confucius and Mencius. It is no exaggeration for Wang Yang-ming to say that at his time Zhu's teaching 'is studied by every man and child in the world' (Ching 1972: 75). But Ming scholars appeared to have an ambivalent attitude toward Zhu Xi's philosophy. In order to pass civil service examinations, they were all familiar with Zhu's interpretations of the Confucian classics. But Zhu's dualistic metaphysics of *li* (principle) and *qi* (material force) with a tripartite division of *xin* (mind-heart), *xing* (nature), and *qing* (feelings) could not satisfy their intellectual pursuit as well as emotional demand. They appeared to move toward a monistic philosophy with the emphasis on *xin* (Liu 1986). Huang Zong-xi (黃宗羲, Li-zhou 梨洲, 1610–95) made the following observation:

> The path of Ming learning was opened by Chen Xian-zhang [陳獻章, Bo-sha 白沙, 1428–1500] but became brilliant only with Wang Yang-ming [王陽明, 1472–1529]. The earlier custom was to memorize the known sayings of the former scholars, without reflecting carefully in oneself or seeking to develop their hidden points. This is the meaning of the statement that each man is only repeating Zhu Xi …
>
> Since Wang Yang-ming pointed out *liang-zhi* [良知 innate knowledge] as that principle of self-realization present in all, accessible to all through contemplation, the road to sagehood was opened to everyone.
>
> (Ching 1987: 100)

Huang Zong-xi opened up a new page in Chinese intellectual history by compiling *The Records of Ming Scholars* (*Ming-Ru-Xue-An* 明儒學案). In his Introduction, he said:

> I used to say: 'In letters as well as in external accomplishments, the Ming dynasty was inferior to the earlier ones. Only in philosophy is it superior. Every nuance, be it fine as the ox's hair and the cocoon's silk, has been carefully discerned and analyzed. For if Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi had criticized Buddhism in many and complex words, they dwelt only on the exterior signs, without being able to distinguish what in Buddhism is close to principle (*li*) and yet wrong. The Ming scholars were able to bring to light the smallest differences and nuances.' Tao Wang-ling also said: 'Judging from their under-

standing, many of our contemporary thinkers are superior to earlier ones.'
This happens to coincide with what I have to say.

<div style="text-align: right">(Ibid.: 45–6)</div>

One may agree or disagree with Huang's assessment, but for better or for worse, Ming
Confucianism did advance beyond Song–Yuan Confucianism and had characteristics
of its own. The mainstream of Ming Confucianism is *xin-xue* (learning of mind-heart);
the emphasis was shifting from study of classics and observance of orthodox teachings
to rely on the inner resources of our *xin* (mind-heart).

The initiator of the movement was, as Huang Zong-xi observed, Chen Xian-zhang,
who was a native of Bo-sha (白沙) village in Guangdong (廣東) Province. Chen
studied under Wu Yu-bi [吳與弼 1397–1469], who refused to take civil service exami-
nations in order to pursue the sagely way by combining farming and learning. The two
most famous disciples of Wu were Hu Ju-ren [胡居仁 1434–84] and Chen Xian-zhang.
According to Huang Zong-xi,

> Hu's description of self-cultivation in tranquility is in the words: having a
> master (*you-zhu* 有主). This has served scholars especially well. And this is
> precisely what Chen Xian-zhang called 'the beginnings (*duan-ni* 端倪) [of
> wisdom] nurtured in tranquility, in possession of which I can do what I wish
> in daily responses and activities, since I am like a horse guided by bit and
> bridle.' How fitting that Hu and Chen, as disciples of the same master, should
> concur thus in silence. But Hu insisted on criticizing Chen for being a Chan
> Buddhist. He reiterated this opinion in his writings. For Hu was an extremely
> cautious (*juan* 狷) Confucian while Chen was very audacious (*kuang* 狂) (i.e.,
> less concerned with judgments of orthodoxy). But one need not doubt the
> correctness of one for the sake of the judgment of the other.

<div style="text-align: right">(Ibid.: 78)</div>

Huang Zong-xi thought highly of Chen as a follower of the sagely way, as he said,

> In his [philosophical] teaching, Chen regarded emptiness as the foundation
> and tranquility as the entry point. He took the meeting and convergence of the
> four directions, the high and low of space, the past and present of time, to be
> the context, the differentiations of daily actions and common practices to be
> efforts and functions. He further considered 'neither neglecting nor assisting
> [the work of cultivation],' as a rule for personal realization and functioning
> well without exerting effort as real progress. No doubt he would have been a
> Zeng Dian [曾點] in ancient times or a Shao Yong [邵雍, 1011–77] in more
> modern times. On account of his teaching, many Confucians of the Ming
> period did not lose their standards for the good life. Only with him did the
> effort of acquiring sagehood become clear to be further developed by Wang
> Yang-ming. Had Chen Xian-zhang and Wang Yang-ming not appeared in the
> world, those who agreed with Zhou Dun-yi and the Cheng brothers would

<div style="text-align: center">403</div>

still have perceived and inferred from the hidden meaning of the subtle and profound teachings of Zhou and the Chengs, while others who disagreed with them would have clarified their differences. But they would not have done as well as they are doing today.

(Ibid.: 86–7)

In many ways Huang Zong-xi compiled *The Records of Ming Scholars* by following the lead of his teacher Liu Zong-zhou (劉宗周, 蕺山 Liu Ji-shan, 1578–1645). Quotations of Liu were put in the beginning of this work. It is worthwhile to see what Liu has to say about Chen Xian-zhang:

Chen's philosophy is based on the natural (*zi-ran*); its essentials consist in acquiring insights for oneself (*zi-de*). Because he emphasizes acquiring insights for himself, he can draw deeply from this and find its source wherever he turns, being as lively as the hawks and the fish and returning to himself by grasping hold of the pivot that controls the creative processes. He may be said to have started a new school of thought by himself, standing out among his fellows …

For Chen's interests are close to Zhou Dun-yi's [周敦頤, 1017–1073], although he is behind Zhou in his investigation of principles (*li*). Chen's scholarship is akin to Shao Yong's, although he has articulated it too early. When tested against the school of the sages, he cannot avoid the defects of being desirous of quick results and looking for small advantages. He appears to be a Chan Buddhist but is not a Chan Buddhist; that is all.

(Ibid.: 55–6)

The term *zi-ran* has captured the spirit of Chen's philosophy. But Chen wrote little, and wanted to express his thought in poems. As a result, the new school of thought he initiated now known as *xin-xue* (learning of mind-heart) did not become prominent until Wang Yang-ming appeared on the scene.

Huang Zong-xi's comments on the Bo-sha School are as follows:

With Chen Xian-zhang, Ming learning started to become precise and subtle, the effort he emphasized is entirely that of interior cultivation: of a state that is prior to joy and anger and yet not empty, and of a state that is amid ten thousand entangled emotions and yet unmoved.

This teaching gained importance with the rise of Wang Yang-ming. The teachings of the two masters (Chen and Wang) are extremely close. I do not know why Yang-ming never mentioned Chen. But his close disciple, Xue Kan [薛侃, d. 1545], was responsible for submitting a memorial in 1509 [*sic*] requesting for Chen a place in the temple of Confucius. He must have recognized the similarities between his master's and Chen's teachings.

(Ibid.: 84)

Like Huang Zong-xi, I also wonder why Yang-ming never made any explicit references to Bo-sha, especially when Zhan Ruo-shui (湛若水, Gan-quan 甘泉, 1416–1560), a disciple of Bo-sha as well as an influential thinker in his own right, was a close ally in pursuing the sagely way and a frank critic of Yang-ming. Zhan taught the realization of the heavenly principle everywhere. Perhaps Zhan favored the gradual approach of self-discipne in contrast to the sudden approach favored by Yang-ming. Anyhow, contributions of Bo-sha and Yang-ming to Ming *xin-xue* (learning of mind-heart) as observed by Huang Zong-xi have been commonly acknowledged by posterity. And it is agreed that *xin-xue* did not become prominent until it was developed into a comprehensive philosophy in the hands of Wang Yang-ming.

5 Wang Yang-ming's Search for the Way

First, a sketch of Wang Yang-ming's life (王陽明, Shou-ren 守仁, 1472–1529). He was a precocious child, and wrote poems before he was ten years old. As a young scholar, he and friends investigated bamboos in the yard without getting anywhere. In early years he drifted along with Buddhism and Daoism. On the day of his marriage ceremony, he practiced Daoist transcendental meditation and did not make an appearance. He started his official career at twenty-eight, and began to attract disciples whom he urged to pursue the sagely way. In 1506, he protested against the imprisonment of a scholar-official by a powerful eunuch, was beaten by cane forty times before the emperor, and banished far away. On his way to what is now Guizhou Province, he had to pretend to be drowned in order to avoid an assassination attempt by his enemy. At Long-chang (龍場), living among aborigines with no books to read and no friends to discuss with, he was driven to search within his own mind. One night in 1508, he found sudden enlightenment and realized the true significance of *ge-wu-zhi-zhi* (格物致知) as taught in *The Great Learning*. A year later, he realized the unity of knowledge and action. In 1514–16, when he was an official at Nanking, his radical teachings, including his insistence on following the old text of *The Great Learning* instead of the one rearranged by Zhu Xi, attracted both followers and critics. From 1516 to 1519 he was ordered to suppress rebellions in Jiangxi and Fujian, which he did successfully. After he had defeated Prince Ning, he was awarded the title Earl of Xin-jian and promised certain hereditary privileges, but his enemies at court accused him of conspiring with the prince. He fell into disfavor. From 1521 to 1527 he was in virtual retirement in his native Yue. But his reputation spread wide and attracted a large following. In 1527, he was called again to suppress rebellions in Quangxi, and succeeded. On his way back he died on January 10, 1529. Then he was accused of spreading false doctrines and opposing Zhu Xi. His hereditary privileges were revoked. It was not until thirty-eight years after his death in 1567 that he was given the title Marquis of Xin-jian and honored with the posthumous title of Weng-cheng (completion of culture). After a review of his life story, one cannot but agree to what he said, that his doctrines were 'achieved from a hundred deaths and a thousand sufferings' (Chan 1963a: 658).

Huang Zong-xi summarized his learning in three stages as follows:

> Wang's learning began with wide reading in prose and poetry, which was followed by a thorough reading of the works of Zhu Xi. He followed the steps of the investigation of things but observed that the principles and the mind remained dual, providing no entry-point [into sagehood]. Then he drifted in and out of Buddhism and Daoism for a long time until his exile among the aborigines and the difficulties surrounding this experience stimulated his mind and strengthened his nature. He wondered how a sage would behave under these circumstances and was suddenly enlightened to the meaning of the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge. He then said, 'My nature possesses all it needs for acquiring the way of sageliness. I need not look for help outside.' Thus his learning changed three times before he discovered the gate to wisdom.
>
> (Ching 1987: 104)

This is very well said, and Huang's summary has been commonly accepted by posterity.[2] Yang-ming's most faithful disciple, Qian De-hong (錢德洪, Xu-shan 緒山, 1496–1574), who was responsible for compiling Wang's chronology, reported that Wang's teachings also went through three stages:[3]

> When [the master] lived in Gui-yang (貴陽), he first taught the unity of knowledge and action; after studying in Chu-yang (滁陽), he often taught students quiet sitting; since Jiang-you (江右) he began to teach only *zhi-liang-zhi* (extension of innate knowledge), directing straight to the substance, so that students may have enlightenment immediately; thus his teachings also went through three changes.
>
> (Author's translation)

Most of Wang's important ideas were recorded in his *Chuan-Xi-Lu* (傳習錄 Instructions for Practical Living) (Chan trans. 1963b). The famous article, "Inquiry on the *Great Learning*", completed in 1527, embodies his basic teachings and represents his final conclusions, and is also available in English (ibid.).

Now for more details on Wang Yang-ming's philosophy. As has been shown, Chinese philosophy in general and Wang Yang-ming's philosophy in particular are existential and practical in nature, very different from Greek cosmology, which is speculative in nature, though they do not lack cosmological implications when they were developed into comprehensive systems of philosophy.

What drove Wang Yang-ming to his enlightenment was probably due to disappointment over Zhu Xi's interpretation of investigation of things and extension of knowledge providing no help for him to pursue the sagely way. After his enlightenment, the first disciple he had was Xu Ai (徐愛, 1487–1518), who was also the husband of his sister. Xu recorded his conversations with Yang-ming in 1512–13, which constituted the first fourteen sections of Part I of *Chuan-Xi-Lu* with emphasis on practice. A typical example is as follows:

I did not understand the Teacher's doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action … Therefore I took the matter to the Teacher … I said, 'For example, there are people who know that parents should be served with filial piety and elder brothers with respect but cannot put these things into practice. This shows that knowledge and action are clearly two different things.'

The Teacher said, 'The knowledge and action you refer to are already separated by selfish desires and are no longer knowledge and action in their original substance. There have never been people who know but do not act. Those who are supposed to know but do not act simply do not yet know. When sages and worthies taught people about knowledge and action, it was precisely because they wanted them to restore the original substance, and not simply to do this or that and be satisfied …'

The Teacher said, '… I have said that knowledge is the direction for action and action the effort of knowledge, and that knowledge is the beginning of action and action the completion of knowledge. If this is understood, then when only knowledge is mentioned, action is included, and when only action is mentioned, knowledge is included. The reason why the ancients talked about knowledge and action separately is that there are people in the world who are confused and act on impulse without any sense of deliberation or self-examination, and who thus only behave blindly and erroneously. Therefore it is necessary to talk about knowledge to them before their action becomes correct. There are also those who are intellectually vague and undisciplined and think in a vacuum. They are not at all willing to make the effort of concrete practice. They only pursue shadows and echoes, as it were. It is therefore necessary to talk about action to them before their knowledge becomes true. The ancient teachers could not help talking this way in order to restore balance and avoid any defect. If we understand this motive, then a single word [either knowledge or action] will do.'

<div align="right">(Chan 1963b: 9–11)</div>

In this period Wang's teaching aimed at restraint and discipline, and stressed sitting in meditation and calm thinking. Unfortunately Xu Ai died early; he was often compared to Confucius' pupil Yan Hui (顏回, 521–490 BCE) in Wang's camp. In the 1520s Yang-ming's thought had been further developed to a new dimension; a typical example is his letter to Gu Dong-jiao (顧東橋, 1476–1545), included in *Chuan-Xi-Lu*, Pt. II. Here he made a frontal attack on Zhu Xi's dualistic philosophy:

What Zhu Xi meant by the investigation of things is 'to investigate the principle in things to the utmost as we come to contact with them'. To investigate the principles in things to the utmost as we come into contact with them means to look in each individual thing for its so-called definite principles. This means to apply one's mind to each individual thing and look for principle in it. This is to divide the mind and principle into two. To seek for the principle in each individual thing is like looking for the principle of

filial piety in parents. If the principle of filial piety is to be sought in parents, then is it actually in my own mind or is it in the person of my parents? If it is actually in the person of my parents, is it true that as soon as the parents pass away the mind will lack the principle of filial piety? When I see a child fall into a well [and have a feeling of commiseration], there must be the principle of commiseration … Is it really in the person of the child or does it emanate from the innate knowledge of my mind? What is true here is true of all things and events. From this we know the mistake of dividing the mind and principle into two.

<div style="text-align: right">(Chan 1963b: 98–9)</div>

Wang's own ideas are succinctly expressed in the following:

Knowledge in its genuine and earnest aspect is action, and action in its intelligent and discriminating aspect is knowledge: At bottom the task of knowledge and action cannot be separated. Only because later scholars have broken their task into two sections and have lost sight of the original substance of knowledge and action have I advocated the idea of their unity and simultaneous advance …

He who only seeks his original mind and consequently neglects the principle of things is one who has lost his original mind. For the principles of things are not external to the mind. If one seeks the principles of things outside the mind, there will not be any to be found. And if one neglects the principles of things and only seeks his mind, what sort of a thing would the mind be? The substance of the mind is nature, and nature is identical with principle … The mind is one, that is all. In terms of its total commiseration, it is called humanity. In terms of its attainment of what is proper, it is called righteousness. And in terms of its orderliness, it is called principle. If one should not seek humanity or righteousness outside the mind, should one make an exception and seek principles outside the mind?

<div style="text-align: right">(Chan 1963b: 93–5)</div>

From the doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action, Yang-ming further developed the idea that the mind is principle. Finally, he expounded his own under-standing of *ge-wu-zhi-zhi* (格物致知) as follows:

What I mean by the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge is to extend the innate knowledge of my mind [*zhi-liang-zhi* 致良知] to each and every thing. The innate knowledge of my mind is the same as the Principle of Nature. When the Principle of Nature in the innate knowledge of my mind is extended to all things, all things will attain their principle. To extend the innate knowledge of my mind is the matter of the extension of knowledge, and for all things to attain their principle is the matter of the investigation of things. In these the mind and principle are combined into one. As the mind

and principle are combined into one, then all my humble opinions which I have just expressed … can be understood without discussion.

(Chan 1963b: 99)

Thus, Wang had advanced a totally new interpretation of *The Great Learning* with his doctrine of *zhi-liang-zhi* (致良知).

6 How Idealistic Is Wang Yang-ming?

If Wang Yang-ming had talked only about his moral philosophy, many would appreciate his insight and commitment to the practice of virtues. But he had developed a comprehensive philosophy with epistemological and ontological implications. His thoughts have been subjected to grave misunderstanding throughout the generations. Two sections in *Chuan-Xi-Lu*, Part III especially caused problems; they are quoted in the following:

> The Teacher was roaming in Nanzhen. A friend pointed to flowering trees on a cliff and said: '[You say] there is nothing under heaven external to the mind. These flowering trees on the high mountain blossom and drop their blossoms of themselves. What have they do with my mind?'
>
> The Teacher said, 'Before you look at these flowers, they and your mind are in the state of silent vacancy. As you come to look at them, their colors at once show up clearly. From this you can know that these flowers are not external to your mind.'
>
> (Chan 1963b: 222)

> I said, 'The human mind and things form the same body. In the case of one's body, blood and the vital force in fact circulate through it and therefore we can say they form the same body. In the case of other men, their bodies are different and those of animals and plants are even more so. How can they be said to form the same body?'
>
> The Teacher said, 'Just look at the matters from the point of view of the subtle incipient activating force of their mutual influence and response. Not only animals and plants, heaven and earth also form the same body with me. Spiritual beings also form the same body with me.'
>
> I asked the Teacher kindly to explain.
>
> The Teacher said, 'Among the things under heaven and on earth, which do you consider to be the mind of Heaven and Earth?'
>
> 'I have heard that "Man is the mind of Heaven and Earth."'
>
> 'How does man become mind?'
>
> 'Clear intelligence and clear intelligence only.'
>
> 'We know, then, in all that fills heaven and earth there is but this clear intelligence. It is only because of their physical forms and bodies that men are separated. My clear intelligence is the master of heaven and earth and

spiritual beings. If heaven is deprived of my clear intelligence, who is going to look into its height? If earth is deprived my clear intelligence, who is going to look into its depth? If spiritual beings are deprived of my clear intelligence, who is going to distinguish their good and evil fortune or the calamities and blessings that they will bring? Separated from my clear intelligence, there will be no heaven, earth, spiritual beings, or myriad things, and separated from those, there will not be my clear intelligence. Thus they are all permeated with one material force. How can they be separated?'

I asked further, 'Heaven, earth, spiritual beings, and the myriad things have existed from great antiquity. Why should it be that if my clear intelligence is gone, they will all cease to exist?'

'Consider the dead man. His spirit has drifted away and dispersed. Where are his heaven and earth and myriad things?'

(Chan 1963b: 257–8)

Under the influence of Western philosophy, some modern Chinese philosophers simply labeled Wang Yang-ming a subjective idealist like the British Empiricist George Berkeley. For example, commenting on the conversation when Yang-ming was in Nanzhen, Hou Wai-lu (侯外廬), a leftist intellectual historian, had this to say:

Wang Yang-ming denies that there is objective existence independent of man's consciousness, he believes that everything exists within the mind …

This is fabrication opposed to the actual state of affairs. We know that sense perceptions are only the result caused by objective existents working on man's sense organs … However, Wang would like to start from perceptions, and he has so exaggerated man's subjective perceptions as to take it to be some sort of deified Absolute separate from matter and Nature …

Such a theory would inevitably lead to solipsism, as Lenin has pointed out that if material bodies … are nothing but association of ideas as Berkeley claims, then inevitably the conclusion would be drawn that the whole world were nothing but the manifestation of the self. Starting from this premise, there would not be other human existents apart from the existence of the self. This is pure solipsism.

(Hou 1957–60: 4.884–5)

The other section was also quoted by Hou to show exactly how Wang's idealism leads to the absurd conclusion of solipsism. Hou had drawn his conclusion as follows:

The starting point and the major premise for Wang's world view is that there is no matter apart from the mind, and that there is no principle apart from the mind: all are derived from the mind. This is a further development of Lu Xiang-shan's view that the universe is my mind and my mind is the universe, and that the Way is not outside of my mind.

(Ibid.: 884)

Yet it is wrong to see Wang's problematic the same as that of Berkeley. Berkeley's main problem is an epistemological one. As he believes that the only source of our knowledge is sense perceptions, he then draws the conclusion that 'to be is to be perceived'. If such is the case, naturally the objects we perceive are nothing but the result of association of ideas and cannot exist apart from the perceiving mind. Consequently there would also be difficulties to assert the existence of other selves, and solipsism becomes a problem. But Yang-ming never for a moment believes that sense perceptions are the only source of knowledge. What he worries about is how to make the moral mind the master of our sense perceptions and overcome selfish desires in order to regard Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things as one body. Likewise he never believes that any physical existents can be reduced to the association of ideas. Allow me to quote another section from *Chuan-Xi-Lu* to substantiate my claims:

> What is called your mind is not merely that lump of blood and flesh. If it were so, why is it that the dead man, whose lump of blood and flesh is still present, cannot see, listen, speak, or move? What is called your mind is that which makes seeing, listening, speaking, and moving possible. It is the nature of man and things; it is the Principle of Nature … In its capacity as the master of the body, it is called the mind. Basically the original substance of the mind is none other than the Principle of Nature, and is never out of accord with propriety. This is your true self. The true self is the master of the body. If there is no true self, there will be no body. Truly, with the true self, one lives; without it, one dies. If you really want to do something for your bodily self, you must make use of this true self, always preserve its original substance.
>
> (Chan 1963b: 80–1)

From the passage quoted above it is clear that Yang-ming held a holistic and functional view of the self which is opposite to the solipsistic view. The eye that cannot see cannot be called an eye, and the body without the mastery of the mind cannot be called a body. This has nothing to do with reducing the body to an association of ideas. Yang-ming's ideas can be traced back to *The Book of Changes*; he followed a tradition totally different from Berkeley's empiricist tradition. In Chapter 10 of the 'Appended Remarks' of the classic, it said, 'Change has neither thought nor action, because it is in the state of absolute quiet and inactivity, and when acted on, it immediately penetrates all things' (Chan 1963a: 267).

Zhou Dun-yi (周敦頤, 1017–73) further developed the ideas in Chapter 4 (Sagehood) of his *Penetrating The Book of Changes*:

> 'The state of absolute quiet and inactivity' is sincerity. The spirit is that which, 'when acted on, immediately penetrates all things'. And the state of subtle incipient activation is the undifferentiated state between existence and nonexistence when activity has started but has not manifested itself in physical form. Sincerity is infinitely pure and hence evident. The spirit is responsive and hence works wonders. And incipient activation is subtle and

hence abstruse. The sage is one who is in the state of sincerity, spirit, and subtle incipient activation.

<div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 467)</div>

Now the mystery is unlocked, Yang-ming sees the world as a continual process of transformation. The blossoms in the mountain were in the state of tranquility; when seen by visitors, they transformed into the state of manifestation through activity. Chapter 5 of Appended Remarks of *The Book of Changes* said:

> The successive movement of *yin* and *yang* constitutes the Way (Dao). What issues from the Way is good, and that which realizes it is the individual nature. The man of humanity (*ren*) sees it and calls it humanity. The man of wisdom sees it and calls it wisdom. And the common people act according to it daily without knowing it. In this way the Way of the superior man is fully realized.
>
> <div align="right">(Chan 1963a: 266)</div>

There are certainly epistemological implications. The world of humanity is open to those with the mind of humanity, the world of wisdom is open to those with the mind of wisdom, while common people just act without being conscious. And the mission of intellectuals is to lead the people from lack of consciousness to consciousness. There are also ontological implications. Yang-ming was firmly in this tradition:

> In the dynamic operation of the material force of the universe there is from the beginning not a moment of rest. But there is the master. Consequently the operation has its regular order and it goes on neither too fast nor too slowly. The master [that is, the wonderful functioning of creation] is always calm in spite of hundreds of changes and thousands of transformations. This process makes it possible for man to live. If, while the master remains calm, the mind is ceaseless as heavenly movements are ceaseless, it will always be at ease in spite of countless changes in its dealings with things. As it is said, 'The original mind remains calm and serene, and all parts of the body obey its command.' If there is no master, the vital force will simply run wild. How can the mind not be flustered?
>
> <div align="right">(Chan 1963b: 66–67)</div>

Man is endowed with the mind that can understand the heavenly mind as well as the heavenly principle; the finite is then united with the infinite. The relationship between our innate knowledge and Heaven, that is, the creative origin of the universe, has been understood by Yang-ming as follows:

> The statement, 'The superior man may precede Heaven and Heaven will not act in opposition to him', means that Heaven is the same as innate knowledge.

The statement, 'He may follow Heaven but will act only as Heaven at the time would do', means that innate knowledge is the same as Heaven.

(Chan 1963b: 228)

Here *liang-zhi* (良知) rendered in English as 'innate knowledge' does not seem to make sense. What Yang-ming intended to show is that what is realized by our innate knowledge is the original substance of the mind, which is the same as the original substance of the heavenly mind. Thus, *liang-zhi* acquires an ontological meaning and status that cannot be shown in the translated term 'innate knowledge'. This line of thought should never be understood as anthropomorphism, as Yang-ming believed that the human mind is endowed with the principle of nature; there is an isomorphism between the two. Hence, he said:

Sincerity is true principle. It is only innate knowledge. The true principle in its wonderful functioning and universal operation is spirit. The point at which it emerges and begins to act is incipient activating force. The sage is the one who is in the state of sincerity, spirit, and incipient activating force.

(Chan 1963b: 225)

One cannot but notice the continuity of thought from Zhou Dun-yi's interpretation of *The Book of Changes* to his understanding of *liang-zhi*. Yang-ming further developed this line of thought to a new height. The most remarkable section I found in *Chuan-Xi-Lu* Part III is as follows:

In a single day a person experiences the entire course of history. Only he does not realize it. At night when the air is pure and clear, with nothing to be seen or heard, and without any thought or activity, one's spirit is calm and his heart at peace. This is the world of Fu-xi. At dawn one's spirit is bright and his vital power clear, and he is in harmony and at peace. This is the world of Emperors Yao and Shun. In the morning one meets people according to ceremonies, and one's disposition is in proper order. This is the world of the Three Dynasties. In the afternoon one's spirit and power gradually become dull and one is confused and troubled by things coming and going. This is the world of the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods. As it gradually gets dark, all things go to rest and sleep. The atmosphere becomes silent and desolate. This is the world in which all people disappear and all things come to an end. If a student has confidence in his innate knowledge and is not disturbed by the vital force, he can always remain a person in the World of Fu-xi or even better.

(Chan 1963b: 238)

Obviously, 'the world' (*shi-jie* 世界) Yang-ming talked about was not just the world around us – what the Germans call *die Umwelt* – it is a meaningful structure formed by a correlation between the subject and the object, and there can never be a schism

between the two.[4] This is why it is so important for us to make existential decisions, to acquire wisdom, and to discipline ourselves so that we can live in a better world. The world around us will never disappear after we die, but the 'world' as a structure of meaning does cease to exist. And one's 'world' is not that much apart from the 'world' of the sages, as long as one can raise the level of consciousness as to correlate to a better world.

Precisely because Yang-ming's ideas have been subject to misunderstanding for a long time, even a sympathetic reader like Wing-tsit Chan had to defend him in the following way:

> Philosophically Wang's position is weak because it entirely neglects objective study and confuses reality with value. Readers of the *Instructions for Practical Living* will realize that Wang's idealism is very naïve indeed. When he was asked, if nothing is external to the mind, what blossoming trees on the high mountains have to do with it, he merely said, 'Before you look at these flowers, they and your mind are in the state of silent vacancy. As you come to look at them, their colors at once show up clearly.' But if Wang's philosophy is short in logical acumen, it is long in moral insight. To him the separation of the mind and the principle of things was not only a fallacy in theory but a moral calamity, because it led to 'the devotion to external things and the neglect of the internal'.
>
> (Chan 1963b: xxxiii)

As has been shown, Yang-ming is not only long in moral insight, but his philosophy is by no means weak and naïve. All we need is proper understanding of his ideas, then we would know what kind of idealism has been taught in his philosophy.[5]

7 Four-Sentence Teaching: the Final Views of Wang Yang-ming

In 1527 Yang-ming had been called from retirement and appointed to subdue rebellions. Before he left, his two major disciples, Wang Ji (王畿, Long-xi 龍溪) and Qian De-hong (錢德洪, Xue-shan 緒山), were engaged in a debate, and asked the Teacher to clarify at the Tian-quan (天泉) Bridge. The Teacher's four-sentence-teaching is as follows:

> In the original substance of the mind there is no distinction of good and evil.
> When the will becomes active, however, such distinction exists.
> The faculty of innate knowledge is to know good and evil.
> The investigation of things is to do good and remove evil.
>
> (Chan 1963b: 243)

Wang Ji's opinions are as follows:

> This is perhaps not the final conclusion. If we say that in the original substance of the mind there is no distinction between good and evil, then there must be no such distinction in the will, in knowledge, and in things. If we say that there is a distinction between good and evil in the will, then in the final analysis these must also be such a distinction in the substance of the mind.
>
> (Ibid.)

Qian De-hong's opinions on the contrary are as follows:

> The substance of the mind is the nature endowed in us by Heaven, and is originally neither good nor evil. But because we have a mind dominated by habits, we see in our thoughts a distinction between good and evil. The work of the investigation of things, the extension of knowledge, the sincerity of the will, the rectification of the mind, and the cultivation of the personal life is aimed precisely at recovering that original nature and substance. If there were no good or evil to start with, what would be the necessity of such effort?
>
> (Ibid.: 243–4)

The Teacher's response was as follows:

> You two gentlemen complement each other very well, and should not hold on to one side. Here I deal with two types of people. The man of sharp intelligence apprehends straight from the source. The original substance of the human mind is in fact crystal-clear without any impediment and is the equilibrium before the feelings are aroused. The man of sharp intelligence has accomplished his task as soon as he has apprehended the original substance, penetrating the self, other people, and things internal and things external all at the same time. On the other hand, there are inevitably those whose minds are dominated by habits so that the original substance of the mind is obstructed. I therefore teach them definitely and sincerely to do good and remove evil in their will and thoughts. When they become expert at the task and the impurities of the mind are completely eliminated, the original substance will become wholly clear.
>
> (Ibid.: 244)

For Yang-ming, the supreme good is beyond good and evil, it cannot be characterized by good, which is relative to evil. For self-discipline, both Wang Ji's sudden approach and Qian De-hong's gradual approach have their proper places. Then he drew the conclusion as follows:

> Just keep to those words of mine [four-sentence-teaching] and instruct people

according to their types, and there will not be any defect. This is indeed a task that penetrates both the higher and the lower levels. It is not easy to find people of sharp intelligence in the world. Even Yan Hui and Ming-Dao [Cheng Hao] dared not assume that they could fully realize the original substance of the mind as soon as they apprehended the task. How can we lightly expect this from people? People's minds are dominated by habits. If we do not teach them concretely and sincerely to devote themselves to the task of doing good and removing evil right in their innate knowledge rather than merely imagining an original substance in a vacuum, all that they do will not be genuine and they will do no more than cultivate a mind of vacuity and quietness. This defect is not a small matter and must be exposed as early as possible.

<div align="right">(Ibid.: 244–5)</div>

Clearly Yang-ming meant to deliver his final views, but then he died in January 1529. These actually became his final words. But the debates among the disciples continued after his death, which will be discussed later on.

8 Wang Yang-ming's Thought in Relation to Lu Xiang-shan and Zhu Xi

Wang Yang-ming's name has constantly been associated with that of Lu Xiang-shan. As there is indeed affinity of spirit between the two thinkers, it is by no means an accident that Lu-Wang has been regarded as a single school. Yang-ming denied that Lu was a Chan Buddhist, and helped to republish Lu's collection of essays despite suppression or neglect from the mainstream Zhu followers. But it would be a grave mistake to identify Wang's position with Lu's, as the approaches of the two thinkers were very different from each other. In *Instructions for Practical Learning*, we find a very interesting conversation on Lu:

> I [Chen Jiu-chuan 陳九川] further asked, 'What do you think of the teachings of Master Lu Xiang-shan?'
>
> The Teacher said, 'Since the time of Lian-xi [Zhou Dun-yi] and Ming-dao [Cheng Hao], there has been only Lu Xiang-shan. But he was still somewhat crude.'
>
> I said, 'In his elucidations, every chapter reveals the innermost funda-mentals [of what is right] and every sentence seems to attack the underlying causes of [what is wrong]. He does not seem to be crude.'
>
> The Teacher said, 'He had made some effort in his mind and was of course different from those who imitated others, depended on others, or sought only literally meanings. However, if you scrutinize his doctrines carefully, you will find there are crude spots. You will see if you continue your effort long enough.'

<div align="right">(Chan 1963b: 192–3)</div>

Yang-ming never said in what ways Lu was crude. Probably he felt Lu lacked details, sophistications, and subtlety in his expressions. Lu's approach was straightforward, while Wang's approach was anything but straightforward. Ironically, his point of departure was very often Zhu Xi. He started with Zhu Xi's problematic, not satisfied with his answers, and looked for his own answers. In this regard, we cannot but say that Zhu had served as an indispensable stimulant to Wang's thought and, in this sense, must also be regarded an important source for the development of Wang's philosophy.

One conspicuous example was his concern for the teachings of *The Great Learning*, probably no less than that of Zhu Xi. Zhu thought that there was a missing text in the classic, and ventured to supply it with his own words. And he was still revising his interpretation of the chapter on the sincerity of the will on his deathbed. Yang-ming did not believe there was a missing text in the classic, so he urged to go back to the original. And the last important essay he contributed was 'Inquiry on the *Great Learning*' in 1527, just a little over a year before he died. At the start of the essay, he said:

> The great man regards Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things as one body. He regards the world as one family and the country as one person. As to those who make a cleavage between objects and distinguish between the self and others, they are small men. That the great man can regard Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things as one body is not because he deliberately wants to do so, but because it is natural to the humane nature of his mind that he do so. Forming one body with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things is not only true of the great man. Even the mind of the small man is no different. Only he himself makes it small.
>
> (Chan 1963b: 272)

As is well known, Zhu Xi found his enlightenment by reflecting on *The Doctrine of the Mean*. But very few scholars notice that Yang-ming also had his own reflections on the problem of equilibrium and harmony in his letter to Lu Yuan-jing (陸原靜). As he said:

> The equilibrium before the feelings are aroused is innate knowledge. It is neither before nor after any state and is neither internal nor external but is one substance without differentiation. Activity and tranquility may refer to the mind's engaging in something or nothing, but innate knowledge makes no distinction between doing something and doing nothing. Activity or tranquility may also refer to the state of being absolutely quiet and that of being acted upon and penetrating things, but innate knowledge does not make any distinction between such states. Activity and tranquility appertain to the time when the mind comes into contact with things, whereas in the original substance of the mind there is no distinction between activity and tranquility. Principle involves no activity. When the mind is active [stirred,

perturbed], this means that it has selfish desires. If it follows principles, it is not active [stirred] in spite of countless changes in its dealing with things. On the other hand, if it obeys selfish desires, then even it is like dry wood and reduced to one single thought, it is not tranquil. Is there any doubt that there is activity in tranquility and tranquility in activity?

(Chan 1963b: 136–7)

Here Wang's monistic thought is in sharp contrast to Zhu's dualistic thought. While Yang-ming made frontal attacks on the popular writings of Zhu Xi, it does not mean that he saw nothing right in Zhu Xi's thought. Not only did he acknowledge Zhu's contributions to the promotion of the sagely way, but he was of the opinion that in his later years Zhu changed his views and taught something very similar to his own. Consequently he selected passages from Zhu Xi's letters and published a volume entitled *Zhu Xi's Final Conclusions Arrived at Late in Life* in 1518 in an attempt to show that Zhu Xi had changed his position in late life and adopted the views now advocated by Wang. Unfortunately, however, Yang-ming's scholarship was so bad that he mistook Zhu Xi's earlier works to be his later works. Wing-tsit Chan pointed out:

The matter created one of the most violent intellectual storms in Chinese history. Throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties, Wang was severely criticized for intellectual dishonesty and for trying to deceive students by utilizing Zhu Xi's name and influence to promote his own doctrine.

(Chan 1963b: 263)

Even when Yang-ming was still alive, he was challenged by scholars such as Luo Qin-shun (羅欽順, Zheng-an 整菴). His answer to Luo was:

I wrote *Zhu Xi's Final Conclusions Arrived at Late in Life* because I could not help it. It is true that I have neglected to ascertain whether certain passages were written earlier or later in life. However, although not all of them were written late in his life, most of them were. At any rate, my chief idea was that it was important to compromise as much as possible so as to clarify this doctrine of the investigation of things. All my life Zhu Xi's doctrine has been a revelation to me, as though from the gods. In my heart I cannot bear suddenly to oppose him. Therefore it was because I could not help it that I did it. Those who know me say that my heart is grieved but those who do not know me say that I am after something. The fact is that in my own heart I cannot bear to contradict Master Zhu but I cannot help contradicting him because the Way is what it is and the Way will not be fully evident if I do not correct him. As to your Honor's contention that I purposefully differ from Master Zhu, do I dare deceive my own mind?

(Chan 1963b: 164)

It is impossible for us to defend Yang-ming's bad scholarship, but there is no reason

for us to doubt his sincerity. Finally Yang-ming's attitude toward the endless debates between the supporters of Lu Xiang-shan and Zhu Xi can be seen from his exchange with Zhou Dao-tong (周道通), a disciple of his:

> Your letter says, 'At present the debate between those supporting Zhu Xi and those supporting Lu Xiang-shan has not stopped. I have often said to friends that now that the correct learning has been obscured for a long time, we must not waste our time and energy engaging in the controversy between Zhu and Lu, but only enlighten people on the basis of your teaching of making up the mind. If they really understand what this mind is and are determined to learn the correct doctrine, then by and large they have already understood the doctrine. Even though the opposite doctrines of Zhu and Lu are not debated and made clear, they can find the truth for themselves. I have noticed that among my friends some are quick to be perturbed when they hear people criticize your theories. The reason why Master Zhu and Master Lu aroused criticism in later generations is, I believe, that their own efforts were not entirely thorough and were clearly not free from being perturbed. Ming-dao [Cheng Ho], however, was free from such defects … What do you think?'
>
>   The ideas expressed in this paragraph are very, very sound. I hope you, Dao-tong, will tell our friends to discuss wherein they themselves are right or wrong but not wherein Zhu Xi or Lu Xiang-shan was right or wrong. To slander people with words is to slander lightly. But if one cannot personally and sincerely practice their teachings and merely listens to them and talks about them all day without stop, that is to slander them with one's own person and to slander heavily. If I can learn from all those in the world who criticize me and thereby improve myself, they will all be polishing and correcting me. In that case, everywhere is the opportunity for me to be alert, to cultivate and examine myself, and to advance in virtue. An ancient philosopher said, 'Those who attack my shortcomings are my teachers.' Should we dislike teachers?
>
> <div align="right">(Chan 1963b: 129–30)</div>

It is interesting to note that Yang-ming agreed with Zhou Dao-tong's attitude to follow the example of Ming-dao, as Zhu and Lu were both one-sided and could not match Ming-dao's achievement in self-cultivation. Yang-ming endorsed Zhu Xi's construction of the orthodox line of transmission of the Way, but he saw differently from Zhu Xi, as he said:

> The transmission of the teachings of Confucius terminated with Mencius. It was not until one thousand and five hundred years later that Lian-xi [Zhou Dun-yi] and Ming-dao [Cheng Hao] began to search again for its clues. From then on the system was developed and branched off more and more, at the same time gradually tending to become fragmented and torn apart, and finally was altogether dissipated. I have gone deeply into the reasons for this, and

believe that for the most part the whole situation has been confused by the fact that famous but mediocre scholars talk too much.

<div align="right">(Chan 1963b: 264–5)</div>

It was clear that he agreed with Zhu to honor Zhou Dun-yi as the first to initiate the movement. But after Ming-dao, neither Zhu nor Lu were able to transmit the sagely Way like Zhou and Cheng (Ming-dao). That was why he developed his *zhi-liang-zhi-jiao* (致良知教 teaching of extending innate knowledge [of the mind-heart]). Liu Zong-zhou (劉宗周, Ji-shan 蕺山, 1578–1645) accepted Yang-ming's interpretation of the orthodox line of the transmission of the Way as that of Zhou-Cheng (Ming-dao), putting aside Zhu and Lu as one-sided. But Yang-ming taught different things at a different time and place, and his followers lacked consensus in their interpretations of the Teacher's ideas. So Liu Zong-zhou felt that Yang-ming's *zhi-liang-zhi-jiao* was only a *quan-jiao* (權教 expedient teaching), and worked hard to replace it with his own *cheng-yi-shen-du-jiao* (誠意慎獨教 teaching of sincerity of the will and vigilance in solitude) as the final teaching. Related issues are discussed in the next section.

9 Liu Zong-zhou and Huang Zong-xi

There were hundreds of followers of Wang Yang-ming with diverse opinions, so it would be a formidable task to study their thoughts. Fortunately, we have *Ming-Ru-Xue-An* (明儒學案 The Records of Ming Scholars) compiled by Huang Zong-xi which is a classic on Ming Neo-Confucianism. What kind of a book is *Ming-Ru-Xue-An*? Liang Qi-chao (梁啟超 1873–1929) has said that it is a most objective study of Ming philosophy (Liang 1936, 48–9). He was wrong, as Huang was not shy to offer his own opinions and judgments. Actually the book was compiled through a certain perspective, that of his teacher Liu Zong-zhou. In the beginning of the book, there is a section entitled 'Quotations from Liu Zong-zhou' (Ching 1987, 49–69). The presence of this section shows that Huang intended to use his teacher's ideas as guiding principles to compile the book. But he did not follow slavishly his teacher's opinions. He believed in *yi-ben-wan-shu* (一本萬殊 one root and myriad variations) (Ching 1987: 18). After going through different schools of thought in Ming Confucianism, Zong-xi had confidence that Ji-shan's philosophy would emerge as the culminating point of the movement. This explains why the last chapter of the book (Ch. 62) was 'Ji-Shan-Xue-An' (蕺山學案 'Case Study of Liu Ji-shan'). Unfortunately, however, the actual course of history did not go the way he intended, but rather went to some other ways opened up by none other than himself. That makes him the last figure in the movement and initiator of the other trends of thought that eventually brought about the downfall of Song–Ming Neo-Confucianism. Owing to these reasons I take him to be a tragic figure in his time (Liu: 1986).

First, just a few words on the lives of these two scholars. Liu Zong-zhou had served in the Ming court. He was famous for moral integrity, and had strong ties with the Dong-lin (東林) school, which was opposed to idle metaphysical speculation and the corruption by powerful eunuchs in the court. One member was Huang Zun-su (黃尊素

1584–1626), Huang Zong-xi's father, who was killed because of his opposition to Wei Zong-xian (魏忠賢). Liu was never trusted or used much by the emperor. He developed the last original philosophy in the long line of Song–Ming Neo-Confucianism. After Zong-xi's father died, Liu took him in and treated him like his own son. But Zong-xi in his early years was more a man of action than ideas. He had organized people to fight against the invading Manchus without success. Eventually the Ming dynasty was replaced by the Qing dynasty. But Zong-xi refused to serve in the new regime. He stayed in his native place, now Zhejiang Province, studied diligently Liu Zong-zhou's papers, and was widely read. As a virtual recluse, he was allowed to pursue his own learning, became a prolific writer, completed several big projects, including the compilation of *The Records of Ming Scholars* and laying the foundation for the compilation of *The Records of Song and Yuan Scholars*.

Julia Ching noticed that the geographical factor has always had a certain importance in the development of philosophical ideas in China (Ching 1987: 21). Huang Zong-xi found that 'The teaching of the Yang-ming school spread from near to far. Its first adherents were all from the same prefecture (Shao-xing 紹興). After his experience at Long-chang (龍場, in Guizhou 貴州) Yang-ming started to accept disciples from all over' (Ibid.: 23). Probably based on such consideration Huang Zong-xi listed six schools according to geographical region (Ibid.: 107–60):

1 Zhe-zhong School (浙中, in Zhejiang 浙江);
2 Jiang-you School (江右, in Jiangxi 江西);
3 Nan-zhong School (南中, in Jiangsu 江蘇);
4 Chu-zhong School (楚中, in Huguang 湖廣);
5 Northern School;
6 School of Yue and Min (粵閩, in Guangdong 廣東 and Fujian 福建).

In addition to these, there is also the Tai-chou school (泰州, in Northern Jiangsu). It is listed separately, perhaps because of its controversial nature. Its founder was Wang Gen (王艮 1483–1541), an eccentric popular orator who attracted a large number of followers with miscellaneous characters. Its emphasis was on practice rather than on theory.

For our purpose there is no need to go into all the complexities of Yang-ming schools of thought, suffice to concentrate on some of the most important issues as our focal points. As our guide we find a key statement by Zong-xi as follows:

> The teaching of Master Yang-ming became popular everywhere under Heaven on account of Wang Gen (王艮) and Wang Ji (王畿). But it gradually lost its transmission in part due to Wang Gen and Wang Ji. Wang Gen and Wang Ji were frequently dissatisfied with their master's teachings, seeking all the while to unveil more of the Buddha's mysteries and attribute to the master. Thus they pressed Yang-ming into the ranks of Chan Buddhism. In Wang Ji's case, no disciple emerged who was stronger than himself, and his teaching was balanced and remedied by the Jiang-you school. So there was no fatal

disintegration effected. In Wang Gen's case, many of his disciples could fight the dragon and the snake with their bare hands. By the time his teaching passed down to men like Yan Jun (顏鈞) and Ho Xin-yin (何心隱) it was no longer within the boundaries of Confucian moral philosophy. Ku Xian-cheng (顧憲成) said: 'Ho Xin-yin and his like were attached to profit and passion like [men] sitting in a basin of paint. They were able to exercise influence over others only through their petty cleverness, which was their strong point.' However, in my opinion, what attracted others to them was not their so-called cleverness but rather their teachings. What we call Patriarch Chan is the teaching that regards transformation of consciousness as direct perception of nature. These men turned Heaven and Earth upside down. There has been no one like them among the ancients and the moderns. The Buddhists practiced beating and yelling, acting wildly according to the situation; however, once the stick was laid down, they were like fools. But these men bore everything with their bare bodies, never letting down their stick, for which reason they have caused so much harm.

(Ching 1987: 165)

These comments refer us to three of the most important schools, Zhe-zhong, Jiang-you, and Taizhou listed above, which will be discussed in that order. The two most important members of the Zhe-zhong school were Wang Ji and Qian De-hong. While the latter was the most faithful follower of Yang-ming, the former had always tried to advance beyond the master. Returning to the four-sentence-teaching issue, after Yang-ming died, Wang Ji labelled it as *si-you-jiao* (四有教 teaching of the four positives), referring to the being (*you*) of mind, will (intention), knowledge, and things, even though the characteristics of the mind are neither good nor evil. This was for him only the elementary teaching, while he himself advanced *si-wu-jiao* (四無教 teaching of the four negatives), referring to the non-being (*wu*) of these four that they are all neither good nor evil (Liu 1998: 240). It is not right to say that Wang Ji went overboard to assert the four negatives, because Yang-ming approved his view at the Tian-quan meeting, and probably added to his self-confidence by saying this approach is for people of sharp intelligence. But Yang-ming did issue the warning that this view should not be publicized because not too many in the world belong in this category. Wang Ji, however, totally ignored Yang-ming's warning and spread his view everywhere, and deliberately took in some Daoist and Buddhist ideas and practices to expand the Confucian horizon. Thus he made some contributions, but also created a lot of confusion among the followers of Yang-ming, and stirred up controversies wherever he went. Jiang-you indeed was the area which produced a number of outstanding scholars inspired by Yang-ming's teachings. Huang Zong-xi has this to say about the school:

The Jiang-you (Jiangxi) school alone acquired the true transmission of Wang Yang-ming. Zou Shou-yi (鄒守益), Luo Hong-xian (羅洪先), Liu Wen-min (劉文敏), and Nie Bao (聶豹) were its best representatives ... All of them

were able to make explicit Yang-ming's intended meanings. At this time, the Shao-xing (紹興) (Zhejiang) school had developed many errors, and the members appealed to their master's authority as support for their own opinions in the face of their critics. Only the Jiang-you school could point that out, thus preventing the Way of Wang Yang-ming from decaying. After all, Yang-ming had spent his whole life and energy in Jiangxi. It was reasonable and natural that his influence should be most felt there.

(Ching 1987: 118)[6]

Huang's characterization of the school and the selection of representatives clearly reflected his 'prejudice'. Nie Bao was not close to Yang-ming at all; he attained his enlightenment in prison in solitary confinement and became a disciple of Yang-ming only after the master had died. Luo Hong-xian did not even get to see Yang-ming when the master was still alive, but was invited by Qian De-hong to compile Yang-ming's Chronology. The Jiang-you school indeed had a large number of disciples of Wang, but there was not a unified view of the teachings of the master. They debated constantly among themselves. When Nie Bao debated with Wang Ji, most sided with Wang Ji, as Huang Zong-xi observed:

After his release from prison, he [Nie] regulated a method of quiet-sitting that he taught those who studied with him, guiding them to return to stillness for the sake of attaining harmony with themselves and a composure that enabled them to respond perfectly to events and happenings, so that in practical life they might be in accord with their [minds]. At the time, those of his fellow students who also followed the teaching of *liang-zhi* regarded the prior state [before rise of emotions] to be present in the posterior – [a moment at which] emotions were rising and yet not arisen, so that the effort of achieving such a prior state could be made manifest in the posterior state, and the effort of the natural (*xian-tian*, literally before Heaven, preconscious) could be made manifest in the conscious (*hou-tian*, literally, after Heaven).

(Ching 1987: 128)

The majority of Yang-ming's disciples disagreed with Nie:

Thus did Wang Ji, Huang Hong-gang (黃宏綱), Chen Jiu-chuan (陳九川), Zou-shou-yi, and Liu Weng-ming each raise difficulties, as Nie sought to resolve them one by one. Only Luo Hong-xian agreed profoundly with him, saying that Nie's teaching resembled a thunderbolt that struck at the ambiguity of many would-be heroes [of the sagely Way], until he made available to all a wide and open road, and no further doubt need remain.

(Ibid.: 129)

But Huang Zong-xi defended Nie by saying: 'Nie Bao did not really diverge from Yang-ming's teachings and should not have been criticized by so many people' (ibid.:

130). The reason was because Nie's approach resembled that of Zhou Dun-yi, which was favored by Huang's teacher Liu Zong-zhou.

As for the Taizhou School, Wang Gen (王艮 1483–1541) was a populist who emphasized the joy of learning and had great appeal to common people including farmers and merchants, who could barely read the Chinese characters. The outstanding member of the school was Luo Ru-fang (羅汝芳, Jing-xi 近溪, 1515–88) who was a disciple of Yan Jun (顏鈞). In early years Luo had trouble in suppressing his desires in practicing self-discipline. Yan taught him that the way to quench the fire in the mind-heart was not to suppress desires but rather to expand the beginnings of humanity within one's mind-heart as taught by Mencius. Luo later on taught the sudden approach within the Confucian tradition. Outwardly the sage's behavior is no different from that of an innocent child: when one is conscious of doing something good, the person has already fallen into the habit of calculation of profit; only when one is conscious to the extent of being unconscious in conducting good behaviors, then everything is natural as if flowing out from one's nature. No words would be needed at this stage of practicing the sagely way (Ching 1987: 185–91).

Both Wang Ji and the followers of the Tai-zhou School shared the faith in *xian-cheng-liang-zhi* (見[現]成良知 innate knowledge at the present). It is not wrong to say that there is endowment in everybody in the street to become a sage. But it is certainly not right to say that everybody in the street is a sage. When unruly behaviors were taken to be the function of our nature, evil consequences ensued. Yang-ming's teachings were blamed for such phenomena; some even blamed them for causing the downfall of the Ming dynasty.

Under such circumstances Liu Zong-zhou's philosophy emerged. It urged people to turn from what is manifest to what is hidden, and to replace Yang-ming's *zhi-liang-zhi-jiao* (teaching of extending the innate knowledge) with Ji-shan's *cheng-yi-shen-du-jiao* (teaching of sincerity of the will and vigilance in solitude). The relationship between Liu and Wang was, as Huang Zong-xi observed in the biography of his teacher, that Liu started out having great faith in Yang-ming, then he had serious doubts about Yang-ming's approach, finally he refuted Yang-ming's teachings vigorously, and then Yang-ming's spirit was being recovered. Consequently Liu worked hard to develop his own teaching, which was believed to have surpassed all the expedient doctrines in the past including Yang-ming's teaching on extending *liang-zhi*. Huang summarized Liu's teaching into the following four doctrines (Liu 1998: 235):

1 There is no examination in activity other than preservation in tranquility.
2 The will is what is preserved by the mind, not what is emanated from the mind.
3 The relationship between what is manifested and what is not manifested should be understood as that between what is inward and what is outward, not what is before and what is afterward.
4 *Tai-ji* (the Great Ultimate) is the collective term of the myriad things in the world.

On the first point Liu Zong-zhou returned to Zhou Dun-yi putting emphasis

on 'tranquility' in self-discipline, which transcended the duality of the states of tranquility and activity in action. Second, *yi* (意 the Will) was seen as the original substance; Ji-shan criticized Yang-ming in making the mistake of interpreting *yi* as *nian* (念 fleeting ideas at the moment) and thus failed to get hold of the core of the sagely way.[7] Third, what is manifested (or the outward) is *xin* (the mind-heart), what is not manifested (or the inward) is *xing* (nature). They are actually one.[8] Fourth, the Great Ultimate was seen as not apart from the myriad things in the world. Obviously there was a strong tendency pointing toward an immanent monism. But Mou Zong-san maintained that Liu still kept his transcendent perspective, while Huang Zong-xi totally lost this perspective and taught a naturalistic philosophy by advocating a monism of *qi* (material or vital force) (Mou 1968–9). I take exception to this view. I would concede that Huang, following the lead of his teacher, showed an even stronger tendency pointing toward an immanent monism. But he still kept his transcendent perspective. This can be seen through his debate with Chen Que (陳確 1604–77), another disciple of Liu. Huang argued against Chen to reduce *tian-li* (天理 heavenly principles) to *ren-yu* (人欲 human desires), as he jealously guarded the transcendent character of heavenly principles (Liu 2003: 9–11). Therefore, I maintain Huang instead of Liu was the last in the line of transmission of the movement of Song–(Yuan)–Ming Neo-Confucianism, with the ultimate commitment to *tian-dao-xin-ming-xiang-guan-tong* (the interconnection between the Way of Heaven and human nature and destiny). Huang had great faith that the way of his master would prevail in the world, as he said:

> Those who know [how to read the skies] say that when the five planets gathered around the Kui, Zhou Dun-yi, the Cheng brothers, Zhang Zai, and Zhu Xi had emerged. When the five planets gathered around Shi, the teachings of Wang Yang-ming became prominent. And when the five planets gathered around Zhang, the master Liu's way penetrated the world. Has this not been the work of Heaven? Has this not been the work of Heaven?
>
> (Ching ed. 1987: 262–3)

Unfortunately however, Huang was totally disappointed. After he passed away, the curtains fell for the movement of Song–Ming Neo-Confucianism.

Postscript

When Wang Yang-ming's followers degenerated to empty talks and unruly behaviors, there were indeed justifications to move toward different directions, and Huang Zong-xi was involved with all three of the new movements in the transitional period between the Ming and Qing dynasties (Liu 2003: Ch. 1) First, the emphasis on *qing* (feelings and emotions) and *yu* (desires): Dai Zhen (1723–77) was the outstanding thinker along this direction. But the price to pay was to lose the transcendent perspective altogether. Then there was the emphasis on practical affairs; unfortunately, however, the alien rule by the Manchus curbed the development of this direction. Finally,

the scholars moved back to the study of classics; this was the way to avoid empty talks and unfounded speculations, and would not offend the new rulers of the Qing dynasty, who promoted Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism with a view to maintaining a stable order under the strict control of the regime (Elman 1984). The Qing dynasty (1644–1912) lasted a normal cycle of about 300 years and was replaced by the Republic of China (1912–). In 1919 the May Fourth Cultural Movement blamed everything on Confucianism, which was relegated from the center to the periphery. Then the People's Republic of China was established in 1949 with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as its official ideology. After the disastrous Cultural Revolution (1966–77), which made the attempt to uproot Confucianism altogether from the Chinese soil, however, Contemporary Neo-Confucianism emerged again like a phoenix reborn from the ashes. Lu-Wang's *xin-xue* in particular is seen as a valuable heritage from our tradition (Liu 2003). Naturally that story will be told in another context and is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Acknowledgements

On English translations I rely on Wing-tsit Chan's *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy and Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings*, and Julia Ching (ed.), *The Records of Ming Scholars: A Selected Translation*. I used many of their translations, only making slight modifications. I completed the first draft of the chapter when I was Y.K. Pao Distinguished Visiting Chair Professor at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in the spring term of 2006. I am grateful to Miss Clara So for typing the manuscript for me.

Notes

1. As far as I know, only Julia Ching has published an article in English on the Goose Lake Debate (Ching 1974). Interested readers may consult my book on Zhu Xi in Chinese (Liu 1995). As a matter of fact the only source that offered some details on the gathering was from the side of Lu Xiang-shan, who took pride in his role on the occasion. Zhu Xi did not seem to care much for the details of this gathering. Not much was recorded from his side except that he found Lu's position not to study classics too radical for him and Lu Zu-qian. My book examined the issues of *Zhu-Lu-yi-tong* (朱陸異同 differences and similarities between Zhu and Lu) in a comprehensive fashion. Another famous debate between Zhu and Lu on the Diagram of Great Ultimate has already been discussed in Chapter 12.
2. The best study in English on Wang Yang-ming's early years is by Tu Wei-ming (杜維明). He wrote a dissertation on the subject while he studied at Harvard, and it was later revised and published as a book. He combined his own existential understanding of Wang Yang-ming's learning process with Erickson's theory of identity crisis to bring a fresh perspective to tackle Wang Yang-ming's earlier thought.
3. Qian's statement is accurate; his authority on this matter has been widely accepted. However, I accidentally discovered that Huang Zong-xi in his *The Records of Ming Scholars* made a twist to say that, after his sudden enlightenment at Long-chang, later in his career, Wang's learning went through another three stages: first, he concentrated on sitting in meditation and purifying the mind; second, after his sojourn in Jiangxi, he only talked about *zhi-liang-zhi*; finally, when he returned to Zhejiang, he reached the mature stage where there was no need to borrow ideas from others and patch things together, all phenomena were illuminated as if by the red sun in the sky (Ching 1987: 104–5). Under such an interpretation, after completing his learning, Wang further underwent three changes.

Thus Huang Zong-xi adopted Wang Ji's view to take Yang-ming's *zhi-liang-zhi-jiao* (致良知教) as an expedient doctrine in order to leave room for his teacher's *cheng-yi-shen-du-jiao* (誠意慎獨教) as the final doctrine (Liu 1998).

4. In the twentieth century Heidegger was the first to take 'the world' as a meaningful structure formed by a correlation between the subject and the object. Cf. Martin Heidegger: *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarie and Edward Robinson (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962). But Heidegger gave us only a phenomenological description of different 'modes of being'. It is amazing that 400 years ago, Wang Yang-ming not only gave us a portrait of different 'worlds', but provided us guidance to choose a better world and direction for us to practice self-discipline.

5. In September 1972 I published an article in Chinese in *New Asia Academic Annual*, 14 to re-examine Yang-ming's philosophy of mind, now included as Chapter 9 in my book on Zhu Xi (Liu 1995). After Wing-tsit Chan read the article, he wrote me and said that it had an awakening effect. He urged me to rewrite the article in English. Many scholars simply take for granted that Yang-ming was a subjective idealist without bothering to look further into the matter. So finally I was driven to publish an article in English entitled 'How Idealistic Is Wang Yang-ming?' *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 10 (June 1983): 147–68. This article is dedicated to Wing-tsit Chan in honor of his contribution to the promotion of understanding of Chinese philosophy in the West, and is now incorporated in Chapter 11 of my book in English, *Understanding Confucian Philosophy: Classical and Sung-Ming* (Liu 1998).

6. Julia Ching made a rare error in her translation of the Jiang-you school. She listed Luo Lun (羅倫, Yi-feng一峰 1431–78), who actually belonged in an earlier generation. I corrected to Liu Wen-min (劉文敏, Liang-feng 兩峰), who was referred to as one of the many Lius of An-fu (Ching 1987: 23) in her Introduction.

7. In the Preface of *The Records of Ming Scholars* Huang Zong-xi maintained that this teaching on *yi* (will or intention) was the core teaching of his teacher but was unpopular at the time. He nevertheless insisted to hold on to the teaching, as this was most characteristic of the Master's thought (Ching 1987: 42). He repeated his firm commitment to this teaching in the last chapter of the book in his comments on the Ji-shan school (ibid.: 253–4).

8. Mou Zong-san believed that such thought was similar to that of Hu Hong (胡宏, 1100–55), and made the proposal that Hu-Liu formed the third branch of Song–Ming Neo-Confucianism in addition to Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang, while acknowledging that there was not any direct relationship between Hu and Liu, as the latter did not make any reference to the former (Mou 1968–9). I had serious reservation over the proposal, as Hu maintained that the Supreme Good is beyond the characterization of good and evil, while Liu maintained that absolutely good without evil characterizes the mind-in-itself (Liu 1998: 124, 242).

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Chapter 14
PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT IN LATE MING AND EARLY QING

Chung-yi Cheng

1 Introduction

There was once a popular belief that the failure of Song–Ming Confucian philosophy gave rise to the Qing evidential scholarship. In other words, there was a change from the interest in philosophy to that in philology. For example, Liang Qi-chao (梁啟超, Ren-gong 任公, 1873–1929) in his *Zhong-Guo-Jin-San-Bai-Nian-Xue-Shu-Shi* (中國近三百年學術史 *A History of Chinese Thought in the Last Three Hundred Years*) said that the mainstream of scholarship from the late Ming to the Qing dynasty was 'weary of subjective speculation and tending towards objective inquiry', while its characteristic was 'discarding theorization and promoting practice' (Liang 1985: 1–2). However, several studies in the past decade have showed that such a belief, if not false, oversimplifies the case (Chow 1994: 44–70; Cheng 2000; Wu 2004; Zhang 2006: 1–99). The actual situation is far more complicated. There was a philosophical development during the Ming–Qing transitional period, which Shu-hsien Liu (劉述先) and I call a 'paradigm shift' (Liu and Cheng 1999; Cheng 2000: 171–88; Liu 2003: 1–19). By 'paradigm shift', we meant there was a radical change in the conception of Confucian philosophy. Scholars during that period strongly criticized the moral metaphysics of Song–Ming Confucianism because of its mistaken dichotomy between morality and desires. They advocated a new philosophy that emphasized that morality is nothing but the 'satisfaction of feelings and fulfillment of desires' (*da-qing sui-yu* 達情遂欲) of every person, which was viewed as the genuine teachings of ancient Confucian sages. Their account of the Confucian key notions such as *xin* (心 mind), *xing* (性 nature), *li* (理 principle) and so forth was thus significantly different from that of Song–Ming Confucianism. In this chapter, I will give a detailed explanation of how this paradigm shift happened in three steps: (1) to trace how the Yang-ming school, the school of Wang Yang-ming (i.e., Wang Shou-ren [王守仁, with 'Bo-an' 伯安 as his style name and 'Yang-ming' 陽明 as his honorific name, 1472–1529]), declined in the hands of its later scholars after Wang's death; (2) to inquire into how Song–Ming Confucianism

was defended by its two wings, i.e., x*in-xue* (心學 the school of mind) and *li-xue* (理學 the school of principle); (3) to examine how the new paradigm emerged. But, before these, it is helpful to summarize the central ideas of the moral metaphysics of Song–Ming Confucianism for the sake of a thorough understanding of the involved ideological change.

It was Mou Zong-san (牟宗三, 1909–95) who characterized Song–Ming Confucianism as moral metaphysics (Mou 1968: 1.1–113). Mou's characterization of moral metaphysics can be elaborated as follows. First, the primary concern of moral metaphysics is the existential inquiry of humans. Surely it is one's existential perplexity that motivates one's inquiry into oneself. 'What makes my life meaningful?' 'What should I do?' 'What is my ultimate concern?' 'Who am I?' The answers to these questions would lead one to find an orientation of life. Once one finds an orientation of one's life, what follows is how to realize oneself in accordance with that orientation. This entire process of existential inquiry, in Song–Ming Confucian words, is called 'learning for one's self' (*wei-ji zhi xue* 為己之學) or 'learning for getting realization by oneself' (*zi-de zhi xue* 自得之學). In respect of *wei-ji zhi xue* or *zi-de zhi xue*, Wm. Theodore de Bary correctly reminded us that it 'was not to be understood as simply the preoccupation of the learned man or literatus. Learning in the larger and deeper sense had the kind of ultimate meaning and value we usually associate with religion' (de Bary 1991: 52). John Dewey's well-known exploration of personally religious experiences (Dewey 1929) can shed new light on understanding the psychology of the Confucian existential inquiry, though it is beyond the scope of this writing to explore Dewey's ideas in this connection. What I need to point out here is that such existential inquiry drove Song–Ming Confucians to work out their doctrines. A good example is Wang Yang-ming, who said that his doctrines were 'achieved from a hundred deaths and a thousand sufferings' (Chan 1963a: 658).

Second, whether one can adequately carry out the existential inquiry depends on whether one can find one's own *xin* (心 mind). One's realization of *xin* in the self would enable one to love oneself as well as others; it is *ren* (仁 humanity); one's recognizing the act of love as moral while its violation as immoral is *zhi* (智 wisdom). As *li* (禮 propriety) is the derivative of *ren* while *yi* (義 righteousness) is the derivative of *zhi*, *xin* is the agent for exercising *ren*, *yi*, *li* and *zhi*. As *ren*, *yi*, *li and zhi* are regarded as moral principles, *xin* is the faculty that creates moral principles. Hereby *xin-xue* of Song–Ming Confucianism found its tenet: '*xin* is principle' (*xin-ji-li* 心即理). In conclusion, as Wang Yang-ming said: 'The mind is one, that is all. In terms of total commiseration, it is called humanity. In terms of attainment of what is proper, it is called righteousness. And in terms of orderliness, it is called principle' (*Wang-Yang-Ming-Quan-Ji* [王陽明全集 *Complete Works of Wang Yang-ming*] 1992: 1:43; Chan 1963a: 682). Back to the existential inquiry, we can understand why *xin* is crucial to the inquiry as it can provide for the orientation of life.

Third, as a subjective faculty, *xin* is universal to all humans. Mencius said, 'Can it be that in our minds alone we are not alike? What is it that we have in common in our minds? It is the sense of principle and righteousness (y*i-li*, moral principles). The sage is the first one who possesses what is common in our minds' (6A:7; Chan 1963a:

56, modified).[1] In terms of its universality, *xin* is none other than human nature. But humans share other commonalities, such as their biological and psychological structures, which are also considered to be part of their nature. Song–Ming Confucians thus made a distinction between two kinds of human nature. One is the moral nature (*yi-li-zhi-xing* 義理之性) and the other is the material nature (*qi-zhi-zhi-xing* 氣質之性). Thus *xin* is the moral nature of humans. Here we arrive at the tenet: 'xing is principle' (*xing-ji-li* 性即理) by a simple inference. The steps are these: (1) *xin* is principle; (2) *xin* is the moral nature of humans; (3) therefore, the moral nature of humans, i.e. *xing*, is principle. Due to the foregoing inference, though 'xing is principle' is the tenet of *li-xue*, *xin-xue* had no difficulty with endorsing 'xing is principle'; nevertheless, its interpretation of the tenet is quite different from that of *li-xue*. I will discuss the main difference between *xin-xue* and *li-xue* later on.

Fourth, for Song–Ming Confucians, the existential inquiry of humans involves not only humans but also the universe. They believe that there is a certain kind of correlation between humans and the universe at large. By extending one's *xin*, according to Song–Ming Confucians, one can comprehend a creative universe, as the creativity embodied in the universe is the same as the moral creativity emanated from humans' *xin*. Song–Ming Confucians are convinced that the moral faculty *xin* can create moral principles and dictate material body with desires and feelings to act on such principles. Analogically, the creative principle of the universe can function through the operation of material forces (*qi* 氣, comprises *yin* 陰and *yang* 陽) to create myriad things. Taking a step further, they believe that the moral creativity of *xin* actually is what humans endowed from the creative principle of the universe. Here we see how Song–Ming Confucians saw the interconnectedness between humans and the universe. That is the reason why Mou said that, without exception, all Song–Ming Confucians subscribed to the shared idea of *tian-dao-xing-ming-xiang-guan-tong* (天道性命相貫通 the Way of Heaven and human nature and destiny are interrelated) (Mou 1968: 1.417).

Fifth, many terms, such as Heaven (*tian* 天), heavenly principle (*tian-li* 天理), the Way of Heaven (*tian-dao* 天道), the Great Ultimate (*tai-ji* 太極), were used by Song–Ming Confucians to label the creative principle. It is noted that: (1) *tian-li* had better be understood through its function instead of being viewed as a substantial concept; (2) *tian-li* is thus not only transcendent but also immanent in character; (3) the creation of *tian-li* would be impossible without *qi* (material force): they are inseparable and work together as a unity, though they are also irreducible.

Sixth, according to Mou, in moral metaphysics there are two directions in the relationship between humans and Heaven. From a practical point of view, there is an upward direction from humans to Heaven, while, from an ontological point of view, there is a downward direction from Heaven to humans. The representative works for the upward direction are the *Analects* and the *Mencius*. As Confucius said, 'I study things on the lower level but my understanding penetrates the higher level. It is Heaven that knows me' (14.37; Chan 1963a: 43). Mencius also said, 'He who exerts his mind to the utmost knows his nature. He who knows his nature knows Heaven. To preserve one's mind and to nourish one's nature is the way to serve Heaven' (7A.1; Chan 1963a: 78). For the downward direction, the representative works are the

Doctrine of the Mean and the *Commentaries on the Book of Changes*. At the beginning of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, it is stated, 'What Heaven (*Tian*, Nature) imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way (Dao). Cultivating the Way is called education' (Chan 1963a: 98). The *Qian-tuan* (乾彖) of the *Commentaries on the Book of Changes* expresses the same idea in different words: 'The Way of *Qian* is to change and to transform so that everything will obtain its correct nature and destiny (*ming*) and the great harmony [of natural forces] will be self-proficient' (Chan 1963a: 264). In conclusion, Mou considered that the aforementioned four works, the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* (three of the Four Books) and the *Commentaries on the Book of Changes*, are crucial in the formation of moral metaphysics, while the *Great Learning* (one of the Four Books) offers only a conceptual framework (Mou 1968: 1.17–18). Here one may wonder whether Mou's assessment of the *Great Learning* fits the historical facts. If the *Great Learning*, as Mou said, was not crucial in the formation of moral metaphysics, why did it receive so much attention among Ming Confucians and even become the focus of intellectual discussions in the Ming dynasty? Mou's answer was that it was because of Zhu Xi (朱熹, Hui-an 晦庵, 1130–1200) who highly praised the *Great Learning*. Because Zhu became the leading figure of Confucianism during the Southern Song, he made a great impact on its later development. Confucians in the Ming dynasty, whether they agreed or disagreed with Zhu's thought, had to face this situation and thus had to discuss the *Great Learning*.

In Mou's view, however, Zhu Xi actually deviated somewhat from the line of moral metaphysics, as his understanding of *xin* is different from the aforementioned second point. In Zhu Xi's thought, *xin* is not the moral faculty that can create moral principles; rather, it is a knowing faculty that can seek knowledge of moral principles (*xin-ju-li* 心具理). Once *xin* gets to know moral principles, it has to take them seriously (*chi-jing* 持敬) so as to make itself act on them. While it can act on moral principles, it can then follow up to restrain the feelings and desires (*jie-qing-yu* 節情欲). Zhu, like other Song–Ming Confucians, considers a moral principle as something inherent in humans' moral nature. Simply speaking, Zhu advocated '*xing* is principle' but rejected '*xin* is principle', which made him become the founder of the school of *li-xue*. In contrast, Confucians who staunchly contend '*xin* is principle' belonged to the school of *xin-xue*. Although Zhu was a leading figure and thus usually deemed a synthesizer of the movement, Mou's studies show that what Zhu inherited was only the thought of Cheng Yi (程頤, Yi-chuan 伊川, 1033–1107) and that Cheng-Zhu were not the heirs to the Confucian orthodoxy. To Mou, the Confucian orthodoxy is the moral metaphysics that has been developed by the *xin-xue* tradition. Whereas Zhu actually had a great impact on the development of Song–Ming Confucianism, Mou concludes that Zhu as a successor of the son born of a side branch (Cheng Yi) took the orthodox position that was supposed to be held by the eldest son born of the main branch (*ji-bie-wei-zong* 繼別為宗) (Mou 1968: 1.54).

Though the above sketch of moral metaphysics is brief, it is sufficient for the purpose of this chapter.

2 The Decline of the Wang School and the Intellectual Change in the late Ming

In *Ming-Ru-Xue-An* (明儒學案 *The Records of Ming Scholars*), Huang Zong-xi (黃宗義, Li-zhou 黎洲, 1610–95) diagnosed the decline of Wang Yang-ming's teachings in the hands of later scholars after the death of Wang, and held Wang Ji (王畿, Long-xi 龍溪, 1498–1583) of the Zhe-zhong school (浙中, in Zhejiang) and Wang Gen (王艮, Xin-zhai 心齋, 1483–1541) of the Tai-zhou school (泰州, in Northern Jiangsu) to be responsible for the downfall.[2] He said:

> The teachings of Master Wang Yang-ming became popular everywhere under Heaven on account of Wang Gen and Wang Ji. But it gradually lost its transmission in part due to Wang Gen and Wang Ji. Wang Gen and Wang Ji were frequently dissatisfied with their master's teachings, seeking all the while to unveil more of the Buddha's mysteries and attribute them to the master. Thus they pressed Wang Yang-ming into the ranks of Chan Buddhism. In Wang Ji's case, no disciple emerged who was stronger than himself, and his teachings were balanced and remedied by the Jiang-you school. So there was no total disintegration effected. In Wang Gen's case, many of his disciples could fight the dragon and the snake with their bare hands. By the time his teachings passed down to the men like Yan Jun and He Xin-yin, it was no longer within the boundaries of Confucian moral philosophy.
>
> (*Huang-Zong-Xi-Quan-Ji* [黃宗義全集 *Complete Works of Huang Zong-xi*] 2005: 7.820; Ching 1987: 165)

Huang was correct in holding that Wang Ji and Wang Gen were responsible for the decline of their master's teachings; but he was incorrect in holding one point while not exactly correct in holding another point. First, his incorrect point is this. Huang regarded the Jiang-you school (江右, in Jiangxi) as a remedy of the teachings of Wang Ji. It was simply not the case. In fact, Jiang-you scholars did not reach any consensus on the interpretation of their master's teachings. Huang seemed to pick out Luo Hong-xian (羅洪先, Nian-an 念菴, 1504–64) and Nie Bao (聶豹, Shuang-jiang 雙江, 1487–1563) as two prominent representatives of the Jiang-you school. Elsewhere in *Ming-Ru-Xue-An* he said, 'The Jiang-yu (Jiangxi) school alone acquired the true transmission of Wang Yang-ming. Zhou Shou-yi, Luo Hong-xian, Liu Wen-min, and Nie Bao were its best representatives' (*Huang-Zong-Xi-Quan-Ji* 2005: 7.377; Ching 1987: 118).[3] However, the common advocacy of Luo and Nie was 'returning to tranquility' (*gui-ji* 歸寂) that was widely criticized by the other students of Wang Yang-ming as mistakenly separating the substance (*ti* 體) and the function (*yong* 用) of *liang-zhi* (良知 innate knowing of the good) into two pieces. The reason why Huang gave such praise to Luo and Nie, as Shu-hsien Liu points it out, was that he mistook the idea of *gui-ji* as something similar to the thought of his teacher Liu Zong-zhou (劉宗周, Ji-shan 蕺山, 1578–1635) (Liu 1998: 237–8). If one does a close scrutiny as Mou Zong-san did, one would agree with him that Luo and Nie actually fell far behind

Wang Ji in understanding their master's teachings (Mou 1979: 298–395). Second, Huang's not-exactly-correct point is this. Huang criticized Wang Ji and Wang Gen (the Tai-zhou school) for their injecting Buddhist mysteries into Wang Yang-ming's teachings. I will show in the following discussion that the main problems with Wang Ji and the Tai-zhou school did not lie in their 'pressing Wang Yang-ming into the ranks of Chan Buddhism', though they borrowed Buddhist concepts and ideas to expand the Confucian horizon.

As one of the closest and most devoted followers of Wang Yang-ming, Wang Ji spent a great part of his life in lecturing at academies and lecture halls to promote his master's teachings. However, he was someone with a highly original mind that made him never satisfied to be a slavish student without showing innovative sparks. Even when Wang Yang-ming was alive, Wang Ji had already tried to further develop the doctrine of *liang-zhi* and once asked Wang Yang-ming for corroboration. The debate between Wang Ji and Qian De-hong (錢德洪, Xu-shan 緒山, 1496–1574) (who was a faithful student of Wang Yang-ming and was chosen by other students to undertake the compilation of the master's chronology) on the understanding of Wang Yang-ming's 'Four Dicta' (*si-ju-jiao* 四句教), and their asking Wang Yang-ming to be the adjudicator, resulted in the well-known conversation about 'confirming the Way at the *Tian-quan* Bridge' (*Tian-quan zheng-dao* 天泉證道). This conversation, which was recorded in complete detail in Wang Yang-ming's *Chuan-Xi-Lu* [傳習錄 *Instructions for Practical Living*], deserves our careful examination in order to investigate the deviation of Wang Ji from Wang Yang-ming's teachings:

> In the ninth month of the sixth year of Jia-Jing [1527], our Teacher had been called from retirement and appointed to subdue once more the rebellion in Si-en and Tian-zhou [when the earlier expedition under another official had failed]. As he was about to start, Ru-zhong [Wang Ji] and I [Qian De-hong] discussed learning. He repeated the words of the Teacher's instructions as follows:
>> In the original substance of the mind there is no distinction between good and evil.
>> When the will becomes active, however, such distinction exists.
>> The faculty of innate knowledge is to know good and evil.
>> The Investigation of things is to do good and remove evil.
> I asked, 'What do you think this means?'
> Ru-Zhong said, 'This is perhaps not the final conclusion. If we say that in the original substance of the mind there is no distinction between good and evil, then there must be no such distinction in the will, in knowledge, and in things. If we say that there is a distinction between good and evil in will, then in the final analysis there must also be such a distinction in the substance of the mind.'
> I said, 'The substance of the mind is the nature endowed in us by Heaven, and is originally neither good nor evil. But because we have a mind dominated by habits, we see in our thoughts a distinction between good and evil. The

work of the investigation of things, the extension of knowledge, the sincerity of the will, the rectification of the mind, and the cultivation of the personal life is aimed precisely at recovering that original nature and substance. If there were no good and evil to start with, what would be the necessity of such effort?'

That evening we sat down beside the Teacher at the Tian-quan Bridge. Each stated his view and asked to be corrected. The Teacher said, 'I am going to leave now. I wanted to have you come and talk this matter through. You two gentlemen complement each other very well, and should not hold on to one side. Here I deal with two types of people. The man of sharp intelligence apprehends straight from the source. The original substance of the human mind is in fact crystal-clear without any impediment and is equilibrium before the feelings are aroused. The man of sharp intelligence has accomplished his task as soon as he has apprehended the original substance, penetrating the self, other people, and things internal and things external all at the same time. On the other hand, there are inevitably those whose minds are dominated by habits so that the original substance of the mind is obstructed. I therefore teach them definitely and sincerely to do good and remove evil in their will and thoughts. When they become expert at the task and the impurities of the mind are completely eliminated, the original substance of the mind will become wholly clear. Ru-zhong's view is the one I use in dealing with the man of sharp intelligence. De-hong's view is for the second type. If you two gentlemen use your views interchangeably, you will be able to lead all people – of the highest, average, and lowest intelligence – to the truth. If each of you holds on to one side, right here you will err in handling properly the different type of man and each in his own way will fail to understand fully the substance of the Way.'

After a while he said again, 'From now on whenever you discuss learning with friends be sure not to lose sight of my basic purpose.

In the original substance of the mind there is no distinction between good and evil
When the will becomes active, however, such distinction exists.
The faculty of innate knowledge is to know good and evil.
The Investigation of things is to do good and remove evil.

Just keep to these words of mine and instruct people according to their types, and there will not be any defeat. This is indeed a task that penetrates both the higher and the lower levels. It is not easy to find people of sharp intelligence in the world. Even Yan Hui [Confucius' most virtuous pupil] and Ming-dao [Cheng Hao] dared not assume that they could fully realize the original substance of the mind as soon as they apprehended the task. How could we lightly expect this from people? People's minds are dominated by habits. If we do not teach them concretely and sincerely to devote themselves to the task of doing good and removing evil right in their innate knowledge rather than merely imagining an original substance in a vacuum, all that they do will not

be genuine and they will do no more than cultivate a mind of vacuity and quietness [like that of the Buddhists and Daoists]. This defeat is not a small matter and must be exposed as early as possible.' On that day both Ru-zhong and I attained some enlightenment.

(*Wang-Yang-Ming-Quan-Ji* 1992: 1.117–18; Chan 1963a: 686–8)

Before going into the Wang Ji-Qian debate, I intend to remind the reader that the doctrine of *liang-zhi* is a kind of elaboration of *xin* by Wang Yang-ming. Wang Yang-ming borrowed Mencius' concept '*liang-zhi*' to characterize *xin* and emphasized that the moral faculty *xin* can serve as a transcendental criterion of good and evil. In other words, he emphasized the wisdom (*zhi* 智) and the righteousness (*yi* 義) sides of *xin*. Now back to the debate, we can see that Wang Yang-ming clearly took the 'Four Dicta' as his ultimate teaching. It is not hard to understand the last three dicta, as their combination is just another expression of Wang Yang-ming's teaching of '*zhi-liang-zhi*' (致良知 extending innate knowledge of the good). For Wang Yang-ming, humans have both their inherent *liang-zhi* and sensuousness; more importantly, the latter would interrupt the former. Therefore, the discipline or effort (*gong-fu* 工夫) to extend *liang-zhi* is to let it in its state of full exercise for the sake of eradicating any sensuous perturbation. We should not imagine *liang-zhi* as something 'in a vacuum'; it is what should function in our real life. The 'will' (*yi* 意) in the second dictum refers not to the moral will but fleeting ideas at the moment, which is arbitrary in doing good or evil. Here it leaves the room for efforts which is the theme of the third and fourth dicta. According to the third and fourth dicta, the effort should first be the self-awakening of one's own *liang-zhi*, then letting *liang-zhi* dictate one's life to do good and remove evil. I must hasten to add that the disciplinary steps in the third and fourth dicta are actually circulated. As in practice, the awakening of *liang-zhi* presupposes that it has already functioned in doing good and removing evil. One can realize *liang-zhi* only when it is in operation and then let it function constantly after realization. Wang Yang-ming called the effort '*zhi-zhi-ge-wu*' (致知格物 extending innate knowing of the good and rectifying affairs or things), or '*zhi-liang-zhi*' for short.[4] All controversies came from the first dictum. What does '*xin-ti*' (心體 the original substance of the mind or the mind in itself), another name of *liang-zhi*, mean? Does it mean something neither good nor evil or something beyond good and evil?

The first dictum should be understood as follows. (1) It simply has nothing to do with smuggling Buddhist indifference to good and evil into Confucianism, otherwise it is inconsistent with the later three dicta. (2) As a transcendental criterion of good and evil, *xin-ti* transcends good and evil that are the judgments made by it and thus is better named as 'the highest good' or 'the supreme good' (*zhi-shan* 至善). Wang Yang-ming explained this thinking elsewhere: 'The highest good is the original substance of the mind. When one deviates a little from this original substance, there is evil. It is not that there is good and there is also an evil to oppose it. Therefore good and evil are one thing' (*Wang-Yang-Ming-Quan-Ji* 1992: 1.97; Chan 1963a: 684). (3) To say that *xin-ti* is beyond good and evil is to characterize it as its state of full exercise or perfection. While *xin* is in its full exercise, it is devoid of any sensuous perturbation,

thus is in the state of tranquility, i.e. the state of having neither good nor evil. Wang Yang-ming said, 'The state of having neither good nor evil is that of principle in tranquility. Good and evil appear when the vital force is perturbed. If the vital force is not perturbed, there is neither good nor evil, and this is called the highest good' (*Wang-Yang-Ming-Quan-Ji* 1992: 1.29; Chan 1963a: 677). (4) While *xin* is in its full exercise, it is also in the state of spontaneity. Notice that this spontaneity is moral but not emotional. While *xin* is spontaneous to do good and remove evil, it does not need 'making any special effort whatsoever to do so' (*wu-you-zuo-hao, wu-you-zuo-e* 無有作好,無有作惡), thereby is even beyond conscious of good and evil. In *Chuan-Xi-Lu*, we can see that this idea of the spontaneity of *xin* constituted Wang Yang-ming's first dictum: 'Being attached to the non-distinction of good and evil, the Buddhists neglect everything and therefore are incapable of governing the world. The sage, on the other hand, in his non-distinction of good and evil, merely makes no special effort whatsoever to like or dislike and is not perturbed in his vital force.' 'Not making special effort to like or to dislike does not mean not to like or dislike at all. A person behaving so would be devoid of consciousness. To say "not to make a special effort" merely means that one's like and dislike completely follow the Principle of Nature and that one does not go on to attach to that situation a bit of selfish thought. This amounts to having neither likes nor dislikes' (*Wang-Yang-Ming-Quan-Ji* 1992: 1.29; Chan 1963a: 677–8). (5) All in all, it does no harm to borrow the Daoist concepts of '*wu-wei*' (無為 taking no action) and '*zi-ran*' (自然 natural) to depict the spontaneity of *xin*.[5]

In the conversation at the Tian-quan Bridge, Wang Ji focused his thinking mainly on the first dictum. For Wang Ji, if one can activate one's *xin* to its full exercise, then not only *xin* is beyond good and evil, but also *yi* (意 will), *zhi* (知 knowledge of the good), and *wu* (物 investigation of things) are beyond good and evil. He considered this further analysis as 'final'. Later on, in his *Tian-Quan-Zheng-Dao-Ji* (天泉證道記 *Account for Confirming the Way at the Tian-quan Bridge*), Wang Ji named his idea 'the Four Negatives' (*si-wu* 四無), as using the Daoist concept '*wu*' (non-being) to say that these four (i.e. *xin, yi, zhi, wu*) are beyond good and evil, while calling Wang Yang-ming's 'Four Dicta' as 'the Four Positives' (*si-you* 四有). What Wang Ji meant is this: (1) while one's *xin* is in its perfect, full exercise, and spontaneous state, one's will, knowledge of the good, and investigation of things are then all naturally act on *xin*; (2) thereby they are considered to be different performances of *xin*; (3) if *xin* is in its perfect state and thus is beyond good and evil, so are its performances; (4) since the perfect state of *xin* is, both in theory and in practice, the destination of the doctrine of *liang-zhi*, the doctrine of *si-wu* is the 'final conclusion'.

Note that Wang Yang-ming also talked of the perfect state of *xin*; he said: 'Principle is one and no more. In terms of its condensation and concentration in the individual it is called "the nature". In terms of the master of this accumulation it is called "mind". In terms of its emanation and operation under the master, it is called "the will". In terms of the clear consciousness of the emanation and operation, it is called knowledge. And in terms of the stimuli and responses of this clear consciousness, it is called things' (*Wang-Yang-Ming-Quan-Ji* 1992: 1.76–7; Chan 1963b: 161). The remaining question

is how to achieve the perfect state of *xin*. Wang Yang-ming's answer is the effort of *zhi-liang-zhi*, which is summarized in his 'Four Dicta'. Only constantly doing the effort of *zhi-liang-zhi* could *xin* achieve to its perfect state. The perfect state of *xin*, for Wang Yang-ming, is a natural result of effort proficiency. However, Wang Ji had another thinking, which eventually led to the defects of his thought as well as his deviation from his master's teachings.

Indeed, Wang Yang-ming was alert to the pitfalls of Wang Ji's thought. In the Tian-quan Bridge conversation, he strongly emphasized that the Four Dicta is his ultimate teaching, and warned both Wang Ji and Qian De-hong not to lose sight of it. The defect of the Four Negatives lies not in its appreciation of the perfect state of *xin*, but its attempt to substitute the Four Dicta. After the death of Wang Yang-ming, Wang Ji explicitly stated that his master's Four Dicta is just the expedient teaching (*quan-fa* 權法), while his Four Negatives is the final teaching. The effort of *zhi-liang-zhi*, which requires one to examine carefully at every moment whether or not one's ideas, feelings, and desires are in accord with good, in Wang Ji's view, is less straightforward and troublesome. As he suggested instead, efforts would be accomplished as soon as one 'suddenly realized' (*dun-wu* 頓悟) one's *xin*. But what did he mean? We can interpret his meaning in two possible ways. First, if Wang Ji means *xin* has a dynamic power *per se* to do good and remove evil naturally (spontaneously) once being realized, he is right. However, it does not imply that the efforts to do good and remove evil consciously (purposefully) are not necessary. The purposeful effort to restore the full exercise of *xin* as substance (*ji-gong-fu-bian-shi-ben-ti* 即工夫便是本體), and the spontaneous activation of *xin* in itself as natural effort (*ji-ben-ti-bian-shi-gong-fu* 即本體便是工夫), are in practice inseparable, and mutually form a circularity. This circularity is already implied in Wang Yang-ming's Four Dicta. Now we can understand why Wang Yang-ming warned Wang Ji not to give his doctrine a one-sided interpretation. Second, if Wang Ji's idea of 'suddenly realized' means that *xin* could instantly be in its perfect state once being realized, so it is not necessary to do effort purposefully – a one-sided interpretation of Wang Yang-ming's Four Dicta – how could this be possible? In the Tian-quan Bridge conversation, Wang Yang-ming did not clearly say this is impossible, instead he said this is possible only to the people of sharp intelligence. Although Wang Yang-ming immediately remarked that it is so hard to find the people of sharp intelligence, even Yan Hui (顏回) and Ming-dao (程明道 Cheng Hao) (both of them are well-known Confucians) would dare to consider themselves as that kind of people, the way he answered undoubtedly leaves room for Wang Ji to develop his own view. However, if Wang Yang-ming's answer is true, the 'sudden realization' of *xin* is only possible for the people of sharp intelligence, it thus cannot be a kind of teaching to practitioners. For being a kind of teaching, by definition, it must include a set of disciplinary course with which practitioners could follow to achieve the goal. The teaching of 'sudden realization' of *xin*, if being still called 'teaching', obviously does not provide any disciplinary course. After all, it is all about one's natural endowment, whether or not one possesses sharp intelligence. It is important to note that the necessity of a disciplinary course was repeatedly emphasized by Wang Yang-ming, as he said, 'always be doing something' (*bi-you-shi-yan* 必有事

焉) and 'polishing and training in the actual affairs of life' (*shi-shang-mo-lian* 事上磨鍊) (Chan 1963a: 658). Perhaps, we cannot help blaming Wang Yang-ming for his implicit encouragement to Wang Ji, though he finally insisted that his Four Dicta is a comprehensive and ultimate teaching.

It is impossible for us to know whether Wang Ji is a person of sharp intelligence. Wang Ji's teachings eventually made the doctrine of *liang-zhi* a kind of mysteriously empty talk. Many scholars in the late Ming, who were influenced by Wang Ji, talked all day about the 'sudden realization' of *xin*, the perfect state of *xin*, but refused to do any (purposeful) moral efforts. This situation was worsened by another famous doctrine of Wang Ji, i.e., his account of '*jian-zai-liang-zhi*' (見在良知 the appearance and the existence of *liang-zhi*). The story was as follows. Wang Yang-ming once advocated that *liang-zhi* is universal to everyone including the common men and women (*yu-fu-yu-fu* 愚夫愚婦). Wang Ji elaborated this in terms of the following point of '*jian-zai-liang-zhi*': *liang-zhi* appears and exists in all people. What Wang Yang-ming and Wang Ji meant is nothing but the idea that *liang-zhi* is the potential of all humans. Then Wang Ji's followers and his contemporaries further interpreted what he said: *liang-zhi* is already made in everyone, i.e., the so-called '*xian-cheng-liang-zhi*' (現成良知 the ready-made *liang-zhi*) (Peng 2005: 70–80). If we interpret the doctrine '*liang-zhi* is already made' in terms of humans' potential, that is right. However, the doctrine can be easily misread as this: *liang-zhi* is already developed in everyone, and that is certainly wrong. This misinterpretation, unfortunately, really happened among scholars in the late Ming that deteriorated the belief of not doing moral effort and eventually led to a moral degeneration.[6]

Now let us turn to the Tai-zhou school. The Tai-zhou school, whose founder was Wang Gen, sought to popularize Wang Yang-ming's teachings to all walks of life – a woodcutter, potter, stonemason, farmer, clerk, merchant and so on; all came under the name of the school as followers. As quoted above in *Ming-Ru-Xue-An*, the school was blamed for degenerating or even developed going beyond the boundary of Confucianism. A widely accepted explanation is this: the Tai-zhou school put excessive emphasis on the importance of feelings (*qing* 情) and desires (*yu* 欲). However, I find the explanation too general, not enough to cover the subtle shifts of thought within the development of the school. Elsewhere I give a detailed examination of the school and suggest that its development can be divided into three phases, each of them represented by two leading figures (Cheng 2004: 40–76). The first phase was represented by Wang Gen and his son Wang Bi (王襞, Dong-yai 東崖, 1511–87), the second phase by Yan Jun (顏鈞, Shan-nong 山農, 1504–96) and his student Luo Ru-fang (羅汝芳, Jin-xi 近溪, 1515–88), and the third one by He Xin-yin (何心隱, 1517–79) and Li Zhi (李贄, Zhuo-wu 卓吾, 1527–1602). What follows is to trace its gradual deviation from Wang Yang-ming's teachings as well as Song–Ming Confucianism.

Let me start with the first phase. Wang Gen and Wang Bi were seemingly inspired by Wang Yang-ming's famous teaching, 'The great man regards Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things as one body' (Chan 1963a: 659). They elaborated this point further and emphasized that the Way in itself (*dao-ti* 道體) (viz. the Way of Heaven and the Way of the Sage) is nothing but 'the flow of process' (*liu-xing* 流行): '[T]he singing of birds

and falling of flowers, the firmness of mountains and movements of waters, to eat when hungry and to drink when thirsty, to wear light dress in summer and heavy furs in winter: all this perfectly reveals the Dao' (*Ming-Ru-Xue-An* in *Huang-Zong-Xi-Quan-Ji* 2005: 7.839–40; Ching 1987: 179). As for human affairs, Wang Gen said, 'The Way of the Sage is no different from the daily uses of the people (*bai-xing-ri-yong* 百姓日用), whatever diverges from the daily uses of the people is heresy' (Cheng 2004: 50). Notice that the phrase 'no different from' here means being 'inseparable with' instead of being 'identical to'. Otherwise the sagely Way would really be degraded. The problem is this: is one able to cultivate this sense of the Way? Wang Gen's answer is certainly yes. For Wang Gen and Wang Bi, only if one follows one's lively nature (the activity of *xin*) to act 'naturally' can one cultivate this sense of the Way. Again, the idea of the spontaneity of *xin* (the perfection of *xin*), like that in Wang Ji, serves as the core of their thoughts. What makes them different from Wang Ji concerning such an idea is this: (1) they treated the idea in a more practical way, while Wang Ji treats it more theoretically; (2) their conception of effort generated by the idea is still in accordance with Wang Yang-ming's Four Dicta, as opposed to Wang Ji's Four Negatives. In Wang Gen's *Le-Xue-Ge* (樂學歌 *A Paean to the Enjoyment of Learning*), the aim of learning is said to restore the joy of *xin*, and the key to do that lies in one's self-awareness of *xin* so as to detect and extinguish one's selfish desires:

> The human heart naturally enjoys itself
> But one binds oneself by selfish desires.
> When a selfish desire makes its appearance,
> Innate knowing is still self-conscious,
> And once there is consciousness of it, the selfish desire forthwith disappears,
> So that the heart returns to its former joy.
> Joy is the enjoyment of this learning:
> Learning is to learn this joy.
>
> (de Bary 1991: 166–7)

In addition, Wang Gen deliberately used the concept '*shen*' (身) to interpret *xin*. The literal meaning of the Chinese character '*shen*' is body, but it would be seriously wrong to understand Wang Gen's '*shen*' as body. For Wang Gen, *shen* is the mind (*xin*) and the body inseparably unified as a whole. The self is thus closer to what he means by '*shen*'. It is ourselves that enable us to think, to study, to activate *xin* and to achieve the sagely Way in our daily affairs. As Wm. Theodore de Bary succinctly points out: 'If there is a significant difference between the two [Wang Yang-ming and Gen], it is that Wang's "innate knowledge" stresses man's moral awareness whereas Gen's places more stress on the self as the active center of things. Simply stated, Gen's view was that the self and society were one continuum, with the self as the root or base and the society as the branch or superstructure' (de Bary 1991: 161). To see 'the self as the root or base and the society as the branch or superstructure' is what Wang Gen meant by '*ge-wu*' (格物); this, according to *Ming-Ru-Xue-An*, is what was called the 'Huai-nan [method of the] investigation of things' (*Huai-nan ge-wu-shuo* 淮南格物

說). Apparently the shift of concepts from 'xin' to 'shen' enables Wang Gen to extend largely the practical dimension of xin from moral cultivation to social responsibility. The final stage of his thought, according to his son Wang Bi, was not the doctrine of liang-zhi, which was only the second stage, but was to learn to become a teacher to all people for all ages, the so-called 'Sage of Great Realization' (da-cheng-zhi-sheng 大成之聖) (Cheng 2004: 47–8).

In the second phase, Yan Ju and his student Luo Ru-fang continuously developed the idea of the spontaneity of xin. The story about their first meeting is a good example for illustration:

> In his youth, Luo had read these words of Xue Xuan: 'My mind has long been confused by the endless waxing and waning of selfishness. I must now completely remove it in order to render clear and peaceful the mind's substance.' He determined to put these words into practice. So he locked himself in the Lin-tian Temple, placing a basin of water and a mirror on a table and sitting opposite it in silence, with the aim of making his mind one with the water and mirror. After some time he became sick at heart, as though burning inside. Once he happened to pass by a Buddhist temple [1540, in Nan-chang] and saw a sign: 'Emergency help for sicknesses of the heart.' He thought it referred to some famous doctor but went in to find an assembly and a lecturer. After listening in the crowd for some time, Luo exclaimed with delight, 'This can truly cure my sickness.' Upon inquiry, he discovered the lecturer to be Yan Jun, hao Shan-nong, who was from Ji-an [Jiangxi] and had received instruction from Wang Gen, of the Tai-zhou school. Luo explained to him that his mind could remain unmoved by thoughts of life and death, gains and losses. Yan said, 'What you have done is to control your passions rather than to realize perfect virtue (ti-ren).' Luo replied, 'One must eradicate selfishness to recover the principle of Heaven. Without controlling the passions, how can one realize perfect virtue?' Yan said, 'Have you not read Mencius' discussion of the four beginnings of virtue? [It says, 'Since all men have these four principles in themselves, let them know how to give them full scope for development and completion, and the issue will be like a fire that has begun to burn or a spring that has begun to find vent.'] In this way one might achieve personal realization of virtue. It is quite simple and direct. So do not doubt your creative and heavenly nature would come to cease, instead you should worry about not knowing it instantly in daily affairs.' At that time, Luo felt as though he had awakened from a long dream. The following day, during the fifth watch of the night, he went to present himself as a disciple, after which he learned all he could from Yan.
>
> (Ming-Ru-Xue-An in Huang-Zong-Xi-Quan-Ji 2005: 8.2;
> Ching 1987: 187, modified)

As has been shown, Yan adopted a religious-like method to popularize Wang Yang-ming's teachings (Wang 2004: 1–28). But this is not what we can explore here.

Relevant to our discussion is his conception of effort. For Yan, the effort to eradicate selfishness so as to recover (the substance of) *xin*, if not wrong, is less simple and direct, as it depends too much on self-restraint and undermines the activity of *xin*. The activity of *xin*, which Yan described as 'the creative and heavenly nature', is the spontaneity of *xin*. While Yan tended to emphasize it in terms of effort, he headed for the same direction as Wang Ji's Four Negatives. Here we find the confluence of Wang Ji and the Tai-zhou school.

Luo then advocated the notion of 'the mind of the infant' (*chi-zi-zhi-xin* 赤子之心). He used 'the mind of the infant' as an analogue to *xin* in itself, because the infant mind is naturally free from formal dogmas, habits or acquired prejudices that cannot stand up to the reflected light of *xin*. Luo also followed Yan in devaluing any purposeful efforts as though they might impede the active and spontaneous exercise of *xin*. In *Ming-Ru-Xue-An*, Huang-Zong-Xi summarized Luo's teachings as follows:

> Luo's teachings take as their goal the recovery of the mind of the infant, which requires neither learning nor exercise of thought, and he regards as essential becoming one with Heaven and Earth and the myriad things, the discarding of the body, and the forgetting of distinctions between things and the self. He sees *li* as something that renews itself without cease, without needing strict control or development, but is spontaneously smooth and harmonious. When it is difficult to fix one's efforts, one should not seek to fix them and should regard such detachment as effort. When one's dispositions appear without support, then one should take such absence of support as disposition. It is like untying the cables and letting the boat float freely, the oars following the course of the wind, and everywhere reaching the right shores. Scholars who lack understanding vainly take the mind-in-itself to be clear and pure and repress their feelings and dispositions out of attachment to a transient consciousness [received in meditation]. Such is just a means for surviving, as in a demon's cave, and not heavenly enlightenment.
> (*Huang-Zong-Xi-Quan-Ji* 2005: 8.3; Ching 1987: 188, modified)

I have analyzed the defect of neglecting the necessity of moral effort in the Wang Ji case. Luo and Yan made the similar mistake. Furthermore, it is important to note that, while Yan and Luo valued the spontaneity of *xin*, they also elevated the status of 'feelings' (*qing*) and 'desires' (*yu*) to the equal of *xin*. Here is how it goes: (1) there is no need to exercise restraint on one's feelings and desires when one's *xin* is in its spontaneous state. (2) As feelings and desires are the embodiment of *xin*, what emanated from one's spontaneous *xin* would be found to be nothing more than moral feelings and proper desires. (3) In other words, while *xin* is in its spontaneity state, *xin* is moral principle, moral feelings, proper desires, and all are one thing. This elevation of the status of feelings and desires should bear consequences for Song–Ming Confucianism. Positively speaking, it enriches Song–Ming Confucian philosophy, as it reveals that there is no strict dichotomy between principle and feelings and desires. In the perfect state of *xin*, principle and feelings–desires are

just two sides of the same coin. Negatively speaking, there is a slippery slope, which would lead to the departure from Song–Ming Confucianism. The slippery slope is this: once we recognize that feelings have the same status as principle in our moral life, (1) it is easy for us to forget that not all feelings but only moral feelings get the equal weight as moral principle. (2) It is also easy for us to forget that moral feelings and other feelings are not of the same kind. The feelings in general are regarded as a kind of natural quality of humans. However, moral feelings are the feelings being transformed by *xin* or principle and are no longer natural in character. In other words, the moral character of moral feelings is determined by *xin* or principle, but not by natural feelings *per se*. (3) If we wrongly take moral feelings as just a member of natural feelings, then it would be too fragile to form the basis of our moral actions. Moral feelings as a member of the feelings have no special binding force. Often one does not feel such moral feelings, and many people feel counter-feelings. Of course, we might find one way to resolve this difficulty by insisting that moral feelings are nothing but a member of natural feelings. (4) But then the whole line of thinking would go beyond the boundary of Song–Ming Confucianism, especially when it developed to its last phase. I will explain this later on. Now let us go back to Yan and Luo. Both of them avowed the idea that (moral) feelings and *xin* (or *xing*) are two sides of the same coin and used this idea to teach their students. In *Ming-Ru-Xue-An*, it was stated: 'He [Yan Jun] once said: "Among my disciples, one can speak with Luo Ru-fang of following nature or with Chen Yi-quan of following the mind. The others only speak of following the feelings"' (*Huang-Zong-Xi-Quan-Ji* 2005: 7.821; Ching 1987: 166, modified). I must hasten to add that, though Yan and Luo greatly elevated the status of feelings, they still bore in mind the distinction between moral feelings, which they called '*xing-qing*' (性情), and natural feelings, which they called '*qing-xing*' (情性) (Cheng 2004: 61–2).

Now we come to the last phase. He Xin-yin, who was also the student of Yan Jun, is well known for his affirmation of the validity of the desires. He argued that the teaching of 'desirelessness' (*wu-yu* 無欲) by Zhou Dun-yi (周敦頤, Lian-xi 濂溪, 1017–73), the great patriarch of Song–Ming Confucianism, was a misunderstanding of what Confucius and Mencius had talked about the desires.

> He [He Xin-yin] also said, 'What Confucius and Mencius call "desirelessness" (*wu-yu*) is not what Zhou Dun-yi calls "desirelessness". One need only have a few desires to adhere to the mind, for the mind cannot be without desires. To want to have a fish or a bear's paws is a desire. To give up the fish and choose the bear's paws is to have fewer desires. To want to have life and also require righteousness is a desire. To give up life for the sake of perfecting righteousness is to have fewer desires. Is not wanting *ren* a desire? To want nothing more once one has acquired *ren*, is that not having fewer desires? Is not "following the desires of one's mind" a desire? And is not "without transgressing the norms" having fewer desires? Is this not what Buddhists call *wu-yu*?'
>
> (*Ming-Ru-Xue-An* in *Huang-Zong-Xi-Quan-Ji* 2005: 7.823;
> Ching 1987: 168, modified)

Indeed, it is He himself who misunderstood Zhou's teaching of 'desirelessness' as the Buddhist doctrine of eradicating desires. What Zhou meant by 'desirelessness' is not to eradicate desires but to transform desires by following our moral nature. Once desires have all been transformed into moral desires, they then no longer bear any prominent characteristics such as impulsiveness, uncontrollable and so forth of desires in general. Though we can still call them desires, it would be much better to call them morals. In other words, Zhou borrowed the Buddhist concept '*wu-yu*' to characterize moral desires. Back to He, he is right to say that 'the mind cannot be without desires' if we strictly interpret this in the Song–Ming Confucian context (as mentioned above, *xin* needs desires to be its embodiment). However, He considered all desires (including desire to survival and desire to righteousness) to be the same kind, with their differences being just a matter of degree. More importantly, He seems to reverse the status of *xin* and desires. That is, it is the 'fewer desires' that defines what *xin* is, but not *xin* that defines what the 'less desirable' is. If so, 'desires' then becomes the first-order concept and '*xin*' is derivative from it in the formation of morality. It is thus legitimate for us to ask why fewer but not much more desires being satisfied should be counted as morals (or *xin*). He gave no answer to the question. If my analysis is true, no matter how we could find a satisfactory answer for He, it is clear that he had fallen onto the slippery slope that I discussed above.

Among those Tai-zhou predecessors, Li Zhi exceptionally praised He Xin-yin as the greatest hero (de Bary 1991: 209). That is why Li and He held the same position: they both strongly affirmed the validity of feelings and desires. In an essay entitled 'The Childlike Mind' (*Tong-Xin-Shuo* [童心說]), Li described this mind as something that is originally pure but will be polluted by received opinions and moral principles. At first glance, Li's notion of 'the childlike mind' is just another version of Lo Ru-fang's notion of 'the mind of the infant'. However, a close scrutiny can enable us to discover a subtle shift of emphasis between them. As for Lo, 'the mind of the infant' is the spontaneity of *xin* showed as doing good and removing evil naturally, while for Li, 'the childlike mind' is the spontaneity of *xin* showed as expressing true sentiment naturally. In addition, like He Xin-yin, Li also fell onto the slippery slope and thus reversed the status of *xin* and the true sentiment that makes his 'true sentiment' none other than natural feelings expressed spontaneously. Li might be right to consider the true sentiment can serve as the foundation of good literature, but he is not convincing when he argues that the true sentiment can also serve as the foundation of moral. After all, there should be a distinction between moral spontaneity and emotional spontaneity. Although 'the childlike mind' is not justifiable to serve as the foundation of moral, it is a possible antidote against scholars' hypocrisy that Li detested most in the late Ming. Ironically, while Li used his teachings to counter hypocrisy, his teachings became a handy excuse for moral degeneration among scholars. There were scholars at the time who pursued unscrupulously their selfish interest and defended themselves as acting on their true sentiment. We have reason to believe that Li was aware of the pitfalls of his teachings, because what he demonstrated intentionally by his whole life was not indulgence but something like Puritanism.

Now let us come to a conclusion about this section. From the above discussion, we can see how Wang Ji and the Tai-zhou school brought Wang Yang-ming's teachings to a decline. That also brought about serious consequences for Song–Ming Confucianism at large. First, there was a strong appeal amidst scholars for treating (purposeful) effort as something necessary to restore the free operation of *xin* and thus insisting that *xin* in itself is the absolute good instead of something beyond good and evil. Second, some scholars suspect that the perfect state of *xin* together with its full actualization in daily affairs is something mysterious and unavailable in real life. This then ensued a tension between the ideal, transcendent, and metaphysical aspect of *xin*, on the one hand, and its actual, immanent, and physical aspect, on the other hand (Cheng 2000: 1–40). The tension further reinforced a tendency toward what Shu-hsien Liu calls 'immanent monism' (Liu 1998: 249–54; Liu 2003: 6–11). By a tendency toward immanent monism, Liu means a tendency to insist that the ideal, transcendent and metaphysical aspect should be utterly internalized in the actual, immanent and physical aspect. One might wonder what makes this inwardly monistic tendency different from the Song–Ming Confucian tenet on the *li-qi* (principle–material force) relationship, as *li* and *qi* are inseparable. The difference is this: scholars who were involved in the tendency always overemphasized the inseparability at the expense of the irreducibility, as they rejected the distinction between the moral nature and the material nature. This thus made the tendency basically a theoretical mistake. A slight slip would lead to the diminution or even elimination of the transcendent aspect altogether. We will be back to examine the tendency later on; what I want to supplement here is that the tendency in effect had already been propagated by some Confucian scholars in the middle Ming, as a way to counter the subtle intrusion by Buddhism into Confucianism. It was widely believed that the Buddhist doctrine allows the separation between principle and material force and thus arrives at the conclusion that the principle is empty while the world is illusory. Therefore, whether or not to insist on the inseparability of principle and material force became a useful indicator for scholars to distinguish Confucianism from Buddhism. The decline of Wang Yang-ming's teachings only accelerated this inwardly monistic tendency.

It seems that Qian Mu (錢穆, Bin-si 賓四, 1895–1990) exaggerated when he said that the thoughts of the early Qing all originated from the Dong-lin school (東林) (Qian 1984, 20); but there is no doubt that he is right to single out the Dong-lin school as symptomatic of the changing intellectual climate in the late Ming. Qian summarized Dong-lin scholars' criticisms and corrections of the later Yang-ming school, such as those of Gu Xian-cheng (顧憲成, Jing-yang 涇陽, 1550–1612) and Gao Pan-long (高攀龍, Jing-yi 景逸, 1562–1626), in three connections: (1) they argued that it is wrong to say *xin* in itself is beyond good and evil; (2) they underlined moral effort as indispensable for comprehending the original substance; (3) they rejected the distinction between the moral and material nature (Qian 1984: 1.9–14).

3 The Defense of Song–Ming Confucianism

In this section, I examine the defense of Song–Ming Confucianism that was made by its two wings, i.e., the school of *xin-xue* and the school of *li-xue*. The moral degradation brought by the later Yang-ming school deeply troubled scholars in the camp of *xin-xue*. Some scholars sought to rescue their school by a rather practical approach, i.e., using their resonantly moral characters as lively manifestations of the usefulness and correctness of their learning. Among them, Sun Qi-feng (孫奇逢, Xia-feng 夏峰, 1585–1675) and Li Yong (李顒, Er-qu 二曲, 1627–1705) were prominent (Cheng 2000: 95–111). Although Liu Zong-zhou, in his time, was highly praised as a man of character, his contribution to rescuing *xin-xue* is mainly on the theoretical aspect. His teachings bore critical impact on the intellectual change at that time through influencing two of his students: one was Huang Zong-xi and the other was Chen Que (陳確, Qian-chu 乾初, 1604–77). While Huang strove for succeeding Liu's teachings as a protector of the Song–Ming Confucian tradition, Chen chose to depart from it though still claiming his departure was inspired by his master as well. In the following, I examine the defense of *xin-xue* by Liu and Huang, leaving Chen to be discussed in the next section.

Mou Zong-san held the view that, based on his original thinking, Liu was the last Confucian who stood in the line of transmission of Song–Ming Confucianism (Mou 1979: 471). According to the *Liu's Chronology* (*Nian-Pu* 年譜), we have been told that Liu started out having doubts about, then endorsed, and then strongly criticized Wang Yang-ming's teachings to develop his own thought (*Liu-Zong-Zhou-Quan-Ji* [劉宗周全集 *Complete Works of Liu Zong-zhou*] 1997: 5.488). Liu, like many other scholars in the late Ming, understood Wang Yang-ming's teachings through its later development in Wang Ji and the Tai-zhou school, hence attributing the difficulties with those thoughts to Wang Yang-ming. Nevertheless, Liu's criticism is rather an innovative revision of than a departure from Wang Yang-ming's teachings. In *Ming-Ru-Xue-An*, Huang Zong-xi summarized the essentials of Liu's teachings as follows:

> Liu's teaching considers as its essential doctrine vigilance in solitude (*shen-du*). The Confucians all speak of vigilance in solitude, but only Liu acquired its truth. What fills Heaven and Earth is *qi*. In the mind of man, the process of *qi* penetrates all things and returns to its beginnings, dividing naturally into joy, anger, sorrow and pleasure. The name of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom all issue from this. Without the ordering of character, one could naturally avoid transgressing their norms, which is the meaning of the harmony of the Mean. That is what one possesses at birth and is common to all. Hence it is also called the goodness of nature, which is without any excess or deficiency. Now nature-in-itself is naturally in process, without injuring the virtue of the harmony of the Mean. Students need only attest the distinctness of nature-in-itself, and adhere to it constantly, in order to practice what is called vigilance. The effort of vigilance consists only of [self-]mastery. Our consciousness has a master, which is called intention. To be one

step removed from the root of intention is illusion and therefore not solitude. So the more one is recollected, the more one's [intention] is also extended. But mastery does not refer to resting in one place. It is always present in the process itself. That is why one says: 'How it passes, without the difference of night and day.' For there is no *li* separated from *qi*, no nature separated from mind. The Buddhists say:

> There is something before Heaven and Earth;
> Without shape, and originally quite alone.
> It can be master of the myriad phenomena;
> It does not decay with the four seasons.

This is their real loot of burglary. But why should Confucians also say that *li* produces *qi*? Where is this infinitesimal difference [between Buddhism and Confucianism]? When one seeks only to interest the self and to profit the self, one cannot govern the country and the world; and when one abandons this difference, differentiations between ruler and minister, father and son, all become quite arbitrary. Would not these people become the laughingstock of the Buddhists?

<div align="right">(Huang-Zong-Xi-Quan-Ji 2005: 8.890–1; Ching 1987: 262, modified)</div>

Liu had no difficulty in recognizing that *xin* in itself (*xin-ti*) is spontaneous. Such recognization was only to differentiate his view on *xin* from that of Wang Yang-ming, as Liu used '*xing-ti*' (性體 the moral nature in itself) instead. The words in the above quoted paragraph are evidential: 'Hence it is also called the goodness of nature, which is without any excess or deficiency. Now nature-in-itself is naturally in process, without injuring the virtue of the harmony of the Mean.' But *xing-ti* is not another thing opposite to *xin*, it is just the nature of *xin*. Indeed, one can comprehend one's *xing* only by comprehending one's *xin*. Given the task to rescue *xin-xue*, Liu avoided characterizing *xin* as *liang-zhi*, thus considered a rather inward-directional concept '*yi*' (will or intention) as the mastery of *xin*. Here the will is the moral will and not the sensuous one. According to Liu, the substance of this moral will was called 'the root of will' (*yi-gen* 意根). In terms of its sincerity, it was called 'the substance of sincerity' (*cheng-ti* 誠體). In terms of its being a solitary state of the mind, it was called 'the substance of solitude' (*du-ti* 獨體). Elsewhere Liu said, 'The root of will is the most invisible, the substance of sincerity originates from Heaven' (*Liu-Zong-Zhou-Quan-Ji* 1997: 2.535). From the substance to effort, Liu underscored effort as necessary to cultivate the moral substance. His special view on effort is the effort of vigilance. That is, one's constant adherence to one's moral will thereby be alert to any fleeting ideas (*nian* 念) that happened to be evil in the stream of consciousness. He also considered the effort of vigilance as an exact interpretation of the concepts '*cheng-yi*' (誠意 sincerity of will) and '*shen-du*' (慎獨 vigilance in solitude), which are from both the *Doctrine of Mean* and the *Great Learning*. In comparison with Wang Yang-ming's doctrine of *liang-zhi* which emphasized that the effort is simple and direct, Liu's doctrines of *cheng-yi* and *shen-du* stressed an inward and introspective way. For this reason, in contrast to that of Wang Yang-ming, Mou Zong-san described Liu's teaching as something returning

from what is manifest to what is hidden (*gui-xian-yu-mi* 歸顯於密) (Mou 1979: 453). Furthermore, Liu's conception of effort enables him to pay much attention to the problem of evil. In his pamphlet of moral instructions, the *Manual of Human* (*Ren-Pu* 人譜), Liu categorized six types of moral transgression (or evil), including 'invisible transgression' (*wei-guo* 微過), 'concealed transgression' (*yin-guo* 隱過), 'apparent transgression' (*xian-guo* 顯過), 'large transgression' (*da-guo* 大過), 'crowded transgression' (*cong-guo* 叢過), and 'formed transgression' (*cheng-guo* 成過), and the relevant efforts to get rid of them (*Liu-Zong-Zhou-Quan-Ji* 1997: 2.1–26). As the problem of evil is a necessary subject that should be dealt with thoroughly in Confucian philosophy, Liu's *The Manual of Human*, as the only Confucian text mainly devoted to discussing the problem, deserves our serious attention. Finally, although Liu said that 'What fills Heaven and Earth is *qi* (material force)' and also that '*li* (principle) is the principle of *qi*, it is certainly not prior to *qi* and not outside of *qi*' (*Liu-Zong-Zhou-Quan-Ji* 1997: 2.483), we should be careful not to jump cursorily to conclude that Liu is a materialist philosopher. Anyone who reads his writings would undoubtedly be impressed by his strong belief in the transcendent Heaven. Therefore, what he said about the *li-qi* relationship could be interpreted appropriately only in the context of the tendency toward immanent monism as mentioned above. Liu was not immune to the tendency given the intellectual circumstances in the late Ming. His worry about the infinitesimal difference between Confucianism and Buddhism on the *li-qi* relationship, as shown at the end of the above cited paragraph, is ironclad evidence.

It is important to note that the tendency toward immanent monism is a theoretical misconception. As *li* and *qi* are inseparable on the one hand and irreducible on the other, so are *xing* and *qing* (the moral nature and feelings), as *xing* is *li* (the moral nature is principle) and *qing* is *qi* (feelings are the material force). From the perspective of a perfectly harmonious state (i.e., *li*, or *xing*, manifested itself completely in its embodiment *qi*, or *qing*), all those sayings like '*li* and *qi* is one thing' (*li-qi-yi-wu* 理氣一物), '*li* is *qi*' (*li-ji-qi* 理即氣) and '*xing* is *qing*' (*xing-ji-qing* 性即情) are fine. But we should bear in mind that all these statements are statements about the perfectly harmonious state and thus cannot be used to reject the irreducibility that lies in the *li-qi* relationship or the *xing-qing* relationship. The mistake of the tendency toward immanent monism lies in its rejecting any statement on the irreducibility of *li-qi* or *xing-qing* (such as '*li* is not *qi*' or '*xing* is not *qing*'), as though it would lead to the separation between them. It thus eventually led to the elimination of the transcendent aspect altogether, and thus gave support to the emergence of a new paradigm, the rival alternative to Song–Ming Confucianism. Ironically, as a defender of the Song–Ming Confucian tradition, Liu inadvertently took part in paving the way for the paradigm shift.

Mou Zong-san once tried to argue that such tendency in Liu's teaching is something peripheral (Mou 1968: 391–402; Mou 1979: 459–60). That might be true if this tendency is looked at merely from a philosophical point of view. However, it is not the case if it is looked at from a historical point of view. Huang Zong-xi in his *Zi-Liu-Zi-Xing-Zhuang* (子劉子行狀 *Biography of Master Liu*) highly praised such tendency in Liu's thought:

For earlier Confucians, there was the contrast between mind and nature, the teacher said, 'Nature is the nature of the mind.' There was the contrast between nature and feeling, the teacher said, 'Feeling is the feeling of nature.' The mind was said to unite nature and feeling, the teacher said, 'The mind is differentiated into nature and feeling.' It was said that selfish desires reflect the human mind, the Principle of Nature reflects the mind of Dao, the teacher said, 'There is only the human mind; the so-called mind of Dao only shows why the human mind is to be identified as the mind.' There was the distinction between the physical nature and the moral nature, the teacher said, 'Nature is always physical, and the moral nature just shows why physical nature is nature.' It was said that what is not manifested is tranquility and what is manifested is activity, the teacher said, 'Preservation and manifestation come from the same motivation, and activity and tranquility follow the same principle, the same can be applied to the distinction between preservation of the mind and the extension of knowledge and between the empirical knowledge through hearing and seeing and the moral knowledge. All must be seen as one.' Then were they all wrong? The teacher said, 'Confucius already said that there is one thread running through my doctrines, if substance and function are divided into two, then there would no longer be one.'

> (*Huang-Zong-Xi-Quan-Ji* 2005: 1.260–1; Liu 1998: 235–6)

According to *Liu's Chronology*, Liu finished a book in 1633 (two years before he died), entitled *Cun-Yi-Za-Zhu* (存疑雜著 *Unsystematic Writings to Entertain Doubts*), which collected his writings on the tendency. From the title of the book (i.e. 'unsystematic writings'), we may wonder whether Liu himself took the tendency as the core of his teaching. However, such tendency was beyond doubt the most influential part of his thought that Liu left to his students. Later Huang Zong-xi further developed the tendency and brought his own thought to the brink of being a kind of naturalistic philosophy. Mou Zong-san, on this account, criticized Huang seriously for not inheriting Liu's teaching (Mou 1968: 2.117–35). Here we can see that what Mou took into consideration was, again, the philosophical reason but not the historical fact.

In contrast to Mou, Shu-hsien Liu argues from a historical perspective that it was Huang instead of Liu who stood as the last in the line of Song–Ming Confucians (Liu 1998: 231–57). There are a number of reasons why Shu-hsien Liu gives such a sympathetic understanding of Huang. First, though he misunderstood Heaven as merely 'the flowing process' (*liu-xing-zhi-ti* 流行之體) of material force, Huang strove to defend the Song–Ming Confucian tradition. Second, Huang strongly adhered to the *xin-xue* tenet '*xin* is principle' and used it in *Ming-Ru-Xue-An* as the crucial criterion to evaluate the thoughts of the Ming scholars. Third, Huang firmly held the Song–Ming Confucian distinction between the heavenly principle (*tian-li* 天理) and human desires (*ren-yu* 人欲) and rendered it moral that the former trumps the later. His debate with Chen Que, to be discussed in the next section, was a case in point. Shu-hsien Liu selected four statements from Huang's writings, which he believes can best characterize Huang's thought.

1 'That which fills Heaven and Earth is Mind. Its transformations are unfathomable and cannot but assume myriad forms.'
2 'The Mind has no original substance (*ben-ti*) except what is achieved by its activity (*gong-fu*).'
3 'To exhaust and comprehend principles (*li*) is to exhaust and comprehend Mind's myriad manifestations rather than the myriad manifestations of all things.'
4 'If one does not read much, then it would be impossible for him to realize the transformation of the principle; if one reads a lot, but does not seek within the mind, then his learning is just vulgar learning.'

<div align="right">(Liu 1986: 95; Liu 1998: 247)</div>

Indeed, Huang's emphasis on the myriad manifestations (*wan-shu* 萬殊) of *xin* allowed him to extend moral cultivation largely to include the studies of classics, history, and politics. For this reason, he deviated somewhat from the *xin-xue* tradition to stress the necessity of reading. Nevertheless, this shift of emphasis resulted partly from the requirement of the historical circumstances and partly from the fruit of Huang's idiosyncrasies, as he was a man with various interests. Subsequent developments showed that Huang's interests in classical studies, history, and politics all affected the intellectual change in the early Qing, except for his defense of Song–Ming Confucianism. Shu-hsien Liu is right to conclude that 'he [Huang] still worked within the paradigm of Song–Ming Neo-Confucian philosophy and had great hopes for the future. But what he intended did not materialize; and inadvertently he contributed a great deal to bring about the advent of a paradigm that rivaled his own intentions. This makes him a tragic figure' (Liu 1998: 254).

Now let me turn to examining the defense by *li-xue*. The failure of the Yang-ming school in effect gave a chance for the revival of *li-xue*, particularly the thought of Zhu Xi. This revival occurred in different types, however. I elsewhere classified the studies of Zhu thought from the late Ming to the early Qing into three types: the theoretical, practical, and official types (Cheng 2000: 113–51). The theoretical-type scholars, such as Lu Shi-yi (陸世儀, Fu-ting 桴亭, 1611–72) and Zhang Lu-xiang (張履祥, Yang-yuan 楊園, 1611–74), aimed at developing Zhu thought in a faithful way. They resorted to Zhu Xi's teachings in refuting Wang Yang-ming's teachings for the sake of reviving Zhu thought and rescuing Song–Ming Confucianism at large. For instance, they strongly argued that the effort to restore one's moral nature should be made in a gradual method that underlines moral endeavor and learning, instead of a sudden method that underlines self-awakening. Naturally what they mean by the gradual method is Zhu Xi's notion of 'investigating things and principles' (*ge-wu-qiong-li* 格物窮理). They further elaborated that one can obtain not only moral principles but also the principles concerning state affairs by doing such effort. In other words, Zhu's thought was considered to be useful to both personal cultivation and state governance. And this treatment was especially significant to Confucian scholars at the time. The historical circumstances in the early Qing is that Song–Ming Confucian ideas, especially Wang Yang-ming's teachings, were widely considered empty talk

and responsible for the fall of the Ming dynasty. Given this, Confucian scholars were urged to show that an assortment of statecraft thought (*jing-shi-si-xiang* 經世思想) was included in their teachings. To these theoretical-type scholars, Zhu's thought provided convincing evidences. Though not many scholars were good at promoting Zhu's thought comprehensively, some did this brilliantly. For example, Qian Mu once praised Lu Shi-yi's *Si-Bian-Lu-Ji-Yao* (思辨錄輯要 *A Selection of the Records of Intellectual Enquiries*) for its thorough understanding of Zhu Xi, commenting that Lu's understanding was even better than that of Luo Qin-shun (羅欽順, Zheng-an 整菴, 1465–1547), who was the leading scholar of the Zhu school in the middle Ming (Qian 1980: 20).

What the practical-type scholars did in promoting Zhu's thought is quite different from what the theoretical-type scholars did. In short, the practical-type scholars tended to give Zhu's thought a one-sided interpretation, i.e., interpreting Zhu's thought in terms of statecraft. Indisputably, Gu Yan-wu (顧炎武, Ting-lin 亭林, 1613–82) was a prominent example of the type. Facing the downfall of the Ming dynasty, Gu directly ascribed this to the influence of Wang Yang-ming's teachings. For him, Confucian teachings devoid of moral effort and practical knowledge was nothing but Chan Buddhism. His interest in Zhu's thought was rather in its emphasis on classical studies than in its moral philosophy and metaphysics, as the knowledge of statecraft could be found in the Confucian classics. Gu thereby stressed that classical studies is instrumental in grasping the teachings of ancient sages. His stress on classical studies undoubtedly anticipated the emergence of the evidential scholarship in the early Qing. There is more than enough evidence in Gu's writings, such as *Tian-Xia-Jun-Guo-Li-Bing-Shu* (天下郡國利病書 *Advantages and Problems in Localities and the State*) and *Ri-Zhi-Lu* (日知錄 *Records of Daily Learning*), to document his major concerns that lay in the thought of statecraft. As for moral cultivation, Gu deliberately watered down the sophisticated discussions on *xin-xing* and simplified them into some common moral practices. His famous exhortation that 'one should conduct oneself with a sense of shame' (*xing-ji you chi* 行己有恥) was a case in point. Elsewhere I considered Lu Liu-liang (呂留良, Wan-cun 晚村, 1629–83) also as a representative of the practical type (Cheng 2000: 113–51). My reasons are these. Considering Lu as a practical-type scholar does not amount to denying that he actually discussed the philosophy of Zhu Xi in his writings on the studies of the Four Books, i.e., *Si-Shu-Yu-Lu* (四書語錄 *Recorded Conversations on the Four Books*), *Si-Shu-Jiang-Yi* (四書講義 *Discourses on the Four Books*). Lu's prominent achievement, however, was rather his ideas of statecraft, especially those on making the distinctions between the public and the private (*gong-si* 公私), the king and his ministers (*jun-chen* 君臣), the barbarian tribes and China (*yi-xia* 夷夏), and so on. This can be substantiated by the case of Zeng Jing (曾靜, 1679–1736). Zeng, as a passionate scholar who was accused in the Yong-zheng reign of having anti-dynastic sentiments, claimed that he was inspired by Lu's writings. In characterization of the development of the practical type, two things stand out here. First, we might wonder whether a selective interpretation of Zhu's thought in terms of statecraft would genuinely benefit its revival. Second, needless to say, the ideas of statecraft like that promoted by Gu and Lu would find no room for development in the Manchu regime.

The third type was the official one, of which scholar-officials such as Xiong Si-lu (熊賜履, Yu-zhai 愚齋, 1635–1709), Li Guang-di (李光地, An-xi 安溪, 1642–1718), Lu Long-qi (陸隴其, Jia-shu 稼書, 1630–92), and Zhang Bo-xing (張伯行, Jing-an 敬庵, 1651–1725) were representatives. The official type was generated by the fact that Emperor Kang Xi (康熙) decided to endorse Cheng-Zhu's teachings as the state orthodoxy. The Manchu regime found upholding some core values of Confucianism, such as filial piety and loyalty to the monarch, would nevertheless legitimize its sovereignty. However, once Cheng-Zhu's thought became an ideology or official doctrine, its being ossified was unavoidable. Indeed most of the scholar-officials did not have sophisticated scholarship in studying Zhu's thought. Lu Long-qi's case was an illustrative example. Lu was the only Qing scholar who received the honor of installation in the Confucian temple, but Qian Mu commented on him in this way: 'Nothing substantial in Lu's writings upon careful examination. Lu was a hypocrite of *li-xue* and only depended on his sectarian views to think highly of himself' (Qian 1980: 134). In addition, as the support to the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy waned because the Manchu regime had already consolidated its governance,[7] the demise of the official type was imaginable.

Before ending this section, I need to make some remarks on Wang Fu-zhi (王夫之, with his style name 'Er-nong' 而農 and alternative name 'Chuan-shan' 船山, 1619–92) as, since the last century, he has been considered to be one of the greatest philosophers in Chinese history.[8] Wang clearly was an outstanding scholar of the day for the breadth of his learning and the comprehensive scope of his thought. His interests covered history, the Four Books, the *Book of Rites*, the *Book of Changes*, and so forth. Recent research by Lai Chen (陳來) confirms the conclusion drawn by Ji Wen-fu (嵇文甫, 1895–1963) in the 1960s concerning the spirit of Wang Fu-zhi's thought: '[The spirit of Wang's thought can be summarized as] respecting Henq-qu (橫渠, Zhang Zai 張載, 1020–77), revising Cheng-Zhu, and criticizing Lu-Wang' (Ji 1962: 109; Chen 2004: 6–8). If so, then Wang Fu-zhi should be counted as a member of the Song–Ming Confucian family, and his thought was closer to that of *li-xue*. Instead of discussing his thought comprehensively, I focus on examining his accounts of the *li-qi* (principle–material force) relationship and the *xin-xing-qing* (mind–moral nature-feelings) relationship, which are directly relevant to the central theme of the current chapter.

In *Zhou-Yi-Wai-Zhuan* (周易外傳 *Outer Commentary on the Book of Changes*), Wang Fu-zhi deliberately picked out the concept '*qi*' (器 concrete thing) to elaborate the unity of *li* (principle) and *qi* (material force):

> The world consists only of concrete things. The Way (Dao) is the Way of concrete things, but concrete things may not be called concrete things of the Way. People generally are capable of saying that without its Way there cannot be the concrete thing. However, if there is the concrete thing, there need be no worry about there not being its Way. A sage knows what a superior man does not know, but an ordinary man or woman can do what a sage cannot do. A person may be ignorant of the Way of a thing, and the concrete thing

therefore cannot be completed. But not being completed does not mean that there is no concrete thing. Few people are capable of saying that without a concrete thing there cannot be its Way, but it is certainly true.

(*Zhou-Yi-Wai-Zhuan* 1977: 203; Chan 1963a: 694)

By 'what exists before physical form' [and is therefore without it] does not mean there is no physical form. There is already physical form. As there is physical form, there is that which exists before it. Even if we span past and present, go through all the myriad transformations, and investigate Heaven, Earth, man, and things to the utmost, we will not find any thing existing before physical form [and is without it]. Therefore it is said, 'It is only the sage who can put his physical form into full use.' He puts into full use what is within a physical form, not what is above it.

(*Zhou-Yi-Wai-Zhuan* 1977: 203–4; Chan 1963a: 695)

Here we see Wang Fu-zhi was no exception from being influenced by the prevailing tendency toward immanent monism. It is true for him to argue that, without a concrete thing, there cannot be 'its' Way or principle. But this is only a one-sided interpretation of the creative principle of Song–Ming Confucianism; for the creative principle lies in the creativity in itself, on the one hand, and its multiple manifestations (the creativity in itself manifests as different principles of different things created), on the other hand. While Wang Fu-zhi argued that nothing existed before physical form and without physical form, he seemed to reject the transcendent character of the creative principle and interpreted it completely in terms of immanence. The creative principle is nothing but the immanent principle of material force, or different immanent principles of different concrete things. Wang Fu-zhi further used the concept '*shi*' (勢 intrinsic trend or situational force) to depict the activity of the creatively immanent principle:

When one speaks of [the relation of] *li* and *shi*, it is best to say [that *shi* is] *shi* 勢 of *li*; when one speaks of [the relation of] *li* and *qi*, it is best to say [that *qi* 氣 is] *qi* of *li*. This means there exists the close analogy between the *li-shi* and *li-qi* relationship. *Li* is by nature not a Substance [in a noumenal sense] which you can [literally] grasp [*li ben fei yi cheng ke-zhi-zhi-wu* 理本非一成可執之物]. [This means that *li* does not have its own independent existence.] *Li* cannot be grasped to be seen [by the sense organs]. It is through the pattern and order of *qi* that *li* is revealed. When a thing has *li*, *li* is revealed in [the material constitution of] *qi*. When things have *li*, they naturally manifest certain intrinsic trend [*shi*]. Conversely, only in the inevitability of the trend [*shi*], one can perceive Principle [*li*].

(*Du-Si-Shu-Da-Quan-Shou* [讀四書大全說 *Discussions After Reading the Great Collection of Commentaries on the Four Books*] 1975: 2.601; Kim 1982: 209)

As principle is immanent in material forces, moral principles are thus also immanent in human feelings and desires. There is sufficient evidence in Wang Fu-zhi's writings to document his view on the inseparability of *li* (moral principles) and *yu* (desires). I cite two such passages from his writings as follows:

> Although rules of propriety are purely detailed expressions of the Principle of Nature, they must be embodied in human desires to be seen. Principle is a latent principle for activities, but its function will become prominent if it varies and conforms to them. It is precisely for this reason that there can never be a Heaven distinct from man or a principle distinct from desires. It is only with the Buddhists that principle and desires can be separated.
> (*Du-Si-Shu-Da-Quan-Shou* 1975: 2.519; Chan 1963a: 700)

> If we do not understand the Principle of Nature from human desires that go with it, then although there may be a principle that can be a basis, nevertheless, it will not have anything to do with the correct activities of our seeing, hearing, speech and action. They thereupon cut off the universal operation of human life, and wipe it out completely. Aside from one meal a day, they would have nothing to do with material wealth, and aside from one sleep under a tree, they would have nothing to do with sex. They exterminate the greater character of Heaven and Earth and ruin the great treasure of the sage. They destroy institutions and eliminate culture. Their selfishness is ablaze while principles of humanity are destroyed. It is like the fire of thunder or a dragon. The more one tries to overcome it, the more it goes on. Mencius continued the teaching of Confucius which is that wherever human desires are found, the Principle of Nature is found.
> (*Du-Si-Shu-Da-Quan-Shou* 1975: 2.520; Chan 1963a: 700–1)

'The Principle of Nature' in the above citations means the moral nature or moral principle. Clearly Wang Fu-zhi, like many of his contemporaries, maintained the inseparability of moral principle and desires and rejected the distinction between the moral nature and the material nature. However, he did not intend to reverse the status of moral principles and desires and thus characterize moral principles in terms of desires. Much evidence in his writings documented that he strictly followed Zhu Xi in moral philosophy. He characterized *xin* as a knowing faculty of seeking knowledge of principles, specified *xing* (nature) as principle or the origin of virtues, understood moral effort as restraint of feelings (*qing*) and desires (*yu*), and more importantly, maintained that moral transgression originates from feelings (Qian 1980: 74-103; Chen 2004: 197–234). Here we might question Wang Fu-zhi about how to maintain the transcendent character of principle in moral philosophy while rejecting it totally in metaphysics. I currently cannot find a satisfactory answer to the question and consider this due to some vagueness of his thought. Such vagueness, in my opinion, has left Wang Fu-zhi, like many of his contemporaries, staying halfway toward a paradigm shift of Confucian philosophy.

4 The Emergence of a New Paradigm

The foregoing discussions are intended to explain how the paradigm shift of Confucianism ever took place during the Ming–Qing transitional period. Let me give a summary. First, the later development of the Yang-ming school (Wang Ji and the Tai-zhou school) brought not only Wang Yang-ming's teachings but also Song–Ming Confucianism at large to a decline. The rescue that came from both *xin-xue* and *li-xue*, as discussed above, failed theoretically and practically for various reasons. A new philosophy was thus expected to come. Second, the status of feelings and desires was highly elevated by the Tai-zhou school; this school eventually led to its departure from Song–Ming Confucianism, on the one hand, and anticipated a totally different conception of feelings and desires, on the other hand. Third, due to an overemphasis on the perfect and spontaneous state of *xin* that led to the neglect of moral effort, the later Yang-ming school accelerated the tendency toward immanent monism. Thereby, the ideas of inseparability and immanence were widely spread among scholars, as this idea rendered *li-qi* (principle–material force) inseparable and *li-yu* (moral principles–desires) inseparable and thus rejected the distinction between the moral nature and the material nature. A corollary of this idea was the elimination of the transcendent character of *li*, *xin*, and *xing* altogether. As I will discuss later on, the emerging new philosophy treated all these concepts in a rather naturalistic, empiricist, and pragmatic way. Last, I intend to make one more point, which has yet to be mentioned but can enhance our understanding of the paradigm shift. That is, that scholars at the time usually resorted to philology to show that Song–Ming Confucianism is not the genuine heir to ancient sages' teachings.

To investigate the emergence of the new philosophy, I view Chen Que, Yan Yuan (顏元, Xi-zhai 習齋, 1635–1704), and Dai Zhen (戴震, Dong-yuan 東原, 1723–77) as three representatives and look respectively at their relevant thoughts. It is worth pointing out that, as we cannot find any kind of academic linkage among Chen, Yan, and Dai, the coincidence of some thoughts in their works seems to result from the changing intellectual climate.

Chen Que, unlike his schoolfellow Huang Zong-xi, chose to depart from his master Liu Zong Zhou's teachings. For the sake of establishing his conversion, he even called in question the authenticity of the *Great Learning* as the record of sages' teachings. Because the *Great Learning* (as one of the Four Books) was especially crucial to the Song–Ming Confucian tradition, what Chen did was to attack the tradition from its very textual root. According to Chen, Song–Ming Confucians were wrong in attributing evil to the material nature of humans, of which feelings (*qing*), desires (*yu*), and capacity (*cai* 才) are the contents. As he put it, 'The Heavenly Mandate is good and without evil, therefore human nature is also good and without evil. Human nature is good and without evil, therefore material forces, the feelings and capacity are also good and without evil. This is what Mencius said and is the purport of Confucius' (*Chen-Que-Ji* [陳確集 *Works of Chen Que*] 1979: 2.452). In the Song–Ming Confucian context, his words should not be interpreted as saying this: if the moral nature of humans is fully developed, then feelings and capacity as its manifestations are all

good. For Chen, human nature is no other than the natural nature of humans; to say that human nature is good is no other than saying that humans were born with good inclinations. And good feelings and good capacity are just different expressions of good inclinations. The evils of humans do not originate from their good inclinations. On this account, Chen criticized Song–Ming Confucians for their ascribing evil to the material nature. But where is evil from? Chen considered that evil is generated from habit (*xi* 習), which could move one to deviate from one's good inclinations (Cheng 2000: 204–15). However, as habit also could help to cultivate one's good inclinations, blaming habit *per se* is not a satisfactory answer to the problem of evil. Indeed one quite serious difficulty with Chen's thought is that the good inclination is too fragile to serve as the foundation of morality. Humans were born with bad inclinations as well as good inclinations. The inclination to good is just one inclination among others and thus has no special binding force. What is special about the inclination to good? Chen gave no clear answer to the question and seemed to appeal to the proprieties (*li* 禮), as the proprieties created by ancient sage kings confirmed that the inclination to good ought to be cultivated.

Chen further advocated that morality, which is the heavenly principle (*tian-li*) in Confucian words, should be characterized only in terms of human desires (*ren-yu*). He wrote, 'I once said that there is originally no heavenly principle in human mind. The heavenly principle can only be seen in human desires. The attainment of human desires in due measure and degree is the heavenly principle. Hence if there are no human desires, then there is no heavenly principle at all' (*Chen-Que-Ji* 1979: 2.461). Although Huang Zong-xi understood that Chen might obtain the idea of inseparability from their teacher Liu Zong-zhou, nevertheless, he criticized Chen's misinterpretation and maintained the distinction (and thus the implicit conflict) between the heavenly principle and human desires.[9] Huang said:

> You [Chen Que] said, 'Zhou's doctrine of desirelessness taught Chan [Buddhism] without the name of Chan. We Confucians only talk about reducing human desires. There is originally no heavenly principle in the human mind. The heavenly principle can only be seen in human desires. The attainment of human desires in due measure and degree is the heavenly principle. Hence, if there is no human desire, then there is no heavenly principle at all.' Such a view was derived from our teacher's assertion that 'The mind of Dao is the original mind of the human mind', and also that 'The moral nature is none other than physical nature, apart from the physical nature, there is no moral nature.' When one refers to the human mind, it is right to talk about physical endowment, but it is incorrect to talk about human desires, as the endowment of the human mind pertains to the substance [*ti*] that circulates without differentiation; it is something public, while human desires are confined to definite locations, they pertain to one's selfishness. The heavenly principle is the opposite of human desires, when this side increases, then the other side decreases; and when human desires increase, then the heavenly principle decreases. This is why the desires must be further reduced. Fewer and still

fewer, until there is no human [artificial] desire whatsoever, then one would act purely according to the heavenly principle. But how can you talk about reducing one's physical endowment? … If you want to look for the heavenly principle through the attainment of human desires in due measure and degree, then one would be troubled for one's whole life, not able to transcend worldly concerns. I am afraid that the so-called heavenly principle would become human desires with a different appearance.

<div style="text-align:center">(*Huang-Zong-Xi-Quan-Ji* 2005: 10.159; Liu 2003: 9, modified)</div>

Here we can see clearly the crucial difference that lies between Song–Ming Confucianism and the new philosophy. For the former, it is the heavenly principle (the moral nature of humans) which could restrain human desires from any excess and tailor them to their proper attainment. In other words, it is a moral directedness antithetical to human desires. Conversely, for the latter, it is the proper attainment of human desires which characterizes what is called the heavenly principle. If so, the new philosophy owes us a standard of the proper attainment of human desires, which used to be the heavenly principle in Song–Ming Confucianism. Now, the new philosophy cannot resort to the heavenly principle for the standard, as this is a typical *petitio principii*. The new philosophy, needless to say, also cannot resort to human desires, as human desires *per se* would not decide the proper standard of their attainment. Chen, again, seemed to appeal to the proprieties as the standard. At this point, one question is pending: why can the proprieties serve as the standard? I cannot find the answer in Chen's writings and thus think that he failed to notice the question.

Yan Yue shared many similarities to Chen, though no evidence so far has shown that he had come across Chen's thought anywhere. Yan overtly broke with the Song–Ming metaphysics by proclaiming the ontology of material force (*qi*). He said, 'Alas! Is there in the world material force without principle, or principle without material force? Are there principle and material force outside of *yin* and *yang* and the Four Virtues?' (*Yan-Yue-Ji* [顏元集 *Works of Yan Yuen*] 1987: 1.21). Yan's ontology of material force is different from the Song–Ming metaphysics, as it maintained that principle is completely immanent. However, it is similar to the Song–Ming metaphysics, as it did not render the universe morally neutral. The immanent principle of material force, in Yan's view, is the Four Virtues, i.e. humanity (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), propriety (*li*), and wisdom (*zhi*). I think that a kind of teleological naturalism is implicit in Yan's thought.[10] Accordingly, Yan argued that if principle is good, so are material force, feelings, and capacity of humans. Like Chen, Yan accused Song–Ming Confucians of wrongly blaming material force as evil.

Master Cheng [Hao (Cheng Ming-dao, 1032–85)] said that in discussing human nature and material force, 'It would be wrong to consider them as two.' But he also said, 'Due to the material force with which men are endowed, some become good from childhood and others become evil.' Zhu Xi said, 'As soon as there is the endowment by Heaven, there is the physical nature. They cannot be separated', but he also said, 'Since there is this principle, why is

there evil? What is called evil is due to material force.' It is regrettable that although they were highly intelligent, they were unwittingly influenced and confused by the Buddhist doctrine of the 'Six Robbers' (the six senses, which avoid perception or giving wrong perception), and said two different things in the same breath without realizing it. If we say that material force is evil, then principle is also evil, and if we say that principle is good, then material force is also good, for material force is that of principle and principle is that of material force. How can we say that principle is purely and simply good whereas material force is inclined to be evil?

(*Yan-Yue-Ji* 1987: 1.1; Chan 1963a: 704–5)

As to man, he is especially the purest of all things, one who 'receives at birth the Mean of Heaven and Earth (balanced material force)'. The two material forces and the Four Virtues are man before his consolidation, and man is the two material forces and the Four Virtues after their consolidation. As the Four Virtues are preserved in man, they are humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. They are called the nature with reference to the internal existence of origination, flourish, advantage, and firmness. When externally manifested, they become commiseration, shame and dislike, deference and compliance, and the sense of right and wrong. These are called feelings with reference to the application of the Four Virtues to things. Capacity is that which manifests one's nature in feelings; it is the power of the Four Virtues. To say that feeling involves evil is to say that the Four Virtues before manifestation is not the same as the Four Virtues after manifestation. To say that capacity involves evil is to say that what is preserved is the Four Virtues but what can be aroused into action is not the Four Virtues. And to say that physical nature involves evil is to say that the principle of the Four Virtues may be called the Way of Heaven but the material force of the Four Virtues may not be so called.

(*Yan-Yue-Ji* 1987: 1.21; Chan 1963a: 707)

What Yan meant by human nature is the material and natural nature of humans, of which commiseration (*ce-yin* 惻隱), shame and dislikes (*xiu-wu* 羞惡), deference and compliance (*ci-rang* 辭讓), and the sense of right and wrong (*shi-fei* 是非) are good natural feelings. These good natural feelings are also called the natural capacity (*cai*). Furthermore, these good natural feelings are deemed immanent principles of the material nature of humans. It is also due to these good natural feelings – just like 'good inclinations' in Chen's thought – that Yan did render human nature good. Surely one has to cultivate these good natural feelings so as to consolidate them. Once they are consolidated, they are called the four virtues (*de* 德). And in that state, humans' immanent principles are regarded as fully actualized and humans are completely good. Again, the problem of where evil is from arose here for these accounts. Surprisingly enough, Yan gave almost the same answer as Chen did, i.e. '*yin-bi xi-ran*' (引蔽習染 attraction, obscuration, and bad influence). Yan said, 'We would surely distinguish man's nature, feeling, and capacity, on the one hand, and attraction, obscuration, and

bad influence, on the other, and the fact that man's nature, feeling, and capacity are all good and that evil originates later would be perfectly clear' (*Yan-Yue-Ji* 1987: 1.2; Chan 1963a: 705). He further drew an analogy with clothing being stained, 'Then how does evil come to exist? It is like clothing which has become so dusty and soiled that it appears to be filthy. People seeing that it has lost its original color, dislike looking at it and call it filthy cloth. But in reality the staining has been caused by something outside the cloth' (*Yan-Yue-Ji* 1987: 1.3; Freeman 1972: 37). There is no need to repeat the difficulty with this answer, as discussed in regard to Chen's case; rather, I focus on examining one main reason why Yan and Chen were unable to give a satisfactory explanation of the origin of evil. For they all missed an obvious fact that humans are endowed with both good inclinations and bad inclinations. If humans' good actions are generated from their good inclinations, then naturally their bad actions are caused by their bad inclinations. One might cast doubt on how such an obvious fact can be ignored. It is because such an obvious fact would lead to the conclusion that human nature – if understood in terms of the natural nature – is both good and evil, a conclusion which is antithetical to Mencius' doctrine of originally good human nature and which both Yan and Chen were reluctant to draw. We should not forget what Yan and Chen intended to do: on the one hand, they set out to criticize Song–Ming Confucians for ascribing evil to the material nature, and, on the other hand, they intended to provide a true interpretation of Mencius' thought. Therefore, Yan and Chen insisted that evil must be caused by something outside human nature, such as habit, attraction, obscuration, and bad influence.

In Yan's accounts, the effort to cultivate one's good natural feelings and to consolidate them as virtues is crucially important. Education is just another name for this effort. Hence, Yan highly valued education, which for him should have distinct practical value. Mansfield Freeman summarized Yan's view on Confucian education as follows:

> Although reading books and reflecting on them form a part of the Confucian training, preoccupation with textual criticism, minute analyses of books and sitting for long periods of time in contemplation are harmful to the individual and accomplish nothing of permanent value. In order to establish his own moral character and train himself to be of use in the world, the student should turn back to the system of education prevailing in the Three Dynasties period which, in Yan Yuen's view, consisted in the fulfillment of the Six Obligations of Conduct (*liu-xing* 六行), namely, goodness to one's parents (*xiao* 孝) and brothers (*you* 友), affection for one's kin (*mu* 睦) and relatives (*yin* 媚=姻), trustworthiness to one's friends (*ren* 任) and charity to those in poverty and distress (*xu* 恤). The curriculum for attaining these virtues had been in ancient times the practice of the Six Arts (*liu-yi* 六藝), which comprises rites (*li* 禮), music (*yue* 樂), archery (*she* 射), charioteering (*yu* 御), calligraphy (*shu* 書) and mathematics (*shu* 數). Yan Yuen emphasized that it is not by study of books or by engaging in lengthy discussions that these subjects can be mastered but only by constant practice (*xi* 習) of them. Hence, upon finishing

this work [*Cun-Xue-Bian* 存學篇 *Preservation of Learning*], he changed the name of his study to Studio of Practical Knowledge (Xi-zhai 習齋). Xi-zhai then became his literary title, the one by which he is best known.

(Freeman 1972: 10–11)

In contrast to the Song–Ming education that emphasized personal introspection, Yan held that practicing the proprieties (*li*) should be the main content of education. However, he believed that the proprieties had long been misread by Song–Ming Confucians so that its truth could be found only in the ancient era (the Three Dynasties). As reported by his follower Li Gong (李塨, Shu-gu 恕谷, 1659–1733), Yan always paid serious attention to what he considered to be properly ancient etiquette. Indeed, Yan also inquired into the ancient times for ideas of statecraft. His famous advocacy of reviving the 'well-field' (*jing-tian* 井田) system was a case in point. All of these made Yan to be called a traditionalist and pragmatist by researchers. As the truth of ancient rituals was recorded in the Confucian classics, a necessary means to find out the truth is philology. That is why later on Yan's teachings were diverted to merge into the evidential scholarship in the hands of Li Kong (Qian 1984: 1.197–8).

So far, the construction of the new philosophy was far from sophisticated. It was not until Dai Zhen that the new philosophy was articulated in a systematic way. Dai, on the one hand, was talented in philological studies that made him a renowned scholar of his day, and on the other hand he was passionate in doing philosophy. Hence, how to integrate these two aspects became a challenge that troubled Dai for a long period of time. Eventually he reached the following conclusion in a preface that he wrote for the *Shou-Jing-Tu* (授經圖 *Diagram of Giving Instructions*) by Hui Dong (惠棟, Ding-yu 定宇, 1697–1758), another outstanding figure in philology at the time:

It has been said that there is Han classical learning and there is Song classical learning: the former emphasizes the ancient glosses (*gu-xun*) and the latter is concerned with [understanding] the reason and meaning [of things] (*yi-li*). I am greatly puzzled by this statement. If one can understand the reason and meaning [of things] by sheer speculation, then anyone can grab them out of emptiness. If that is so, what can we hope to gain from classical learning? It is precisely because sheer speculation cannot lead us to the reason and meaning [of things] as intended by the sages and worthies that one has to seek it from the ancient Classics. When seeking from the ancient Classics, we are facing the huge distance between the ancient and the present that lies in the texts, and then we have to resort to the ancient glosses [so as to fill the distance up]. Only when the ancient glosses are clear can the Classics be understood, and only when the Classics are understood can the reason and meaning [of things] as intended by the sages and worthies be grasped.

(*Dai-Zhen-Wen-Ji* [戴震文集 *Works of Dai Zhen*] 1980: 168; Chin and Freeman 1990: 12, modified)

Briefly speaking, Dai claimed that philology is the necessary means of doing philosophy and that doing philosophy is the meaningful end of philology. Of course, this should be understood against the background that doing philosophy via interpretation of classics had long been the tradition of Chinese philosophy. Dai used the first part of his statement (i.e. philology is the necessary means of doing philosophy) to attack Song–Ming Confucians for their interpreting classics by sheer speculation. And he used the second part (i.e. doing philosophy is the meaningful end of philology) to urge his fellows of the evidential scholarship for not making philology something trivial. His attack on Song–Ming Confucianism then developed into his sophisticated construction of the new philosophy. However, his concern about the meaningful end of the evidential scholarship was not appreciated by his fellows, as many of them maintained that philology can stand up to its own professionalism. As for employing philology as the necessary means of getting the meaning of classics, Dai seemed to assume that the literal meaning, i.e. the glosses (*gu-xun* 故訓), could provide the true meaning of classics. But I think that he told only part of the story of textual interpretation. He is right to insist that, without the glosses, we cannot understand even a single word in ancient texts; but it does not follow that the glosses can directly provide us with the meaning of the texts. For there is much room for reasoning from words, sentences, paragraphs to the formation of concepts, then to the logical coordination of concepts, and then to the meaning. It is this reasoning that functions amid literal meanings to make interpretation possible. Furthermore, reasoning actually bears interpreter's 'pre-understanding' (such as one's cultural endowment as its background) and thus makes the appropriate interpretation multiple in nature. Here is not the place to discuss hermeneutics in detail; what I want to emphasize is that Dai's understanding of the *Mencius*, though claimed as the true understanding obtained by philological method, is nothing but his personal interpretation (Cheng 2000: 225–35).

The mature exposition of Dai's thought and the new philosophy can be found in his work *Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* (孟子字義疏證 *An Evidential Study of the Meaning of Terms in the Mencius*), whose final version he had finished a year before he died. Let me go through the features of his thought based on this work.

In the first place, Dai completely cut the transcendent aspect from principle (*li*). For him, principle is not independent of material force, it is just the internal order (*tiao* 條) or pattern (*wen* 文) of material force, as he said:

> The word 'principle' is a name assigned to the arrangement of the parts of anything which gives the whole its distinctive property or characteristic, and which can be observed by careful examination and analysis of the parts down to the minutest detail. This is why we speak of the principle of differentiation (*fen-li*). With reference to the substance of things, there are such expressions as the principle governing the fibers (*ji-li*), the principle governing the arrangement between skin and flesh (*cou-li*), and pattern (*wen-li*). (Also called *wen-lu*, *li* and *lu* being similar in sound.) When proper differentiation is made, there will be order without confusion. This is called 'order and arrangement' (*tiao-li*).
>
> (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 1; Chin and Freeman 1990: 69)

On this account, Dai strongly criticized Zhu Xi's misconception of principle as 'it were as if a thing apart, received from Heaven and possessed by *xin* (mind)' (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 3). The universe, in Dai's view, is merely the incessantly operational process of two material forces *yin* and *yang*. This is not morally neutral, however. The incessantly operational process of material forces gives rise to Heaven and earth and the production and reproduction of myriad things; so it signifies the value of creativity (*sheng-sheng* 生生). As Dai put it:

> The *qi* of Heaven and earth transforms and operates forever, producing and reproducing unceasingly. Yet creatures, if born on dry land, will die in water, or, if born in water, will die if they leave the water, and those born in a southern clime and accustomed to warmth cannot tolerate the cold, whereas those born in a northern clime and accustomed to cold cannot tolerate the heat. Thus what some creatures depend on for nourishment is harmful to others. 'The great virtue of Heaven and earth is the giving of life.' If living things can no longer sustain life and consequently die, is it because Heaven and earth have lost their [life-giving] power?
> (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 43; Chin and Freeman 1990: 147)

Similar to Yan Yue, but more explicit, a kind of teleological naturalism is clearly found in Dai's thought. In sum, the internal order (*tiao*) and pattern (*wen*) of material force is no other than the harmoniously differentiated (*fen* 分) existences of all things and is thus called principle (*li*) or the great virtue (*de*) or the creativity (*shen*) of the universe. From the universe to humans, the principle (or value) of creativity is 'the fulfillment of human life' (*sui-sheng* 遂生), or more specifically, 'the satisfaction of feelings and fulfillment of desires' of every person (*da-qing-sui-yu*). This is integral to Dai's moral philosophy. I will go back to this later on.

Second, as the implication of his ontology of material force, Dai, like his fellows of the new philosophy, rejected the distinction between the moral nature and the material nature and understood human nature merely in a natural sense. Thereby he suggested that nature (*xing*) in general is comprised of three different parts: the material form (*pin-wu* 品物), blood-and-*qi* (*xue-qi* 血氣), and the knowing mind (*xin-zhi* 心知). The material form is the form or species one thing is born to be. Here we could say that humans and animals are different in kind (*lei-bu-tong* 類不同). Blood-and-*qi*, including feelings and desires, is the natural endowment of living things, especially humans and animals. Dai reminded us that we cannot distinguish humans from animals in terms of blood-and-*qi*. It is 'because living species made up of blood-and-*qi* cherish life and fear death, they seek what is beneficial and avoid what is harmful. And, even though they may differ in their degree of sentience, they are alike in cherishing life and fearing death. Man's difference from birds and beasts does not, however, lie in this' (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 26–7; Chin and Freeman 1990: 116). For Dai, the knowing mind means the cognitive faculty of principle – the utmost of intelligence and senses (*zhi-jue* 知覺). As the cognitive faculty of principle can tell us what moral principle is, it is the faculty of moral judgment. Animals apparently

only have a lower level of intelligence and senses; but that is enough to enable them to advance beyond cherishing life and fearing death and thus to perform altruistic behavior. Dai wrote:

> The reason why birds and beasts know their mothers but not their fathers is because they are limited by their intelligence and senses [*zhi-jue*]. But in their love of those who gave them birth, in their love of what they have given birth to, in the love between male and female, and in not devouring their own kind or biting those they are associated with, they have advanced well beyond cherishing life and fearing death. In one case there is a concern only for oneself while in the other case concern is extended to others who are close to one, but in both cases the virtue of humanity [*ren*] is exhibited. Being concerned about oneself is being humane to oneself. To extend the concern for oneself to those who are close to one is being humane to those who are nearby. This is the knowing mind naturally expressing itself. Man's dissimilarity with the birds and beasts does not lie in this either.
> (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 27; Chin and Freeman 1990: 116, modified)

Here we see that the selfish love (cherishing life and fearing death) originates from blood-and-*qi*, while the altruistic love (concern is extended to others) originates from intelligence and senses. Because altruistic love can be found in the natural nature of both humans and animals, the essential characteristic that differentiates humans from animals is not this naturally altruistic behavior. Obviously what makes humans essentially different with animals is the former's knowing mind, i.e., their faculty of knowing principle or making moral judgments. Dai said:

> Moreover, as for the habit of the crow to feed its parents, of the fish hawk to recognize sex distinctions, of the bees and ants to recognize the difference between ruler and subject, of the jackal to sacrifice wild beasts, and of the otter to sacrifice fish, they all seem to be in accordance with what human beings called the virtues of humanity and righteousness, yet each is just performing its task by following its nature. Man is able to extend his knowing until he has reached perfect understanding, until the virtues of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are all complete in him. Humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are none other than the ultimate achievement of understanding and the supreme measure of knowing. The activities of intellect and the senses constitute the life of man and beasts; the reason why the activities are different is because man and beasts have different natures.
> (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 28; Chin and Freeman 1990: 118–19, modified)

In short, for Dai, it is not the altruistic love that counts as moral; it is the knowing mind that counts the altruistic love as moral by recognizing it as moral principle (the principle of humanity).

Third, then, we come to the problem of what morality is. Again Dai rejected the Song–Ming dichotomy between morality and desires; instead he reduced morality to human desires. In other words, he rejected that there is a clear cut between moral principle (*li*), on the one hand, and feelings (*qing*) and desires (*yu*), on the other hand. He said, 'Principles exist where feelings do not err. It is not possible to have acquired principle without first having satisfied feelings' (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 1; Chin and Freeman 1990: 70). He also said, 'Desire is a fact, whereas principle is its specific law' (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 8; Chin and Freeman 1990: 82). I think Dai is right in calling our attention to an easily overlooked relationship between moral principle and desires and feelings. That is, whatever counts as moral should include at least some sort of satisfaction of feelings and desires. However, the satisfaction of feelings and desires alone is not sufficient to explain what moral is. It is worth remembering again that Chen Que and Yan Yue both faced this similar challenge. Dai solved the difficulty by resorting to the principle (or value) of creativity (*sheng*). As mentioned above, the principle of creativity in terms of human affairs is the fulfillment of human life (*sui-sheng*) or the satisfaction of feelings and fulfillment of desires of all people (*da-qing-sui-yu*). Presumably one has to weigh up (*quan* 權) one's feelings and desires, which might conflict with one another, for good order to fulfill one's life. Whereas humans are political beings, only when one weighs one's feelings and desires against those of others to avoid conflict and achieve harmonization, can one fulfill one's life. In other words, the principle of creativity provides the standard of proper attainment of feelings and desires that constitutes morality. For Dai, the knowing mind can know the principle of creativity (i.e., the moral principle); once it knows the principle, it would want and enjoy (*yue* 悅) the principle. Furthermore, Dai emphasized that one's practicing Confucius' maxim of 'reciprocity' (*shu* 恕) can ensure one that what the knowing mind obtains is something 'universalizable' (i.e., principle) rather than some subjective opinion (*yi-jian* 意見). He said:

> When I do something to others, I should examine myself and think quietly: Would I accept it should someone do the same thing to me? When I demand something from others, I should examine myself and think quietly: Were this demanded of me, could I do it? When I gauge the response of others by my own [responses], principles will become clear. The principle of Heaven refers to the principle that is differentiated on the basis of what is natural. The principle that is differentiated on the basis of what is natural means this: gauging the feelings of others by one's own so that there is fairness in every [action].
>
> (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 1–2; Chin and Freeman 1990: 70)

Applying reciprocity enables one to use one's feelings to gauge others' feelings (*yi-qing-xie-qing* 以情絜情); the principle of 'the satisfaction of feelings and fulfillment of desires' of every person (*da-qing-sui-yu*) will be thus clear. It is noted that the practice

of reciprocity can also reinforce one's concern (*ren*) to others that will reinforce the knowing mind's enjoyment (*yue*) toward principle.

Fourth, there might be no need for people to use their knowing mind anywhere. Because the proprieties (*li*) were created by ancient sage kings as the detailed expressions of the principle of creativity, it can serve as the moral instructions for all people. Dai said, 'The system of rites is the order and arrangement of Heaven and earth' (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 49; Chin and Freeman 1990: 156). It is noted that Dai's emphasis on the proprieties was largely developed into a kind of ritualism by his followers. For example, Ling Ting-kan (凌廷堪, Ci-zhong 次仲, 1757–1809), one of Dai's followers, recommended to 'replace principle with rituals' (*yi-li-dai-li* 以禮代理) (Zhang 1994).

Fifth, Dai gave a rather complete solution to the problem of evil, which had yet to be satisfactorily resolved in the thoughts of Chen Que and Yan Yuen. For him, evil originates from two sources: selfishness (*si* 私) and beclouding of the mind (*bi* 蔽):

> Whatever arises from desires is always something which has to do with the business of living and providing oneself with proper nourishment. When desires go wrong, it is because of selfishness, not because the mind is beclouded. [On the other hand,] if a person thinks he has grasped a principle but what he holds to firmly is really wrong, then he is suffering from mental beclouding and unclear thinking. Selfishness and beclouding of the mind are two great handicaps from which people in the world, both ancient and modern, have suffered. Selfishness originates from the fault of desires, and beclouding of the mind arises from errors in comprehension. Desires are rooted in blood-and-*qi*, whereas comprehension is a function of the mind.
>
> (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 9; Chin and Freeman 1990: 83)

Although Dai made a distinction between selfishness and beclouding of the mind, he viewed selfishness as the fault that comes from one's excessive craving for gratifying desires and happens only when one's knowing mind is beclouded. Therefore, how to keep the knowing mind clear is especially crucial. In this respect, Dai suggested, 'Only through learning [*xue* 學] can one make up for such deficiencies and advance to wisdom and continue to correct these deficiencies to the utmost. It is like the brilliance of the sun and moon lighting up every cranny. [When there is illumination,] one then becomes a sage' (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 6; Chin and Freeman 1990: 77). On this account, though he criticized Xunzi for wrongly separating moral from human nature, Dai highly praised Xunzi's *Quan-Xue-Pian* (勸學篇 *Encouraging Learning*) as: 'Were a sage to appear again, would he change a single word of these statements?' (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961: 32; Chin and Freeman 1990: 125).

Finally, to exert the knowing mind to the utmost and thereby satisfying feelings and desires properly was called by Dai as the process from 'what is the natural' (*zi-ran* 自然) to 'what is the necessary' (*bi-ran* 必然). He said:

> Desires are the natural tendencies of one's physical nature; loving admirable

virtue is the natural tendency of one's knowing mind. This was how Mencius explained the goodness of human nature. According to the natural tendency of our knowing mind, there is none who is not pleased with principle and righteousness; it is just that most of us have not fully grasped principle or that our actions are not in complete accord with righteousness. When a person has carefully observed what is natural in [the movement of] blood-and-*qi* in order to apprehend what is necessary, what he has gotten is called principle and righteousness. What is the natural and what is the necessary are not two separate things. Thus, when what is natural is completely understood without slightest mistake, that is the necessary. If [a person has approached what is necessary] in this way and there is no regret but only contentment afterwards, this means [that he has attained] what is natural in the highest degree. If he allows his natural tendencies to lead him into error, then he has lost what is natural. What he has gotten is not what is natural. Therefore, by returning to what is necessary, a person completes what is natural.

> (*Meng-Zi-Zi-Yi-Shu-Zheng* 1961, 18–19; Chin and Freeman 1990: 100)

Indeed, although there remain questions in Dai's thought that have yet to be explored in this writing (such as his interpretation of the *Mencius* and *Xunzi*), I think the foregoing discussion is sufficient to show the essentials of his thought. In comparison and contrast to Song–Ming Confucianism, Dai took a very different approach to Confucian philosophy with the problem of over self-perfection as his primary concern. His distinct approach has made him a prominent figure of the new philosophy; his philosophy has significantly enriched Confucian philosophy.*

Notes

1. I borrowed the available translations of writings quoted in this chapter and have occasionally and slightly modified them as indicated in the main text with 'modified'.
2. Huang's diagnosis of the defeat of the Yang-ming school was actually borrowed from his teacher Liu Zong-zhou. See *Liu-Zong-Zhou-Quan-Ji* (1997: 2.325).
3. I would like to thank Shu-hsien Liu for telling me that there is a rare mistake in this translation. Julia Ching confused Liu Wen-min (劉文敏, Liang-feng 兩峰) with Luo Lun (羅倫, Yi-feng 一峰). It is Liang-feng who was listed by Huang Zong-xi here.
4. In *Da-Xue-Wen* (大學問 *Inquiry on The Great Learning*), Yang-ming gave a succinct exposition of *zhi-zhi-ge-wu*: 'Now when one sets out to extend his innate knowing of the good to the utmost, does this mean something illusory, hazy, in a vacuum, and unreal? No, it means something real. Therefore, the extension of the knowing must consist in the investigation of things. A thing is an event. For every emanation of the will there must be an event corresponding to it. The event to which the will is directed is a thing. To investigate is to rectify. It is to rectify that which is incorrect so it can return to its original correctness. To rectify that which is not correct is to get rid of evil, and to return to correctness is to do good. This is what is meant by investigation' (*Wang-Yang-Ming-Quan-Ji* 1992: 2.972; Chan 1963a: 665–6). I used the translation by Wing-tsit Chan (陳榮捷, 1901–94) with slight modification.
5. Among Ming scholars, Chen Xian-zhang (陳獻章, Bai-sha 白沙, 1472–1529) was the first one to introduce the Daoist concept '*zi-ran*' into *xin-xue* and to identify it as the core concept of his thought. See Cheng (1999).
6. Notice that Mou Zong-san was very clear about the flaws of Wang Ji's Four Negatives, but his appreciation of Wang Ji's original thinking made him argue that the later development was the result of

the misuse by followers (*ren-bing* 人病) and not the result of the theoretical mistakes (*fa-bing* 法病). I think Mou's argument is not convincing enough. See Mou (1979: 266–82, 297–8).

7. The case of Zeng Jing (曾靜, 1679–1736) I mentioned above was also a catalyst for the Manchu government reducing its support for the Cheng-zhu orthodoxy. See Wang (1992).

8. Wing-tsit Chan sketched out the development of the studies of Chuan-shan: 'But he [Chuan-shan] was practically forgotten until almost a century later, and his many works, of which seventy-seven have survived, were not published until the middle of the nineteenth century. Even then attention was attracted only to his bold political theory and unorthodox interpretation of history. It was not until our own time that his unique philosophy was appreciated. Because of his materialism, he has been praised in Communist China as one of the greatest philosophers in Chinese history' (Chan 1963a: 692).

9. Qian Mu was of the opinion that Huang Zong-xi's thought underwent great changes in his later years as he finally was influenced by Chen Que. Qian's consideration was that Huang rewrote several times the epitaph for Chen. However, after studying in depth the four epitaphs Huang wrote for Chen, I concluded that Huang was consistently different from Chen as he still worked within the boundary of Song–Ming Confucianism. The reason Huang rewrote the epitaph for Chen is this: Huang in his later days understood that he developed eventually to be different from his teacher in thought no matter that he claimed himself to be the only heir to his teacher. That thus enables him to be more sympathetic to Chen's departure. See Cheng (1996).

10. David S. Nivison depicted teleological naturalism as follows: 'The universe (whether God-like or not) is not a giver of explicit commands; however, the universe is not morally neutral either. It has a sort of teleological structure; it produces humans disposed to formulate and follow moral rules – not just any rules, but the right ones – and thereby indirectly creates the moral order. Certain forms of this position may allow the universe to be moral in other ways as well, e.g., favoring humans when they behave morally, or itself exhibiting process (e.g., "productiveness") which are felt to be structurally similar to human moral behavior (e.g., "benevolence").' See Nivison (1996: 273).

* I am indebted to Edward Simetz for polishing the English of this chapter.

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V

MODERN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY: FROM LATE QING THROUGH THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Chapter 15
ENLIGHTENMENT MOVEMENT

Xinyan Jiang

The Chinese enlightenment movement took place during the late nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. It was largely the Chinese response to China's crisis in face of Western power, and may be considered the first step in China's path to modernization. After the Opium War in the 1840s, China, once one of the greatest powers in the world, was reduced to the status of a semi-colony. Many Western countries (later joined by Japan) came to control large parts of China and forced the Chinese government to give them what they wanted. By the end of the nineteenth century, for the first time in history, the survival of China as a nation became problematic. To save China, China's best minds started to investigate the reasons why the West had become powerful and China had weakened. This is the historical background to the Chinese enlightenment movement. What Chinese enlightenment thinkers during this period did essentially was to extensively introduce Western thought to the Chinese and critically evaluate Chinese tradition. It was through their work that Western theories of liberty, equality, and democracy, and Western scientific method, were brought to China. These new ideas became powerful weapons against Chinese despotism. This enlightenment movement at first prepared China for the 1911 revolution that overthrew China's last emperor, although some enlightenment thinkers themselves were reformers but not revolutionaries. Later on it developed into the New Cultural Movement (approximately from 1915 to the early 1920s) whose passionate advocacy of science and democracy and sharp critique of traditional Chinese culture greatly shook the cultural foundation of traditional Chinese society and profoundly shaped Chinese minds in the twentieth century.

Yan Fu (嚴复), Liang Qichao (梁啟超), Wang Guowei (王國維), Hu Shih (胡適), and Zhang Dongsun (張東蓀) were among the most distinguished Chinese enlightenment thinkers. Their great significance in the history of Chinese philosophy does not lie in their originality in a purely philosophical and scholarly sense, but in the creative way they connected Western ideas with the Chinese situation and integrated Western philosophy into Chinese philosophical traditions. This chapter is a brief discussion of their major ideas.

1 Yan Fu

Yan Fu (嚴复 1854–1921) was the first to systematically introduce Western thought into China. It was through his writings and translations that the Chinese learned about evolutionary theory and liberalism. Before Yan Fu, Chinese understandings of Western ideas were all based on Japanese translations of Western works. Yan Fu was the first Chinese to translate Western works into Chinese directly from English. In his time he understood Western thought better than anyone else in China. It was Yan Fu who first urged political and social change in China in terms of national survival in evolution. It was also he who first pointed out that the lack of liberty was the fundamental problem of Chinese society. Although he was not a radical anti-traditionalist, the new outlook of the world he brought to China greatly changed the way the Chinese thought about others and themselves. Yan Fu's works marked the beginning of China's enlightenment movement.

Yan Fu was born in a scholar–gentry family in a village in Houguan (today's Fu Zhou) of Fu Jian Province. When he was 14, he entered a navy school and after graduation he worked in the Chinese Navy as a practitioner. He was then sent to the British Navy Academy and studied in Britain for three years. During his stay in the UK, he became familiar with many Western works in various subjects such as philosophy and political economics. After returning to China, he worked in the well-known North Ocean Navy School and later on became the President (*zong-ban* 總辦) of the school. He was not directly involved in developing the Chinese Navy, nor did he participate in battles against the Japanese Navy; nevertheless, his work in the Navy school and good knowledge of the Chinese Navy might have made him feel deeper sadness and disappointment than many others when the Chinese Navy was defeated by Japan in 1895. After the Chinese Navy was destroyed by the Japanese, he started teaching and created a newspaper to spread new ideas and advocate reform in China. Later on he was President of Fudan University and Peking University. He translated numerous Western works, including Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* and *System of Logic* (the first half), Herbert Spencer's *Study of Sociology*, Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*, E. Jenks's *A History of Politics*, and W.S. Jevons's *Logic: A Primer*. He not only translated them but also wrote a substantial number of commentaries on them, published along with the translations, that showed his interpretations and critique. Among his own writings, the following four essays, published during 1895–8, are the most influential: 'On the Speed of World Change', 'On Strength', 'On Our Salvation', and 'In Refutation of Han Yu'.

1.1 Evolution and the survival of the Chinese nation

Yan Fu's best-known work is his translation (1898) of *Evolution and Ethics* by Thomas H. Huxley. It was one of the most significant books in modern Chinese history, having a tremendous impact on his contemporaries and generations to come. It made many Chinese realize the urgency of reform in China for the first time.

Although Huxley's book is aimed at refuting social Darwinism and showing the inapplicability of evolutionary theory in the social domain, it served as an efficient instrument in China to promote Darwinism and the social Darwinism advocated by Herbert Spencer, and to justify reform in China. Yan Fu clearly understood the disagreement between Huxley and Spencer, and he sided with Spencer. But, why did he choose to translate Huxley's book? Probably it is because he thought that Darwin's work, as one on natural science, might not interest general readers in China and Spencer's work might be very difficult for Chinese readers to comprehend at that time. On the other hand, Huxley's book contains a very vivid and accessible introduction to Darwin's evolutionary theory and discussion of the relation between evolution and human society. Thus, Yan Fu decided to translate Huxley's book into Chinese and put his criticism of Huxley and praise for Spencer in his commentaries on his translation.[1] To highlight the theme on evolution, Yan Fu translated the title of Huxley's book into 'On Evolution' and omitted 'Ethics'. As Yan Fu expected, after his translation was published, what attracted the Chinese most about Huxley's book was not his criticism of the social Darwinism, but Spencer's social Darwinism. The strongest message his Chinese readers received from Huxley's book is this: given that it is natural law that only the fittest survive and the strong beat the weak, the Chinese nation will not survive if the Chinese do not make substantial change in their society.

In his commentaries on Huxley's book, Yan Fu overtly criticized Huxley separating the way of human beings from the way of nature. According to him, in this aspect, Spencer is superior, because he understands that morality and social organization are products of evolution. Agreeing with Spencer, he wrote:

> The original purpose of grouping together (*qun* 群) was for safety and interests. This is a matter of evolution. Those who can group and live together can survive, while those who are not able to group are eliminated; those who group well survive, while those who do not group well perish. Who group well? They are those who have sympathy for each other.[2]
>
> (Yan 1986, vol. 5: 347)

Obviously, for him, moral feelings and social organization are the ways for human beings to survive in competition. Therefore, human beings are subject to the natural law of evolution. Like Spencer, Yan Fu believed that to do well in competition with other groups, a group must organize its members better than other groups and have stronger individual members than other groups. The fact that the Chinese were badly beaten by Westerners and the Japanese shows that their way of grouping does not work well and their members are weak. Hence, to survive in competition with other nations, the Chinese must change their system of grouping and find ways to strengthen their individual members. Otherwise the Chinese will be eliminated or became slaves of other nations (Yan 1986, vol. 1: 12).

Prior to the publication of his translation of Huxley's book, in 1895, the year the Chinese Navy lost its battle with the Japanese Navy, Yan Fu had already published several articles that, among other things, introduced evolutionary theory and used it

to justify the need for reform in China in terms of the survival of China in compe-
tition. The publication of his translation of Huxley's *On Evolution and Ethics* greatly
helped to popularize these ideas. By the end of the nineteenth century and the early
twentieth century, they were widely accepted by Chinese intellectuals.

1.2 Liberty and the survival of the Chinese nation

To strengthen China, the Chinese first needed to find the reason why China had
become weaker than Western nations. According to Yan Fu, the lack of liberty was the
main cause for China's backwardness and weakness. He believed that the achievement
of the West was based on liberty. When he discussed the main things that China
should learn from the West, he said:

> In short, it is nothing but culturally respecting truth and abandoning the
> falsehood, and politically and legally serving common good and minimizing
> partiality. These two things were desired by the Chinese too, but they can
> prevail in the West but not in China, due to the fact that there is liberty in
> the West but no liberty in China.
>
> (Yan 1986, vol. 1: 2)

He pointed out clearly that encouragement in truth-seeking and the government
serving the common good had made the West stronger than China, while both these
two presuppose liberty.

On the one hand, he must have been deeply influenced by Mill and believed
that liberty is indispensable for seeking truth. The entire Chapter 2 of Mill's *On
Liberty* argued that in the interest of truth, liberty of thought and discussion are
necessary. Yan Fu not only adopted Mill's point that discovering truth requires
liberty, but also went further to link truth-seeking with the well-being of a nation.
Therefore, he concluded, encouraging truth-seeking is necessary to produce a strong
and powerful nation.

On the other hand, he believed that liberty can efficiently promote common
good. He argued that under a despotic government people's interests cannot be
represented and people are like slaves who can work only for their masters. When
people are enslaved by their rulers, they will not be motivated to work hard or fight
for their state, and therefore a nation whose people are slaves as such cannot be
powerful and strong:

> People in the West are respected and appreciated, even more than their kings
> or dukes, but the people in China are regarded as so low that they are all the
> property of their ruler. When the state needs people to fight for it, in the
> West people will naturally go to fight for their common interests and property,
> while in China slaves have to fight for their masters. Slaves fight against those
> who have been given human dignity. How can they not be defeated?
>
> (Yan 1986, vol. 1: 36)

Wherever there is no liberty, truth and common good will not flourish, and a nation and state will not prosper. This is totally consistent with Mill's view. At the end of *On Liberty*, Mill clearly indicates that a state will not prevail if its members are not allowed to develop freely (Mill 1956: 143). Mill's influence on Yan Fu in this aspect seems undeniable.

Yan Fu's translation of Mill's *On Liberty* is the first book that systematically introduced the concept of liberty to the Chinese. His translation was published in 1903, although he meant to publish it much earlier.[3] He did not undertake comprehensive revisions of the first draft of his translation and published it in hurry, because he believed that his translation was urgently needed in China at that time (Yan 1986, vol.1: 131, 134). When he explained why he translated Mill's *On Liberty*, he said that the Chinese badly needed a better understanding of liberty. As he put it, for a decade, people had passionately talked about liberty and freedom, but had not had a clear idea of what it was. As a result, the conservatives considered liberty wild and dangerous and the reformers equated it with random action (Yan 1986, vol.1: 131). By introducing Mill's work to the Chinese, he was hoping to clarify all confusions and therefore justify the liberty that he advocated. His translation was published with the title *On the Borderline between Society's Power and Individuals' Power*. With such a title, he intended to show that the key to understand liberty is to understand the appropriate restraints on society and individuals. On the one hand, society should not interfere with an individual when the individual does not do anything harmful to society; otherwise, society will have violated the individual's liberty. On the other, an individual should not do anything to harm society; otherwise, the individual will have violated the liberty of other individuals in society. What Mill emphasized in *On Liberty* is that society should not interfere with individuals excessively, while what Yan Fu wanted to highlight is the restrictions on both sides. Given the historical context in which *On Liberty* was introduced to China, what Yan Fu did was very plausible – he was teaching people that liberty is not the same as doing whatever an individual wants to do – a common Chinese misunderstanding of liberty at that time.

In addition, given the fact that what was most urgent in China at that time was the survival of the nation, it is understandable that Mill's discussion of the instrumental value of liberty clearly had a greater impact on Yan than his emphasis on the intrinsic value of liberty. This reflects in Yan Fu's translation and interpretation of Mill's *On Liberty*.[4] Moreover, Mill's analysis of why ancient nations like China fell behind and stopped moving forward must have reinforced Yan Fu's belief in the instrumental value of liberty. Mill's analysis might also have directly influenced Yan Fu's diagnosis of China's problem.[5] In *On Liberty*, when Mill argues for the significance of encouraging individuality, he takes China as an example of what European countries should not follow. According to Mill, China's lack of progression is directly caused by the lack of individuality, while the lack of individuality is the result of the lack of liberty (Mill 1956: 87). When Yan Fu was looking for the reason why China was badly beaten by British and other Western powers, he would not overlook what Mill said.

1.3 Liberty and traditional norms

The main audience for Mill's *On Liberty* were those who lived in democratic societies. So, *On Liberty* is not mainly about why the majority should obtain political liberty from a despotic government but why each individual should be protected from majority rule. But the Chinese, who were still ruled by a despotic government and had not obtained the freedom that the British enjoyed, urgently needed to justify their fight against government dictatorship. That might explain why Mill's warning of the tyranny of the majority did not get a strong response in China, while Rousseau's theory of natural rights and the general will did.

Yan Fu was certainly very clear that under different political systems there are different focuses in the struggle for liberty. As he said in his 'Translator's commentary':

> Under aristocratic government, people struggle against aristocracy in order to get liberty; under despotic government, people struggle against monarchy in order to get liberty; with constitutional democracy, aristocracy and monarchy are now governed by law, so they cannot abuse people at will. So, under such political systems, individuals struggle against society, the masses, and customs, in order to have liberty.
>
> (Yan 1986, vol. 1: 134)

Yan Fu understood that what China needed first was to eliminate despotism and win the majority's political freedom. Therefore, he made great efforts to promote political reform in China. He even wrote to the Chinese emperor to advocate such reform. In his 'A Letter to the Emperor', he says that the reason why in China there were many times when an old dynasty was replaced by a new one was that the old one did not make political changes when needed. In the West, the same ruling family lasted very long, because they made necessary political changes; if the emperor of the Qing dynasty could make necessary political changes, his government would last (Yan 1986, vol. 1: 63). What Yan Fu wished was a constitutional monarchy like that of Great Britain. According to him, what China should do is to 'take liberty as substance, and democracy as its function' (Yan 1986, vol. 1: 11). He saw that liberty is more fundamental than democracy, and democracy is a way to realize liberty (Li 2003: 256). He was clearly aware of the fact that China was still in the stage of fighting against despotic government.

Nevertheless, he did see the relevance of *On Liberty* to the Chinese situation. Besides Mill's discussion of the domain of individual freedom and the domain of the state's power over individuals, Yan Fu also learned from Mill about how prevailing public opinions, habits, and customs function as one kind of tyrant of the majority against liberty in any society. In the case of China, according to Yan Fu, the moral norm for relationships, like religion in the West, is the great obstacle for free discussion. He wrote:

> In Western countries, there is nothing that prohibits free speech more

than religion. Hence, in Mill's discussion on the liberty of thought and discussion, most times he takes religion as an example. In China, those moral norms for human relationships function in the same way. As far as those moral norms are concerned, no free discussion can be allowed. Chinese moral norms even do more than Western religions in prohibiting free discussion.

(Yan 1986, vol. 1: 134)

If the well-being of China depends on people's liberty, and if liberty cannot be obtained without discrediting China's traditional moral norms, a critique of China's traditional morality is indispensable to the flourishing of the Chinese nation. This means that a new cultural movement is necessary. Although such an anti-traditional cultural movement did not start until 1915, leaders of the movement were familiar with Yan Fu's ideas. Therefore, Yan Fu's work later had a significant impact on China's new cultural movement.

1.4 Scientific method, improvement of the quality of citizens, and gradual reform

Yan Fu was a passionate promoter of liberty, but he advocated obtaining liberty only by gradual reform. That was why he never supported China's 1911 revolution. He was a strong critic of Rousseau's theory of natural rights that justifies violent revolution.[6] For his entire life, he believed that social and political change in China could be reached only through non-violent measures.[7] From his social Darwinist perspective, liberty was a product of evolution. Therefore it cannot be obtained through violent revolution. Revolution would not bring more liberty but only chaos. To bring liberty to China, one must help to create conditions necessary for liberty. For him, improving people's physical strength (*gu-min-li* 鼓民力), developing people's intellects (*kai-min-zhi* 開民智), and renovating people's morality (*xin-min-de* 新民德) were the most important things for the prevalence of liberty in China (Yan 1986, vol. 1: 27). That may explain why he paid great attention to education.

As far as education is concerned, Yan Fu believed that to improve the quality of the Chinese, it was extremely important to introduce scientific method to China. That was his motivation in translating Mill's *System of Logic*. What attracted him most in Mill's logic was his inductive method. Later on, to make the topic more accessible, he also translated Jevons's *Logic: A Primer* and used it as his textbook. Yan Fu was the earliest thinker in China to introduce induction to China.

As mentioned above, his emphasis on education was consistent with his belief in evolutionary theory, especially social Darwinism. In his translator's commentary on Mill's *On Liberty*, he wrote: 'in natural evolution, the higher level a society has evolved to, the more liberty the society has' (Yan 1986, vol. 1: 133). How much liberty a society can achieve depends on how well the society has evolved. Only when members of a society have reached a higher level of physical strength, intelligence, and morality, can real liberty be achieved. 'The people who are capable of self-governing and freedom are those who are excellent in physical strength, intellect,

and morality' (Yan 1986, vol. 1: 27). For him, education, but not revolution, will foster the evolution of the Chinese nation most.

He firmly believed that democracy and liberty require a certain level of intellectual and moral development among citizens. In this aspect, he is clearly closer to Mill's view that the democratic system is presupposed by people's ability for self-governing. Although Mill does not oppose all revolutions, he does not believe that all revolutions will bring progress. In *On Liberty* Mill clearly says that as long as people are not accustomed to transact their business on their own, revolutions that overthrow their governments will not improve the situation, but only change rulers rather than systems (Mill 1956: 136). For Yan Fu, the moral and intellectual level of Chinese citizens at that period was not adequate for exercising full liberty and establishing a truly democratic society. Furthermore, according to him, imitating Western democracy under the current Chinese situation would bring great disorder to China (Li 2003: 259). The chaotic situation in China after the 1911 revolution might have reinforced his view. Today, when we look back on the modern history of China, we might say that the revolution was inevitable, and a historical mistake non-revolutionary Chinese reformers made was that they did not realize that the Chinese monarchy at that time was too corrupt to carry out any serious political reform. Of course, the 1911 revolution did not bring democracy and liberty to China, but great progress was made in that direction.

2 Liang Qichao

In China, during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, there was no one whose writings were so widely read and so deeply touched the hearts of educated Chinese as did Liang Qichao's. Even today, his famous 'On Young China' is still an inspiration for many who are striving for China's modernization. Although Liang was not the first one to introduce modern ideas, such as democracy, liberty, and equality, to China, he was probably most responsible for popularizing and developing them. The passion and beauty of his writings made his promotion of new ideas most effective in his time. His contribution to the Chinese enlightenment can hardly be overestimated. He was an exemplary Chinese public intellectual. His profound influence in China is an excellent illustration of how one individual can make a great difference in the world.

Liang Qichao (梁啟超 1873–1929) was born into a literati family in a village in Xinhui county of Guangdong Province. He was a child prodigy, well known in his hometown and nearby areas, and well trained in traditional Chinese learning before he started to encounter Western ideas. The turning point in his life was when he met Kang Youwei (康有為 1858–1927) in 1890 and became Kang's disciple. Kang opened Liang's eyes to a new intellectual world and brought him into China's reform movement. He awakened Liang's political consciousness and made him aware of the legitimacy and urgency of institutional changes and renovation in China. Besides these, Kang also cultivated Liang's lifetime interest in Lu-Wang Neo-Confucianism and Mahayana Buddhism.

Next to Kang, Liang was one of most eminent figures in 'the Reform of 1898'. After the reform failed, Liang fled to Japan and stay there until 1912. During fourteen years' exile, he edited *Qing-Yi-Bao* and *Xin-Min-Cong-Bao*, and published a huge number of articles to introduce Western ideas and promote political and social change in China, which made his name even better known than Kang's. That period was the peak of his life as an enlightenment thinker.

Kang's impact on Liang was certainly great, but disagreement between them was also profound. Liang was more open minded and more tolerant than Kang. His thought was also greatly influenced by Yan Fu. Therefore, it is no surprise that there are some similarities between Yan's and Liang's ideas. Although he was not a revolutionary, Liang endorsed the new republic after the 1911 revolution. Furthermore, he played a leading role in defending the republic in China when Yuan Shikai (袁世凱 1859–1916) was trying to bring China back to monarchy. All of this clearly distinguished Liang from both Kang and Yan. After the republican revolution of 1911, Liang held high positions under several different governments, including Minister of Justice (1913) and Minister of Finance (1917). From 1918 until his death, he devoted himself to scholarly writing and teaching. In the last few years of his life, he was a professor at Qinghua University. Liang was an extremely productive writer. In his short life, he wrote about fourteen million words (Chen 1996: 130). *Yin-Bing-Shi-He-Ji* (*Collected Works from the Ice Drinker's Studio*, 149 vols) is the most complete collection of his writings.

2.1 Despotism and national character

Like Yan Fu, Liang advocated liberalism for the sake of the interests of the Chinese nation. The starting point of his philosophy is the survival of the Chinese nation but not the individual's interest. This may explain why he never paid much attention to the intrinsic value of liberty and equality held by classical liberalism in the West. This may also explain why in the later years of his life he turned to statism once he came to believe that authoritarianism could serve China better than liberalism. What never changed in Liang's thought is the motif of nationalism.

As discussed early on in this chapter, the key to connecting Chinese nationalism with liberalism was a type of group evolutionism that was introduced to China by Yan Fu and believed by many Chinese intellectuals at that time. In agreement with Yan Fu, Liang also believed that Western nations were doing better than the Chinese in competition with other nations because their members under democratic governments were more energetic and stronger than members of the Chinese nation and had greater solidarity than the Chinese. Moreover, Liang gave detailed discussion and analysis of why the Chinese were weak and lacked national solidarity.

According to Liang, by nature despotic monarchy inevitably made the Chinese weaker and with less national solidarity than Westerners who lived under democratic government. As Chang Hao has pointed out, Liang realized that despotic monarchy was 'an institutional embodiment of egoism' (Chang 1971: 104). Its purpose was to serve the self-interest of its ruler. For their self-interests, rulers of despotic monarchies

always need to weaken their subjects and minimize their solidarity. These rulers are thieves who have illegitimately stolen everything from the people, and made a country as their own private property with the people as their slaves. To keep their power and prevent people from rising up to take back what they legitimately should have, these rulers definitely need to weaken the power of their subjects as much as they can. For this reason, they have done their best to hinder the physical and intellectual development of their subjects, to make them ignorant, passive, disorganized. That is what has happened in China (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 420–3).

> Furthermore, they not only feel no shame and regret about what they have done, but also use moral theories to justify what they have done … As a result, the people of the whole country had to regard themselves as slaves. Therefore they possess the character of slaves and do what slaves do.
>
> (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 414)

As Liang pointed out, over several thousand years, Chinese rulers' skill in weakening and manipulating their subjects had achieved great perfection. To sum up, their skills may be classified into four arts of ruling. The first is the art of taming. People are born with desires for independence, knowledge, and social life. But all of these are what despotic rulers fear most. Therefore, they have used all kinds of means to tame people so that people have become ignorant, selfish, and obedient. Such taming worked so well that in China people commonly regarded an independent and critical mind as abnormal. As Liang described:

> Slavishness, ignorance, selfishness, hypocrisy, cowardice, and indolence are most shameful in the world. But today people not only do not feel shameful of all of them, but also go further like this: if there occasionally is someone who does not have a slavish mentality, does not want to be ignorant, is not totally selfish, not hypocritical, not cowardly, and dislikes indolence, people all over the country would regard him as a monster and a great evil. Such taking of right for wrong and wrong for right, and loving what should be hated and hating what should be loved show how much people have lost their nature.
>
> (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 421)

The second skill is the art of luring. This is to lure subjects to serve and please the rulers by giving them rewards such as money, positions, etc. This has made people compete in pleasing rulers and live just like those dogs that do their best to please their masters. In all despotic societies this method has been used, but it has been used at its highest proficiency and perfection in China (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 421). The third skill is the art of control. The key to this method is to appoint obedient and mindless officials at all levels so that the ruler's authority can never be challenged. Consequently, only those who are unable and ignorant can be officials. Therefore, officials all over the country are like dead men 'who have no brain, no bone, no blood, and no energy' (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 422). They are indeed easily controlled. The fourth skill is the

art of keeping watch on people. This is to use all government measures to ensure that people will not do anything undesirable as regards their rulers. This includes depriving people of freedom of thought, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech. Under such conditions, independent spirit and creative mind can hardly survive in China (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 422).[8]

More than several thousand years' despotic monarchy in China had caused serious defects in the Chinese national character (*guo-min-xing* 國民性). In China, Liang was probably the first to discuss the problem of the Chinese national character. Liang summarized four kinds of backwardness in the Chinese character: weakness of patriotic sentiment, fragileness of independence, lack of public consciousness, and lack of the ability of self-governing (Liang 1941: 3). They are obviously products of despotism; therefore, Liang said:

> From what we have seen, we can know the basic origin of China's weakness. China is weak, because its citizens are weak. But its government is the one that causes the weakness of Chinese citizens.
>
> (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 422)

Once those defects in national character are formed, in turn they will strengthen despotism. In the past, rulers of China had done all they could to weaken Chinese people for their own self-interest. It worked for them. But, when China had to compete with Western nations whose members were more energetic and more united than those of China, China's survival and the interest of China's rulers were both threatened. It meant that the damage that Chinese rulers had caused to Chinese people had now brought about their own downfall (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 423).

2.2 Democracy, the nation-state, and civil society

Given the intrinsic connection between China's weakness and despotism, democratic reform was required for the survival of China. Since what had caused the weakness of China was the despotic monarchy itself as a political institution but not its individual rulers, the ideal of Mencius' benevolent government could not solve China's problems. Liang clearly realized that as long as people had no rights, there was no workable mechanism that made rulers treat people well and produced strong and energetic citizens.

> Benevolent government is about protecting people and taking care of people. The one who protects and takes care of people has unlimited power. Therefore those who talk about benevolent government can only talk about what a ruler ought to be but have no way to make the ruler practice benevolent government … Those who talk about limiting government's power and admitting people's rights regard people and government as equals, and believe that people's rights are naturally owned by people but not given by their government.
>
> (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 833)

Early in his life, Liang blamed Xun Zi for his advocacy of authoritarian government and praised Mencius for his idea of the primacy of the people, but without realizing the fundamental difference between Mencius' ideal society and modern democracy (Chang 1971: 74–5). It was after Liang's extensive exploration of Western ideas that he came to see how much China's modernization needed to appeal to what was outside Chinese traditions. In traditional Chinese philosophies, absolute monarchy and political inequality are taken for granted. People should be loved and taken care of, but they do not have equal rights in political affairs to that of the ruler and ruling class. The best people could hope for was a good ruler who would treat his people well. That was why Confucians had paid so much attention to teaching rulers to be benevolent, but had never proposed a new political system that might efficiently limit the ruler's power and get the people's will represented in government. The fact is that there were very few benevolent rulers over the past several thousand years. The reason for this is 'the ruler has right and power, while the ruled does not' (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 833). Obviously, without a democratic system that entails popular participation and restriction on the ruler's power, benevolent government could not be a reality. The essence of despotic monarchy entails the rulers' bad treatment of people and the weakness of a nation.

To empower China, the Chinese people must be treated well. To do so, democratization is necessary.[9] Although, like Yan Fu, Liang was attracted to liberty and democracy by its instrumental value, he seemed more interested in the positive role that democracy might play in national solidarity. For him, popular participation could contribute to group cohesiveness, and people's rights might be 'a kind of mechanism which could generate collective dynamism in China' (Chang 1971: 107). It seemed to him that democracy and nationalism were two aspects of the same thing, like 'two opposite sides of the same coin' (Chang 1971: 165). He believed that to face international competition, China must be transformed from an ancient empire to a nation-state – a modern state. In an empire subjects do not care about their country since the country is the property of the monarch. In a nation-state, there are citizens who share the ownership of the state and are bound together by common interests. Therefore people in such a state have great solidarity and great strength. An empire cannot possibly defeat a nation-state, because this is a battle between a handful of people in the empire and hundreds of thousands of citizens in a nation-state (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 413–14). He believed that all modern states in the West were nation-states. Nationalism had helped raise their power in the world. At that time, Western nationalism had developed into national imperialism (Liang 1917: 5–6). The Chinese nation would not survive in the face of Western invasion if it did not become a nation-state itself. However, the nationalism he advocated for China was not aggressive in nature, but defensive. When he defined such nationalism he said that nationalism was the fairest and greatest doctrine in the world, according to which no nation should violate each other's liberty (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 459).

However, mere institutional change in government was not sufficient for building a democratic society and nation-state. Liang noticed that newspapers and free associations of people were extremely important in this process. He believed that newspapers

could promote national solidarity by 'facilitating intellectual communication among different parts of a country' (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 66); voluntary associations could also promote national solidarity by connecting people according to their professions or common interests (Chang 1971: 107). He held that free association was one of the reasons why Westerners grouped better than others:

> The best way to go is to group, and the worst way to go is to be alone … As far as the way of grouping is concerned, grouping minds is superior to grouping bodies … Europeans understand this, and practice it in three ways: what groups citizens together is called parliament, what groups business people is called company, and what groups intellectuals together is called study society.
>
> (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 26–7)

Among free associations, he believed that study societies were especially important. For him, study societies were the mother of other kinds of associations. Europeans did very well in forming study societies. In Western countries, there was an association for each discipline; therefore, their academic level was high and their military was advanced (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 27). He said that in China there were study societies in ancient times, but these were prohibited later on. The result was that bad people managed to gather together but decent people could not. For him, study societies were very important in China, since they could not only advance learning and produce talent (Liang 1999, vol. 1: 27), but also play a leading role in educating common people and linking various forces and opinions (Chang 1971: 108–9). It seems that to a certain degree Liang realized there was a close connection between the modern state and the formation of civil society[10] and understood the importance of civil society in improving citizenry and promoting political participation.

2.3 New citizens for a new China

To build a democratic society and form a nation-state in China, Chinese people must become a new type of citizen. In Liang's words, the relationship between a state and its citizen is like one between one's body and its component parts. To strengthen China, its citizens must be renovated. The emergence of new citizens in China requires some fundamental changes in Chinese culture. To create new citizens for China, Liang advocated a set of new values. In his well-known *On New Citizens* (*Xin-Min-Shuo* 新民說), Liang proposed the new ideal for China. This was the first time in Chinese history that an ideal of citizenship had been formulated (Chang 1971: 214).

According to him, in traditional Chinese culture, ethics was focused on relationships within the family. In it there were many private virtues, but very little concerning social relationships (Liang 1917: 19–20). By contrast, in Western traditions, public morality was well addressed. A new citizen of China needed both private and civic virtue. Therefore, public morality or civic virtues must be added to the Chinese moral tradition. The ideal of the new citizen needed to be based on both Chinese and

Western ideas. As far as civic virtues were concerned, Liang believed the following were crucial for the new citizens of China.

Firstly, new citizens should be nationalistic. They should develop national consciousness and regard themselves as members of a nation-state. They need to understand the consistency between the interests of their state and their own interests (Liang 1917: 23, 30). They should take responsibility as citizens and do their duties such as paying tax and performing military service (Liang 1917: 181–2; Huang 1972: 66). To do so, the Chinese need to distinguish between the world and a nation, and between the court and a state (Liang 1917: 181–2). New citizens should be loyal to their state and citizenry, not to monarchy. Therefore, they need to understand that they are masters of their state, not slaves of their monarchy.

Secondly, new citizens should have the spirit of liberty and independent minds. They should think by themselves and trust their own judgment. They should not be slaves of past sages, of custom, of environment, of their own passions and desires (Liang 1917: 78–83). They should be more capable of self-respect, self-governing, and self-determination. In short, they should exercise autonomy (Liang 1917: 87). Liang fiercely criticized the slavish mentality in the Chinese character. For him, a democratic China could never be a reality if the spirit of liberty and independent thinking did not prevail among Chinese people. Although there was a time when Liang considered following Kang's idea of making Confucianism a state religion for the sake of national solidarity, later he gave it up, due to his belief that a state religion would negatively affect people's independent thinking.

Thirdly, new citizens should be aware of their rights and should struggle for equality so that they could defend their individual rights domestically and national rights internationally. In Liang's opinion, overemphasizing benevolence (*ren* 仁) in traditional Chinese culture actually hindered the development of individual independence and played a negative role in claiming individual rights. Instead of benevolence, rightness (*yi* 義) should be advocated more, since rightness could help people defend their rights in the sense that rightness implies both that one ought not to hurt others and that they ought not to be hurt by others (Liang 1917: 51–2).

Fourthly, new citizens should cultivate physical, moral, and intellectual courage and possess a spirit of adventure and desire for improvement and progress (Huang 1972: 66). Liang asserted an active and dynamic spirit in Confucianism, but he noticed that in Confucianism it only applies to the moral area (Chang 1971: 188–9). For him, new citizens needed to bring activity and dynamism to non-moral aspects such as in outward activities with nature and other nations. A spirit of adventure and the desire for improvement and progress are not traditional in Chinese culture. On the contrary, Daoist 'non-action' is deeply rooted in Chinese mentality. Liang believed that the rise of the West was partially due to its spirit of adventure and desire for improvement and progress, and he passionately praised Western heroes such as Columbus, Magellan, and Washington, who embodied such spirit (Liang 1917: 38–40).

Nevertheless, the method of self-cultivation in Neo-Confucianism, especially in Lu-Wang philosophy, could still be useful for new citizens. Therefore, although Liang did not take much from traditional philosophy for his ideal of the new citizen, he

thought that traditional methodology could be useful to a certain degree. In addition, as far as private virtues were concerned, he thought that Chinese tradition should be followed. Unlike the May Fourth generation, Liang did not want to abandon Chinese tradition as a whole. It is plausible to say that Liang stood in the middle between conservative traditionalists and radical anti-traditionalists (Huang 1972: 156–8; Tan 1971: 40).

3 Wang Guowei

Wang Guowei (王國維 1877–1927) was a very different kind of thinker from Yan Fu or Liang Qichao. He was not occupied by a search for power and wealth for China, but sincerely engaged in seeking universal truth for humankind. He was one of the few Chinese thinkers who appreciate the intrinsic value of philosophy and art and do not treat them as a mere means for immediate moral and political purposes. In his time he was the only one whose introduction of Western philosophy into China was not colored by pragmatic and didactic considerations. His greatest achievement lies in his application of Western philosophy and scientific method to studies of traditional Chinese disciplines. He is best known for his work in aesthetics and Chinese history. As far as his philosophy of art and literature is concerned, his most influential works are 'Critical Essay on the Dream of the Red Chamber' (1904), *Comments on Lyrics in the Human World* (1908), and *A Historical Examination of Song–Yuan Dramas* (1912). These works revolutionized Chinese literary studies and marked the beginning of modern Chinese aesthetics. Politically, he was not an advocate of democracy and liberty. On the contrary, he was among those who were still loyal to the Chinese monarchy even long after China's last emperor was overthrown by revolutionaries.

Wang was born into a petty landlord and literati family in Haining of Zhejiang Province. He was well trained in Chinese learning before he encountered Western thought. He devoted the early period of his life to the study of pure philosophy. The Western philosophies that particularly interested Wang were German rationalism and idealism. Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche were his philosophical heroes. However, later on, he felt that 'what is believable is not lovable, while what is lovable is not believable' (Wang 1983c: 22), and he concluded that he was too emotional to do well in philosophy, but too rational to do well in literature (Wang 1983c: 21). Therefore, he turned his attention to aesthetics and theorizing about literary criticism – in between pure philosophy and pure art, but which combined philosophy and art (Fung 1989: 190–1). In the later period of his life, he worked more on Chinese history. His was the most scientific method of studying history in early twentieth-century China and it made him the founding father of modern history studies in China. He was a professor at Qinghua University. Wang committed suicide when he was fifty, but the reason for doing so remains controversial even today.

3.1 Universal and eternal truths and the mission of philosophy and art

One of Wang's famous sayings is 'Scholarship should not be distinguished as Chinese and Western, new or old, and useful and useless' (Wang 1983a: 6). He believed that in China and the West, and in the past and the present, there are always some genuine truths that are universally valid, and none of these truths is useless in a broad sense. One should pursue these truths without caring about where and when they originated and whether they have immediate utility.

He believed that to seek for truth was more important than to achieve immediate political and moral purposes. Scholarly debates are concerned only with truth and falsehood, and therefore national, racial, and religious considerations should not be taken into account in such debates (Wang 1983b: 97). For this reason, one should engage in scholarship for its own sake and not regard scholarship as a means to anything else. He said that Kant's maxim is to treat each human being as an end, but not only human beings should be treated in this way, so should scholarship (Wang 1983b: 95). According to him, scholarship will not flourish if it is regarded as a means only (Wang 1983b: 95). In Chinese tradition, scholarship's instrumental value has always been emphasized, but its intrinsic and independent value is rarely taken seriously. Wang was one of very few Chinese thinkers who criticized this aspect of Chinese tradition.

Among all disciplines of scholarship, he considered philosophy and art (including art in an ordinary sense as well as literature) the most significant. For him, both philosophy and art aim at seeking for the greatest truth about human beings and the universe, although they do so in different ways. On the one hand, to do philosophy is to discover such truth, while to do art is to express such truth in symbols. What they can accomplish is not temporary success but eternal achievement. The lasting and greatest truths they can offer to human beings may not always be consistent with the interests of a country at a particular period, but that is what makes these truths sacred (Wang 1983b: 101). In his praise of philosophy and art, he said:

> In the world the most sacred and noble, but not immediately useful, things are philosophy and aesthetics. People over the world all hubristically said: 'they are useless'. But that does not make philosophy and art less valuable.
>
> (Wang 1983b: 101)

Wang understood that philosophy and art pursue truth in a different way from science. He believed that philosophy and art are more inward looking in their truth-seeking; that is, they focus on finding and expressing truths about human beings themselves (Bonner 1986: 47; Fung 1989: 189). For this reason, what philosophers and artists can achieve is much more lasting than what politicians and entrepreneurs can (Wang 1983b: 100–1).

His advocacy of truth-seeking and his understanding of philosophy naturally explain why he strongly promoted the study of philosophy in China. The first philosophical essay that Wang ever published was 'Clarification of Confusions in Philosophy'. In

the essay, he argued that philosophy is indispensable for human life. He quoted from a German philosopher: 'As long as the human mind exists, philosophy will not perish.' Human beings have rationality and need to understand the universe and themselves. Philosophy satisfies such human need and exercises human rationality, although it does not seem useful in a more direct and obvious way. Furthermore, philosophy is the foundation for more practical disciplines such as education. Without philosophy one cannot understand the true meaning of education. Philosophy concerns principles of truth, goodness, and beauty, while truth, goodness, and beauty are what education teaches people about. To justify his emphasis on the importance of philosophy, he also argued that philosophy was part of traditional Chinese learning, not an invention of the West. However, to make great progress in Chinese philosophy, the Chinese must understand Western philosophy. Only those who have good mastery of Western philosophy can develop and enrich Chinese philosophy (Wang 1983b: 39).

3.2 Aesthetic critique of Chinese literary works

Wang laid the foundation for modern Chinese aesthetics by applying German philosophy to Chinese literature and art, and combining classical German aesthetics with traditional Chinese literary and art theories. Besides Schopenhauer, his aesthetics was also greatly influenced by Kant, Schiller, and Nietzsche.

The origin and essence of art and principles of artistic creation

To understand Wang's view of art, one needs first to know his understanding of the essence of life. Following Schopenhauer, Wang believed that life is suffering because it is dominated by the desire for life. Desire is the essence of life. When one's desires are not satisfied, one feels miserable, and if all one's desires are satisfied, one feels bored and empty. So, in either way, life is pain. Therefore, desire, life, and suffering are a trinity (Wang 1983b: 48).

One way to relieve suffering is to have hobbies. The nobler kind of hobby is art and literature (Wang 1983c: 8). Art is the product of excessive human energy and the cause of play. Furthermore, art is not only the play of adults, but also the manifestation of the will to power (Wang 1983c: 8–9, 28). Furthermore, art is a means to be free from suffering. Clearly, Wang combined Schiller's view of the playfulness of art, Nietzsche's view of the will to power, and Schopenhauer's view of the suffering of life.[11] Enjoyment from art can make people temporarily happy and go beyond the control of the will to life. One's aesthetic pleasure is free from considerations of self-interest. In true aesthetic experience, one is truly free. In this aspect, similar to Kant, Wang said:

> There is one thing that can make me transcend self-interest and forget the relationship between myself and external objects, that is the moment when there is no hope, no fear in my heart, and I am not a self with desire but the one with knowledge … however, what can make me transcend self-interest must be something that has nothing to do with my self-interest. Briefly and

clearly put, that thing must not be a real thing. How can anything except art be like that?

(Wang 1983b: 49)

The purpose of art is to describe the suffering of life and the way of liberating from the suffering (Wang 1983b: 51). Therefore, the value of art is dependent on the imperfection of the world and the suffering of life (Fung 1989: 186). 'The value of art is not absolute, but relative to this world and this life' (Wang 1983b: 55). People need art, because art can bring them comfort and help relieve their pain. However, Wang held that art cannot provide comfort to all people, but only to those who have leisure time and sufficient education to enjoy it. For those working people who have to work all the time for survival, religions can provide better comfort. They can get comfort by believing that in the next life they will be better off than in this current one. For well-educated people, it is difficult to believe in a life after death, but they can attain pleasure and comfort from art in this current life (Wang 1983c: 44). Like Schiller, he believed that, to make more people able to find comfort in art, aesthetic education should be promoted.

Having accepted Schopenhauer's pessimistic outlook on life, Wang also shared his great appreciation of tragedy. He regarded *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, one of the most famous Chinese long novels, as one of the greatest works, mainly because it is a great tragedy. His 'Critical Essay on the Dream of the Red Chamber' was the first systematic attempt to philosophically criticize a literary work from the viewpoint of aesthetics in China. Although the essay is fundamentally Schopenhauerian, it started a new era of Chinese literary criticism. In the essay he argued that the beauty of tragedy is the highest aesthetic value, because it reveals the greatest truth of life and touches human hearts to the deepest degree. The beauty of tragedies shows people the true essence of life. There are three kinds of tragedies, as Schopenhauer has classified: (1) tragedy of wrongness in which suffering is caused by the unusual evil of extremely evil persons, (2) tragedy of fate in which suffering is caused by inevitable destiny, and (3) tragedy of life in which suffering intrinsically exists in life itself and is caused by ordinary people who just do ordinary things. Among these three, the third type is the most tragic and can move people's hearts most, because this kind of tragedy reveals the greatest misfortune inherent in human life. According to Wang, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* is of this third type. Therefore it is completely a tragedy and the most typical tragedy among all tragedies (Wang 1983b: 53).

According to Wang, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* is about 'ordinary morals, ordinary human emotions, and the ordinary state' (Wang 1983b: 53), therefore ordinary readers can easily make connection with it, and be easily moved by it. Compared to Goethe's *Faust*, which is the tragedy of an extraordinary hero, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* shows the tragedy of life better and can deeply touch more people (Liu 1996: 63). 'The suffering of Bao Yu[12] is the suffering that everyone may have. It is deeply rooted in fundamental human existence, therefore relief of such suffering is hoped for most' (Wang 1983b: 52).

As far as the nature of beauty is concerned, Wang was greatly influenced by Kant

and he believed the following. Firstly, all beauty is beauty of form. Beauty of an object, no matter which kind of beauty it is, solely lies in its form (Wang 1983c: 24; Bonner 1986: 107). Secondly, aesthetic experience is totally disinterested. Aesthetic judgment has nothing to do with one's self-interest. The most essential feature of beauty is that 'it is lovable but not useful' (Wang 1983c: 23). We feel something is beautiful, not because we think that it is useful to us but simply because it is pleasant. Thirdly, beauty is intuitive and concrete, not conceptual and abstract. Although a feeling of beauty may be universally shared, it is not mediated by any concept. Therefore, a great artistic work such as an excellent lyric has a quality of immediacy and transparency (*bu-ge* 不隔, literally 'not veiled') (Wang 2007: 22).

Given his appreciation of the unique value of art and understanding of the characteristics of beauty, it is natural for him to insist that art should be independent of politics and ethics, and not be used as a means to any political or moral purpose. Consequently, he was strongly against Yan Fu and Liang Qichao who advocated using literature to serve national interests. And he also opposed Confucians who take moral education as the main function of any form of art (Bonner 1986: 105).

Based on his understanding of art, he proposed the following aesthetic principles. Firstly, what art describes should be what is universal for human beings, but not qualities applicable only to particular individuals (Wang 1983b: 58). Secondly, art should not be abstract but concrete. It should describe universal qualities of human beings through describing specific individuals. That is 'putting universal human qualities under individuals' names' (Wang 1983b: 58). Thirdly, good art is based on what is natural, but better than what is natural. The ideal of artists and what artists have experienced are both indispensable for good art. 'Art originates from both what is prior and what is empirical' (Wang 1983b: 58). Experience provides artists with what is natural, while ideals enable them to create something better than what is natural (Fung 1989: 188).

In addition, agreeing with Kant and Schopenhauer, Wang also believed that the greatest art can be created only by genius. Artistic works of genius are original, natural, and exemplary, but cannot be imitated. However, unlike Kant and Schopenhauer, Wang emphasized that cultivation and effort are necessary for great artworks, and artistic genius alone is not sufficient (Bonner 1986: 111; Liu 1996: 41). He believed that to produce great artistic work, one not only needs genius but also must possess good scholarship and a noble personality (Wang 1983c: 29). It is in this context that he proposed his well-known 'three stages' of development of a great writer or other kind of great person:

> From ancient to present those who had great achievement and great knowledge have invariably gone through three stages. The first stage may be described by these lines: 'Last night the wind withered the green trees, I mounted a high tower alone, to gaze at roads in the world as far as I can' (from Yan Tongshu's lyric to the tune 'Butterflies Lingering over Flowers' [*Die-Lian-Hua* 蝶恋花]). The second stage is like 'My sash is getting looser and looser; still I don't regret; for her sake, I have become wan and thin' (from Ouyang Yongshu's

lyric to the tune 'Butterflies Lingering over Flowers' [*Die-Lian-Hua* 蝶恋花]). The third stage may be described in the following lines: 'In a crowd I look for her ten thousand times, all at once, as I turned my head, I was startled to find her, she is where lights were growing dim' (Xin Youan's lyric to the tune 'Blue Jade Table' [*Qing-Yu-An* 青玉案]). No one has ever been able to skip the first two stages and directly leap over into the third stage. This is also true of literature. That is why literary geniuses do need extensive cultivation.[13]

(Wang 1983c: 29)

These three stages have been summarized as goal-setting, hard work, and sudden illumination (Liu 1996: 107). This theory of three stages has been often quoted and widely loved in China since Wang proposed it. It is probably one of the best-known parts of Wang Guowei's thought.

Jing-jie and various kinds of beauty

In *Remarks on Lyrics in the Human World* (*Ren-Jian-Ci-Hua* 《人間詞話》), Wang's best-known work in poetic criticism, he proposes to use '*jing-jie*' (境界) as the most important criterion for poetic evaluation. He said, 'The most important element in a consideration of lyrics (*ci* 词) is *jing-jie*' (Wang 2007: 1). Whether a poem is good depends on if it has *jing-jie*. It has been said that the phrase *jing-jie* is not Wang's invention, and something similar had been used by others before him in various ways (Rickett 1977: 23–5; Zeng 1994: 25), but it was Wang who made the '*jing-jie*' a key concept in literary criticism. '*Jing-jie*' is hard to translate and define. '*Jing*' alone has been translated as 'scene', 'poetic state', 'realm', or 'world', with '*jie*' as 'boundary' or 'border'. When the two are put together, '*jing-jie*' may literally mean 'a state or realm with a boundary' or 'a sphere of reality delineated' (Rickett 1977: 23). Wang never gave a definition or clear explanation of *jing-jie*. Only by analyzing his use of *jing-jie* in his *Ren-Jian-Ci-Hua*, can we have some understanding of the concept. Some scholars such as Fung Yu-lan (Feng, You-lan 馮友蘭) have argued that '*jing-jie*' used by Wang is actually the equivalent of '*yi-jing*' (意境), where '*yi*' refers to what a poet means to express or feel and '*jing*' to the thing that is described, including scenery, external objects, or internal emotions. '*Jing* is objective situation, while *yi* is the understanding of and feeling of the objective situation' (Feng 1989: 194). 'Objective situation' in this context covers more than external objects. As Wang put it:

> *Jing* is not limited to scenery and objects alone. Pleasure and anger, sorrow and joy are also a sort of *jing-jie* in people's hearts. Therefore, those poems which can describe true scenery and objects, true emotions and feelings, can be said to possess *jing-jie*. Otherwise they may be said to lack *jing-jie*.
>
> (Wang 2007: 3)

Therefore, *jing-jie* as *yi-jing* refers to a poetic state in which a poet's idea and the reality (including scenery and emotions) that the poet describes are well united. In Fung's words, when idea, scenery, and emotion are united as one, a complete *yi-jing* is

produced (Fung 1989: 192–3). *Yi-jing* is also regarded as the combination of 'the ideas of "content" or "meaning" (*yi* 意) and "the state in which this content exists or takes form" (*jing* 境)' (Rickett 1977: 25–6).

If we take *jing-jie* as *yi-jing*, we may say whether a poem is good dependent upon whether it has *yi-jing*; that is, whether it has attained such a unity of a poet's idea, emotion, and reality. To make a poem have *jing-jie*, a poet first must have genuine feeling, and then be able to present that feeling so well in his/her poem that his/her readers can also feel the way he/she does (Ye 1982: 221).

As far as classification of *jing-jie* is concerned, Wang classifies it into two kinds: the state that has a self (*you-wo-zhi-jing* 有我之境) and the state that has no self (*wu-wo-zhi-jing* 無我之境). In the former, what is observed is colored by one's emotion and ideas. 'Things are seen from perspectives of oneself' (Wang 2007: 2). In this case, the expression of a poem clearly reflects the emotions or ideas of its author. Wang gave these verses as an example: 'With tear-filled eyes I ask the flowers but they do not speak. Red petals swirl past the swing away.' 'How can I bear it? Shut within this lonely inn against the spring cold. Slanting through the cuckoos' cries the sun's ray at dusk'[14] (Wang 2007: 2). In such a state, the beauty that the poem presents to its readers is what Wang called *hong-zhuang* (宏壯 magnificence, the sublime, i.e. *zhuang-mei* 壯美) (Wang 2007: 3). Although the author in this state is not detached from his desires or emotions, he is temporarily apart from them due to his being touched by, or attracted to, something beautiful (Liu 1996: 109–10).

Unlike in the state that has a self, in the state that has no self an author's emotions or ideals are not separate from reality and a poet's observation of reality is not colored by his emotions and ideals. Therefore, in such a state, 'one views objects from perspectives of objects and so one cannot tell the difference between what is oneself and what is the object' (Wang 2007: 2). Wang gives these examples: 'I pluck chrysanthemums by the eastern fence. Far distant appear the southern mountains.' 'The cold waves rise smoothly, quietly white birds glide softly down.' In such a state, the beauty a poet presents or creates is *you-mei* (优美 the beautiful) (Wang 2007: 2). It is the highest state of beauty. In this state, the poet is free in the sense that he is not affected by any desire or emotion and is totally detached from his own self. As has been pointed out, such a state is a state of self-detachment which is similar to the state of 'non-attachment' (*wu-nian* 無念) in Chan Buddhism, and the state of pure knowledge in Schopenhauer's philosophy (Liu 1996: 110–11).

The concepts of *you-mei* and *zhuang-mei* are not inventions of Wang. They were already discussed by Edmund Burke (1729–97) and Kant. But it was Wang who interpreted them in terms of the state that has a self and the state that has no self. More importantly, Wang proposed the third category of beauty. Both *you-mei* and *zhuang-mei* are creations of genius. They cannot be exactly imitated or duplicated. However, according to Wang, there is another kind of beauty that is inferior to *you-mei* and *zhuang-mei*, resulting from imitation. Wang call it '*gu-ya*' (古雅) – literally meaning 'ancient elegancy'. Wang did not define *gu-ya*, but he did claim that it is a secondary form in the sense that it is an imitation of nature and work of genius. In his own words, *gu-ya* is "the beauty of the form of the beauty of the form" (Wang 1983c: 24). Beauty

lies in form. The beauty in nature and beauty created by artistic geniuses are the first form, while its imitation must be the second form. Since *gu-ya* is imitation of beauty that exists in nature and embodied in works of geniuses, it is obviously not a product of genius but of someone who is good at learning and cultivation. Although this kind of beauty is not the best, it indeed has aesthetic value. After all, imitation of what is beautiful is also beautiful.[15]

4 Hu Shih

Hu Shih (胡適 1891–1962) was one of the most eminent intellectuals in twentieth-century China. Unlike those enlightenment thinkers in the previous generation such as Yu Fu and Liang Qichao, who were mainly occupied by promoting political changes, he focused more attention on cultural change. He was one of initiators of the May Fourth New Cultural Movement in the late 1910s. He was the first one who promoted the vernacular style of writing that led to revolutionary changes in Chinese language and literature. For his entire life he strongly promoted liberalism in China. He was also the one who brought Dewey's experimentalism to China. He was one of the most earnest advocates of scientific method that he believed applied to all disciplines of learning and all aspects of life. As a philosopher, an educator, and scholar–politician, he played a very significant role in transforming Chinese culture in the twentieth century.

Hu Shih was born in Jixi of Anhui Province and he went to Shanghai at 12 years old to study at a school where new ideas from the West were taught. He was greatly influenced by Yan Fu and Liang Qichao, especially the latter. He studied in the United States from 1910 to 1917. After receiving a bachelor's degree in agriculture from Cornell University, in the last two years of his stay in the United States he studied philosophy with John Dewey at Columbia University. After he returned to China in 1917, he became a professor at Peking University and taught there for the next two decades. From 1938 to 1942, when China's war against the Japanese invasion was at its most difficult stage, he was China's ambassador to the United States and did outstanding work in getting international support for China. Later on he became the President of Peking University (1946–8). He left China in the spring of 1949 for the United States and, 10 years later, he went to Taiwan, where he was President of the Central Academy of Science. Among his representative works, the best known are 'My Tentative Ideas of Literature Reform' (1917), *An Outline of Chinese Philosophy* (1919), 'Experimentalism' (1919), and *The Development of Logical Method in Ancient China* (1922). He was one of the few Chinese thinkers who published much in English. His English works are included in *Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings* (3 vols 1995).

4.1 The instrumentalist view of truth and the urgency of cultural change in China

As one of the most important leaders of the new cultural movement in China, Hu Shih was more critical about traditional Chinese culture than the earlier generation of Chinese enlightenment thinkers. The philosophy that he used most to justify his advocacy of new beliefs and his critique of traditional culture was Dewey's pragmatism, though Hu Shih preferred to call it 'experimentalism'.

According to Dewey, truth is not static and eternal. It is merely an instrument for human beings to deal with their environment and it will change when humans' environment changes. Hu Shih elaborated such ideas and connected them with the Chinese situation at his time. He believed that 'the fundamental purpose of Dewey's philosophy is to show how to make human beings cultivate their "creative intelligence" and make them respond to their environment in a satisfactory way' (Hu 1986a: 64). For him, experimentalism is consistent with Darwin's theory of evolution. If a change of species in evolution results from its adaptation to the environment, and truth is merely a kind of instrument for human beings to deal with their environment, then, 'when the environment changes, a change of truth would follow' (Hu 1986a: 80). 'Therefore, the feudal ethical codes that were once recognized as eternal truths, such as "three bonds and the five relationships" are now no longer truths' (Hu 1986a: 80).

Clearly, Hu Shih held that reforming China culturally was consistent with Dewey's view of truth, while Dewey's view was supported by the theory of evolution whose validity was widely accepted by Chinese intellectuals at that time. Therefore, he was saying that for the Chinese nation's survival, Chinese people needed to accept and innovate new ideas and approaches, and find new truths instead of holding on to those old values that no longer fitted the new situation. Traditional moral norms and beliefs, no matter whether they were from ancient sages or from conventions, should not be taken as absolute and unchangeable truths. With rapid changes in the world, Chinese culture must be renewed.

4.2 Experimentalism as method

How to get truths? According to Hu Shih, one should adopt the experimentalist method in truth-seeking in all areas. For him, such a method was the most scientific approach. What is the experimentalist method? For Hu Shih, Dewey's experimentalism as method may be understood in two ways: as historical and as experimental methods.

Historical method requires putting the object of investigation in historical context and examining its cause and its effect. In Hu Shih's words, this is 'a method of grandfather–grandson' – cause is 'grandfather', effect is 'grandson', and the investigated object is in the middle (Hu 1986a: 10). He believed that this method was the most tolerant and fair:

> On the one hand, it is very honest and tolerant to employ this method, because it always points out why a certain institution (system) or doctrine

occurred, what historical background there was for it, and therefore make its historical position and value very understandable. Hence it will not be too picky about anything. On the other hand, this method is the most severe and revolutionary, because it always evaluates the value of a doctrine or institution (system) in terms of its consequence. Therefore, it is most just and severe. This method is an important weapon for all movements with a critical spirit.

<div align="right">(Hu 1986a: 10)</div>

As far as experimental method is concerned, he described it with the following three characteristics:

(1) It starts with specific fact and situation; (2) according to it, all doctrines, ideals, and knowledge are all hypotheses that need to be verified, but not truth that can be taken for granted; (3) for it, all doctrines and ideals should be tested by experiment, and experiment is the only touchstone.

<div align="right">(Hu 1986a: 10)</div>

Later on, he summarized such a method as 'propose bold hypotheses and give careful verification' (Hu 1981: 208), which is the best-known maxim of Hu Shih. This explains why in a scholarly context he always advised his students to write a big work on a small topic, and in a political context he advocated talking more about problems and less about 'ism' – the abstract theory.[16]

The experimentalist method presupposes a skeptical and critical attitude and opposes all kinds of dogmatism and authoritarianism. When Hu Shih talked about why he preferred such a method, he mentioned that, as a teenager, he did not believe in supernatural beings such as ghosts or gods and had doubts about many things (Hu 1983: 121), and that in his youth he was greatly influenced by the works of Thomas H. Huxley from whom he learnt not to accept a belief that has insufficient evidence (Hu 1981: 63). For his entire life, he was an advocate of a skeptical spirit and a critical attitude. Custom, convention, teachings of ancient sages, and public opinion, are all subject to doubt. One should not accept any of them without critical examination (Hu 1981: 63). For him, doubt is the first step to truth. A skeptical attitude is taken for granted in the experimentalist method, because to study things in historical context and to regard all doctrines as hypotheses are to question all existent conclusions.

As Yu Yingshi has pointed out, what Hu Shih emphasized most is methodology (Yu 1985: 553–4). For Hu Shih, experimentalist method was the most important thing that he had constantly promoted in his life. In his autobiography, he said: 'All kinds of works of mine on the history of Chinese thought and Chinese history are around the concept of method. "Method" dominates all of my works for over forty years in the past' (Hu 1983: 94). His works are embodiments of such a method. Among others, his *An Outline of Chinese History* is an excellent example of how he applied this method.

4.3 Epoch-making work in the history of Chinese philosophy

Hu Shih's *An Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy* had epoch-making significance in studies of the history of Chinese philosophy. It changed the way in which the history of Chinese philosophy was written and taught in China once and for all. Its breakthroughs are mainly in two aspects. Firstly, it treats all schools of Chinese philosophy equally and denies the superiority of Confucianism that had been dominant since the Han dynasty. Secondly, it regards Chinese philosophy as the object of evolution and progress and attempts to discover historical connections between Chinese philosophies in different periods and evaluate them in a historical context. Both of these were very revolutionary. Before Hu Shih, no one treated the history of Chinese philosophy in this manner.

For Hu Shih, there are three purposes for studying the history of philosophy; namely, understanding historical clues for change and development in philosophical ideas (*ming-bian* 明變), finding causes for change and development in philosophical ideas (*qiu-yin* 求因), and judging the values of various schools of philosophy (*ping-pan* 評判) (Hu 1998a: 149–50). He explains these three purposes in some detail. First, *ming-bian* is the first and most important task of the history of philosophy. Among different philosophies there is something that connects them together and shows how they have changed in history. Only the history of philosophy can find these clues. Secondly, *qiu-yin* is necessary for the history of philosophy too. 'There are approximately three kinds of causes: (a) differences in individuals' character and talent, (b) differences in historical situation, and (c) differences in influence from scholarly thoughts' (Hu 1998a: 150). Lastly, *ping-pan* is not the subjective evaluation of various schools of thought from the perspective of one who studies the history of philosophy, but objective judgment based on the effects each school has brought about. A school's effect may be classified into three categories, including (1) its effect on thought at its own time and later periods, (2) its effect on custom and politics, and (3) its effect on shaping personality and character (Hu 1998a: 150).

To achieve these purposes and write a reliable history of Chinese philosophy, according to Hu Shih, one must first follow the four steps listed below:

> The first is collecting historical data, and the second is examining collected data and distinguishing true ones from false ones; the third is getting rid of unreliable data, and the fourth is ordering reliable data.
>
> (Hu 1998a: 159)

Only after these steps are completed, can one proceed to understand historical clues for change and development in philosophical ideas, find causes for change and development in philosophical ideas, and judge the values of various schools of philosophy.

Hu Shih's way of investigating the history of Chinese philosophy is clearly experimentalist. Not only does it exemplify 'bold hypotheses and careful verification', but it is also clearly historical in method. For instance, besides promoting academic equality and democracy, his denying the superiority of Confucianism over all other schools of

Chinese philosophy treats Confucianism and other schools as hypotheses proposed under certain historical conditions, but not as something that could be absolutely true or false without historical context. Also, his considering Chinese philosophy as the object of evolution and believing in the connection between the development of ideas and their social conditions show that he evaluates various schools of Chinese philosophy historically.

When he talked about his *Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy*, he said: 'the greatest wish I had for the work on the history of philosophy was to integrate philosophies of various schools into a whole, and make them logically clear doctrines' (Hu 1998a: 158–9). Furthermore, his book on the history of Chinese philosophy adopted a comparative approach and made contrasts between Chinese and Western philosophy. For Hu Shih, the differences between Chinese and Western philosophy are caused by the differences in historical and social situations, not by the differences in the function of the mind. People all over the world are psychologically similar, but different situations and environments have made them think differently and created different philosophies. Therefore the difference between Chinese and Western philosophy does not make either side superior to the other (Hu 1998a: 159).

What should be noticed is that he did not think that the experimentalist method was totally foreign to the Chinese. He believed that the method used in Chinese evidential investigation (*kao-zheng-xue* 考證學) was very similar to the experimentalist method, although it was not applied to areas other than the study of history in China at this time (Hu 1983: 96). For him, the experimental method was universally valid, because it was based on common sense shared by all human beings (Hu 1983: 97).

4.4 Liberalism, sound individualism, and cultural globalization

Hu Shih was among very few thinkers of his time in China who truly understood liberalism and lived up to liberal values in both political and private life. According to Hu Shih, the basic components of liberalism include liberty, democracy, tolerance, and non-violent change or reform. He clearly stated that liberalism first of all must respect liberty; to respect and protect individual's liberty, democracy must be established. Without democracy liberty cannot be guaranteed. True democracy requires tolerance, that is, tolerating opposite or different opinions. With all of these, non-violent power transference will be possible, and social changes will be made peacefully (Hu 1998b: 127–8). In his private life, he always respected other individuals, including his political or philosophical enemies; in his public life, he constantly advocated legal status for opposition parties and non-violent measures to resolve conflicts among different political groups. Although his ideal was utopian, given the Chinese situation at this time, he never gave up his belief in liberty and democracy, and insisted that values such as equality, freedom, and democracy would prevail in China someday. For him, these liberal values do not just belong to the West but to the world. This brings us to his view of cultural globalization.

According to Hu Shih, science and democracy are the basic trend in the development of the world. Scientific method, democratic government, individual freedom

are universally valid for all nations. No matter whether one likes it or not, the fact is that they bring prosperity and strength to society and well-being to individuals. To embrace these values and put them into practice are not about learning from the West and being completely Westernized (*quan-pan-xi-hua* 全盤西化), but about acceptance of universal human values and being culturally globalized to a full degree (*chong-fen-shi-jie-hua* 充分世界化) (Hu 1947; 1986b: 141–4). However, even if cultural globalization is about being completely Westernized, in practice one does not need to worry about actually being completely Westernized, because one's traditional culture is too strong and powerful to disappear. Therefore, the outcome of any attempt at being completely Westernized at most would be something lying in between being completely traditional and being completely Westernized (Hu 1986b: 135–40). To reform Chinese tradition and bring liberalism to China, so-called 'being completely Westernized' is necessary.

Liberalism presupposes sound individualism that is not the same as egoism. Hu Shih was an influential promoter of individualism in China. Sound individualism is the doctrine that each person should develop his individuality and fulfill his potential to the greatest degree. Such individualism does not promote selfishness but can do great good for society. Society tends to oppress individuality and independent spirit. However, once individuality is greatly oppressed, society will lose its life force. Therefore, the best way for one to benefit society and other people is to fully develop one's individuality. Only those who have individuality and independent spirit dare to tell the truth and criticize the dark side of their societies. The development of individuality is indispensable for social reform and progress (Hu 1991: 63, 275–6).

5 Zhang Dongsun

Zhang Dongsun (張東蓀 1886–1973) was another influential Enlightenment thinker in China during the first half of the twentieth century. His influence was partly because of his excellent work in introducing Western philosophy to China.[17] But, his significance in contemporary Chinese philosophy is mainly due to his role as the first contemporary Chinese philosopher to establish his own philosophical theory, especially in epistemology.[18] Epistemology is the central part of Zhang's philosophy, which began with a pluralistic epistemology and culminated in a cultural episte-mology. His pluralism is derived from a revised version of Kantian philosophy. To justify such an epistemology, he proposed a cosmology: panstructuralism (*fan-jia-gou-zhu-yi* 泛架构主義). His cultural epistemology, although based on his pluralistic epistemology, sought to explore the social and cultural nature of knowledge. To illustrate and demonstrate his cultural epistemology, Zhang also undertook comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy. Especially insightful are his investigations of how differences in language influence differences in philosophy and how the cultural differences determine differences in logical thinking. His comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy remain of great value even today. They continue to throw light on current debates on cultural issues and to inspire comparative philosophy.

Zhang Dongsun's hometown was Qian Tong of Zhejiang Province, but he was born in Neiqu of Hebei Province where his father was the country magistrate. During his childhood, he was well trained in traditional Chinese learning. In his youth he went to Japan and studied philosophy for more than five years at Tokyo University. After returning to China in 1911, he taught in various universities, including Peking University, and published many works on philosophy. Among his best-known works are *Science and Philosophy* (1924), *Philosophy ABC* (1929), *Outlook on Life ABC* (1929), *Essay on New Philosophy* (1929), *Moral Philosophy* (1931), *Contemporary Ethics* (1932), *Epistemology* (1934), *Philosophy of Value* (1934), *Knowledge and Culture* (1946), *Thought and Society* (1946), and *Rationality and Democracy* (1946).

5.1 Pluralistic epistemology

Zhang called his account of knowledge 'pluralistic epistemology' (*duo-yuan-ren-shi-lun* 多元認識論), because it held that the various elements which make our cognition possible are mutually independent and irreducible to each other. More specifically, according to his epistemology, sensation, external order, transcendental forms, logical postulates and concepts are all indispensable for knowledge. Each has its own source and cannot be reduced to others (Zhang 1934: 106).

Firstly, sensations are not representations of external things. The content of a sensation is non-existent in the sense that it has no exact correspondence with its object in the external world. However, Zhang agreed with Bertrand Russell that sensation has an external ground and is not caused by the mind alone (Zhang 1932: 10–11; 1934: 47). There is something in the external world that stimulates our sensations. However, the external cause of our sensation is not a substance, but is rather an order or structure outside us (Zhang 1932: 12; 1934: 47–9).

Secondly, external order does exist independently of us, although we can have almost no knowledge of it. For Zhang, however, there are three kinds of external order that we can know. The first is atomicity, which signifies the atomic structure of the physical world without any reference to substance (Zhang 1932: 16). Atomicity is the equivalent of divisibility. The second kind of external order is continuity. Anything that can be divided also has continuity (Zhang 1932: 19). The third kind of order is creativity or novelty. The existence of change in the world proves the existence of new things in the world (Zhang 1934: 61).[19] Change in the external world involves only change in structure (Zhang 1934: 61). However, Zhang does not explain why these three orders are truly external, if they are all dependent on time and space that he considers internal (see below).

Internal order is also indispensable for cognition. Zhang divided internal order into two kinds: cognitively *a priori* forms (transcendental intuitive forms) and logically *a priori* forms (logical postulates). According to Zhang, cognitively *a priori* forms or transcendental intuitive forms are the third element of cognition. They are the prior conditions of our cognition, such that only under such conditions is our cognition possible (Zhang 1932: 28). There are three kinds of transcendental intuitive forms: space, time, and the subject–object relation.[20] His view of time and space is similar to

Kant's (Zhang 1932: 26–7; 1934: 69, 72). With regard to the subject–object relation, Zhang held that all cognition presupposes a subject and an object (Zhang 1932: 32).

According to Zhang, logically *a priori* forms or logical postulates are the fourth element of cognition. Such forms are the fundamental principles which make logic possible. They include postulates or categories in the Kantian sense and relations of logical implication (Zhang 1934: 84–5). According to Zhang, unlike cognitively *a priori* forms that are common to all knowers, postulates are different in different cultures. Their change depends upon culture (Zhang 1934: 128). Implicative relations or logical implications are the foundation of all judgments and inferences. They are logical rules or laws without which there would be no logic (Zhang 1934: 91).

Concepts are the fifth element of cognition. Concepts are symbolic in nature; a concept is a symbol or class-name. The particulars that are included under the same concept need not share common attributes, but are classified as the same kind because our responses to them are similar (Zhang 1934: 99–100). For example, a pen and ink are very different things, but we classify both under the concept of stationery because of the way in which we use them (Zhang 1934: 116). Every concept, according to Zhang, is a collection of our experience-attitudes or operations (Zhang 1932: 46) that has become comparatively fixed due to custom (Zhang 1934: 118). In this sense, class-names do not correspond to natural kinds in the external world but to our ways to respond to external things. A concept is a kind of collection of responses. For example, the concept of orange represents a group of our ways of handling an orange, such as 'to be taken', 'edible', 'to be smelt', 'sweet', etc. (Zhang 1934: 111–12). However, our classification of things is not totally arbitrary. There are some objective grounds for our responses to things. For example, one of our responses to an orange is to eat it because it is edible, but we do not have such a response to a stone. Although 'being edible' is a relational property which is not intrinsic to an orange and depends on our relation to an orange, this relational property has something to do with certain unknown qualities of an orange (Zhang 1934: 116–17). Consequently, although concepts as class-names are subjective, they are still correlated with the external world in some way.

According to Zhang's epistemological pluralism, knowledge is the joint product of these five elements of cognition. Because Zhang's pluralistic epistemology was so deeply influenced by Kant, he saw it as a kind of revised Kantian theory of knowledge (Zhang 1937: 96). Nevertheless, he insisted that his theory was unique. For him, his innovation did not lie in any specific part of the theory, but in the way in which he united all of its parts. Since the synthesis was new, his pluralistic epistemology was novel (Zhang 1937: 96).

5.2 Panstructuralism

Underlying Zhang Dongsun's pluralistic epistemology was his non-substantial view of the world. That is why for him there is nothing as substance for us to know, and the objects of sensation do not have an ontological status (Zhang 1934: 127). However, to justify his pluralistic epistemology, Zhang needed a cosmology whose account of the

universe dispensed with the notions of substance, matter, or physical entity. He called this cosmology 'panstructuralism' (*fan-jia-gou-zhu-yi* 泛架构主義) (Zhang 1934: 127).

According to Zhang, the external world comprises various structures, only some of which, atomicity, continuity, and creativity, are known to us. These structures or orders are all that really exist in the universe. Roughly speaking, these structures are arranged at three levels: so-called 'matter', 'life', and 'mind'. All of these structures are empty, and none are substances with certain natures. Rather than material substance, there are only physical relations and physical laws (Zhang 1934: 128–9). 'Matter' is a general concept covering a total domain of many specific concepts about physical properties. There is nothing that is in itself matter corresponding to our concept of matter (Zhang 1934: 128). So-called 'life' is a generalization covering the domain of biological phenomena. 'Mind' is a generalization too, but it covers psychological phenomena that differ from biological function (Zhang 1934: 130). Therefore, in our language, it is better to replace 'matter' with 'physical laws'; to replace 'life' with 'biological principles'; and to replace 'mind' with 'psychology' (Zhang 1934: 131). In short, terms for substance as carrier of attributes should be replaced by terms for structures or orders. However, the structures or orders of the universe are not purely natural or objective, but rather depend on our cognitive activity. Their formation is greatly affected by our cognitive forms and patterns (Zhang 1934: 133).

In explaining his cosmology, Zhang compared it to Buddhist cosmology. He believed that the two were very similar in that both deny substance and emphasize relationship. He said that 'structure' in his theory resembled what Buddhism calls 'relatedness' (Chinese: *yin-yuan* 因緣; Sanskrit: *paccaya*). According to Buddhism, especially in Great Vehicle Buddhism, all things are constituted by relatedness, and there are no substances. The universe, like a big net, comprises countless numbers of relations that are dependent on each other and combine in various ways and at various levels. This illustrates the universe's emptiness. In Buddhist thought, 'emptiness' is not equivalent to 'nothingness', but means no substance, no fixed nature, and no self-sufficient being. Since there is only relatedness in the universe, nothing is an independent being by itself. Hence, there is no substance, and the world is merely a set of functional relations. Zhang believed that his cosmology was in accordance with this Buddhist idea (Zhang 1979: 39), since it holds that the universe consists of structures that are not substances but relations. There is further similarity between Zhang's cosmology and Buddhist cosmology. Buddhism holds that the universe is governed by a universal and unchanging law, holding that everything is determined by relatedness or *yin-yuan* and that nothing has an intrinsic nature in itself. In this sense, there is something objective in the universe. Zhang argued that this objectivity is consistent with his claim that the structures of the universe have some objectivity (Zhang 1979: 40).

However, for Zhang there was an important difference in cosmology between his thought and Buddhism; namely, he accepted evolution, while Buddhist cosmology denied it. Combining the Buddhist idea of non-substance with the theory of evolution, Zhang held that the structures of the universe, although empty, are in evolution, and new kinds of structures may emerge due to changes in the combination of various

structures. Evolution is not simply change but change that brings structures to a higher and more complex level than before (Zhang 1934: 40–1). Although all that exist are just relatedness or structures, they are changed in a progressive pattern. For Zhang, there is no inconsistency between holding that there is no substance and believing that there is evolution.

5.3 Cultural epistemology

Pluralistic epistemology reveals that knowledge is not an objective reflection of external things; and panstructuralism argues that there is no substance for us to know. To know is not to represent what is there outside us, but to construct or recreate the contents of knowledge in relation to the structures of the universe. On this account, the need for subjective elements in knowledge is obvious. How, then, are the subjective contents of knowledge decided? Zhang believed that, besides the common structure of human knowledge that is discussed in his pluralistic epistemology, culture plays a significant role in forming our knowledge, and that knowledge is culturally and socially determined. Therefore, to talk about knowledge, we must talk about culture. In this sense, the knowing mind is a collective mind. According to Zhang, epistemology in the past spoke only about the solitary mind, but, with regard to knowledge, there is no solitary mind. We can have a new philosophy only when we have greatly reformed epistemology (Zhang 1946: 140). To reform traditional epistemology, Zhang put forward a theory of knowledge which sought to explain how cultural elements influence and shape our knowledge. It might be appropriate to call Zhang's theory 'Cultural Epistemology'.

On the basis of examining how cultural products such as language affect the development of philosophy and science, Zhang held that to a certain degree different cultures have different ways of knowing. He used the differences between Chinese and Western philosophy as proofs of his cultural epistemology.

According to Zhang, there are several important differences between Chinese and Western philosophy. Firstly, unlike Western philosophy, Chinese philosophy gives primacy to issues of human life. In this sense, Zhang said that Chinese philosophy is direct (Zhang 1946: 75). Zhang argued that Western philosophy could not do the same because Western culture is centered on intellect or reason. To propose an ideal as desirable in a culture that regards reason as the core of the good life, one must justify one's proposal in terms of theoretical knowledge about the universe. But Chinese culture is centered on morality. Since Chinese people are used to talking about human life, character, and behavior directly, they do not feel it necessary to justify their beliefs about human life by appealing to cosmology (Zhang 1946: 75). Therefore, there is no need in Chinese philosophy to justify views on how to live in the way that is required in Western philosophy.

Secondly, Chinese philosophy, unlike Western philosophy, is not a philosophy of substance. Zhang believed that Chinese philosophy has no concept of substance and therefore no ontology. Chinese philosophy is concerned with possible changes and relations rather than with ultimate essences or substances. Although Chinese

cosmology does contain the concept of the integral whole, this concept is not the same as substance in the sense of substratum or ultimate stuff. Rather, Chinese philosophy is concerned with how parts fit into the integral whole, and for this reason Chinese philosophy focuses discussion on the unity of humans and Heaven. Zhang regarded philosophy of this type as 'function philosophy' which is focused on relations of different parts and functions of different parts in the whole (Zhang 1946: 99). Zhang's denying Chinese philosophy a concept of substance and an ontology has been very controversial. But, he is certainly right in highlighting that Chinese philosophy concerns relations and changes much more than Western philosophy.

Zhang's claim that in Chinese philosophy there is no concept of substance and no ontology is based on his belief that there are certain differences between Chinese and Western languages and that such differences have a great impact on the formation of metaphysics. According to Zhang, although in the first place the way of thinking of a nation greatly affected the form of its language, once its language was developed it had a great influence on that nation's way of thinking. On the one hand, the structure of a language expresses the character and psychology of a nation, and on the other, it also determines the nation's way of thinking (Zhang 1946: 50). Since language is social, it must have some power to determine the direction of thought of individuals in society (Zhang 1946: 50). For example, the nature of Chinese grammar has a certain impact on the way of Chinese philosophizing. Because Chinese language does not mark differences between subject and predicate expressions through changes in suffix or in other ways and lacks a clear distinction between subjects and predicates, the Chinese do not have a concept of a subject that is clearly distinguished from that of a predicate (Zhang 1946: 160). Also, the Chinese language often omits the subject of a sentence, unlike Western languages in which the omission of the subject of a sentence is an exception. This feature of Chinese gives the impression that the subject is dispensable (Zhang 1946: 180). Another difference is that Chinese lacks the equivalent of the expression 'it' and therefore lacks sentences of the form 'It is'. 'It is' expresses only the existence of something and not its attributes, and this separation of existence from attributes is a basic condition for forming the concept of substance (Zhang 1946: 180). Most important is the lack in Chinese of an equivalent of the expression 'to be' in Western languages. Therefore it has difficulty in forming the subject–predicate propositions of standard logic. For all of these reasons, Chinese thought did not develop the concepts of subject and substance.

The third difference between Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy, according to Zhang, is that Chinese philosophy is not much concerned with the problem of knowledge. Because it lacks a concept of substance, Chinese philosophy tends toward phenomonalism: there is no need to investigate whether substance underlies all changes in the universe because we will know the truth about the universe by knowing how parts in the universe are related to each other. Epistemology presupposes that there is a difference between what the subject perceives and what the object really is. If one supposes that what the subject sees is what the object really is, one will not have a problem of knowledge (Zhang 1946: 101).

Fourthly, Zhang held that Chinese and Western philosophies have different types

of logical thinking and explained this difference as well by differences in Chinese and Western languages. He argued that Aristotelian logic is derived from the structure of Western languages rather than from universal rules of human reasoning. The object of logic is the rules of reasoning in language. Because reasoning must be expressed in language, there can be no rule of reasoning without language, and the expression of reasoning must be implicitly affected by the form of language. Therefore, different languages will influence the formation of logics of different forms. This will become obvious if we compare the Chinese language and Chinese ways of thinking with Western languages and Aristotelian logic (Zhang 1946: 178). Chinese thought lacks Aristotelian logic, but that does not mean that Chinese thought lacks logic. Rather Chinese thought has a different type of logic.

For Zhang, there are two main differences between Aristotelian and Chinese logic. The first one is that Aristotelian logic is based on the subject–predicate form and the law of identity while Chinese logic is based on the correlation between opposites. Zhang called the former 'identity logic' (*tong-yi-lü-ming-xue* 同一律名學) and the latter 'correlation logic' (*xiang-guan-lü-ning-xue* 相關律名學) or the 'logic of correlative duality' (*liang-yuan-xiang-guan-lü-ming-xue* 兩元相關律名學). He was probably the first scholar to attribute correlative thinking to Chinese philosophy. According to Zhang, the subject–predicate form of propositions and the law of identity (A = A or something cannot be what it is and fail to be what it is at the same time) determined Western logical division, definition, syllogism, and other logical forms. Aristotelian logic is structured by dichotomous logical division in terms of contradiction: A and not A. This division is exclusive in principle; that is, it leaves nothing outside its terms. An object x must be either A or not-A. Logical definition in Aristotelian logic is an equation in which a sign of identity is placed between the definiendum and the definiens. For example, a triangle is a plane figure bounded by three straight lines (Zhang 1946: 181). But such a method of definition cannot often be found in Chinese logic.

Relational propositions are the basic propositions of Chinese logic. In Chinese logic, correlations between opposites, such as above and below or front and back, are emphasized and taken as the starting point. In Chinese thought, opposites represented by *yin* (negative principle or force) and *yang* (positive principle or force) are not mutually exclusive; rather they are dependent on each other and complete each other. Therefore, in Chinese logic, meaning is often expressed in terms of opposition, such as 'Great form has no shape' (*da-xiang-wu-xing* 大象無形). According to this logic, the meaning of a word is not made clear by a definition but by contrasting it with its opposite. For example, a 'wife' is a 'woman who has a husband', and a 'husband' is a 'man who has a wife' (Zhang 1946: 182–3). This is not a strict definition but an explanation in terms of relation.

In addition to giving linguistic reasons to explain differences between Chinese and Western logic, Zhang investigated the connection between the political and social orientation of Chinese philosophy and the emergence of a Chinese logic of correlation. He believed that social phenomena, such as relations between men and women or relations between rulers and subjects, are always relative (Zhang 1946: 191). Through

observation, one will naturally form the idea that all social phenomena are relative and that opposites are dependent upon each other. On this basis, he concluded that correlative thinking is a characteristic of politically and socially oriented thought (Zhang 1946: 191).

Another difference between Western and Chinese logic concerns their modes of inference. In contrast to syllogistic inference and its modern successors used in the Western logic of identity, Chinese logic uses analogy (Zhang 1946: 190). Analogical thinking is the characteristic form of inference in Chinese logic. In this sense, we may call inference in Chinese logic 'analogical argument'. Chinese philosophers often use analogies to argue their points. This sort of inference is again related to the political and social orientation of Chinese philosophy. Analogical arguments are often inappropriate in scientific thought, but they are commonly of value in social-political arguments. Analogical argument is one of the characteristics of political thought (Zhang 1946: 190).

Zhang clearly realized that underlying all these differences between Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy are differences in their larger cultural backgrounds. He believed that Western metaphysics and logic are based on religious culture, while Chinese cosmology and logic are founded on political culture (Zhang 1946: 189). He believed that in the West the influence of religion has been very strong. The pursuit of the supreme and ultimate substance in Western philosophy is clearly a reflection of Western religion. But in China politics and not religion dominated ways of thinking. Basically, Chinese philosophy is derived from the need of the justification for a certain kind of social order. That explains why it is not occupied by the issue of the ultimate being but by the issues of relations and patterns of changes.

It is also because of such a practical attitude that Chinese philosophy does not concern itself much with the nature of a thing but how to deal with the thing. For example, the Chinese do not ask much about what Heaven really is in itself but very much want to know the will of Heaven and its impact on their actions (Zhang 1946: 188). Zhang called this attitude 'how priority attitude'. On the contrary, Western thought has a 'what priority attitude' with which one asks 'what a thing is' first before investigating 'how to deal with it' (Zhang 1946: 189). Correlative logic, non-exclusive definition, etc., are all related to the political background of Chinese philosophy, while identity logic, subject–predicate sentence, the concepts of substance and category, are based on the religious background in the West (Zhang 1946: 189). As with some of Zhang's other ideas, this one is also debatable, but it is intriguing and thought provoking.

Zhang's comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy helped to establish his cultural epistemology and to show how our cognition is influenced by culture. His studies also contributed much to comparative philosophy itself and provided many valuable insights into the differences between Chinese and Western philosophy. His investigation of the influence of Chinese language on the development of Chinese philosophy is highly valuable pioneering work. His proposal that correlative thinking is a characteristic of Chinese philosophy and that analogical argument is a Chinese

mode of inference has been widely adopted by scholars in comparative philosophy.[21] His work in these areas deserves great recognition.[22]

All five thinkers discussed in this chapter contributed greatly to the Chinese enlightenment movement. Yan Fu's introduction of evolutionary theory and liberalism awakened China's best minds and initiated a new era in the history of Chinese philosophy. He is rightly regarded as the father of the Chinese enlightenment movement. Liang Qichao's eloquent critique of despotism and passionate plea for new ideas developed and popularized the Chinese enlightenment. His popular political writings had a great impact nationwide and educated a whole generation of Chinese. He was the most powerful spokesman of new ideas at the time. Wang Guowei's role is of a very different kind. His non-didactic and non-pragmatic attitude toward philosophy and art brought something totally new to the Chinese tradition. His scholarly work is an embodiment of the modern scientific method and independent spirit. His works were not as influential as those of Yan and Liang in his time, but their lasting value has been appreciated across times and political borders. Hu Shih's significance in the May Fourth New Cultural Movement made him a leading enlightenment thinker during the 1910s to 1920s. He remained an eminent figure in Chinese philosophy for the next several decades due to his persistent critique of Chinese traditional culture and advocacy of liberal values. He is considered one of the most important representatives of liberalism in China. Compared to the other four thinkers, Zhang Dongsun's position in the Chinese enlightenment is more philosophical. He not only introduced numerous works of Western philosophy to China, but also made a great effort to assimilate Western philosophy into his own. He will always be remembered as the first Chinese scholar to establish his own philosophical system in the twentieth century. Each of these five thinkers has in his own way added an illustrious page to the annals of the Chinese enlightenment.[23]

Notes

1. Similar speculation has been put forward by Benjamin Schwartz (see Schwartz 1964: 101–2) and Fung Yu-lan (Fung 1989: 162–3).
2. All translations from Chinese texts are mine, unless otherwise specified.
3. In 1899 Yan Fu finished his Chinese translation of Mill's *On Liberty*. However, before he had time to make some revision for publication, he had to flee to Shanghai from Tianjing where he lived due to the invasion of Tianjing by the allied forces of eight Western Powers, and, in fleeing, he lost the manuscript of his translation along with Mill's book. Fortunately, in the spring of 1903, a Westerner found what Yan had lost and mailed his manuscript back to him. About three months later, having made some minor changes to the original manuscript, he published his translation (see Yan 1986, vol. 1: 134).
4. There are many discussions of whether Yan Fu's translation and interpretation of Mill's *On Liberty* was truthful to Mill's original text. On the one hand, some scholars such as Benjamin Schwartz believe that Yan Fu failed to understand Mill's view of the intrinsic value of liberty and therefore his translation does not catch the main spirit of *On Liberty* (Schwartz 1964: 131–48); on the other hand, others argue that Yan Fu understood that Mill believed liberty is valuable in itself, but Yan Fu did not completely understand why he did (Huang 2000: 4); in addition, there are some who believe that Yan Fu's emphasis on the instrumental value of liberty is perfectly consistent with Mill's *On Liberty*

because Mill's appreciation of the instrumental value of liberty is much greater than past scholarship has believed (Zhang 2003: 9).

5. A similar point has been made by Lin Zaijue. See Lin 1999: 198–200.

6. For detailed discussion of Yan Fu's criticism of Rousseau, see Huang 2000: 255–69.

7. Whether he became much more conservative in the late period of his life than in his earlier period has been subject to much controversy in recent years. For a brief introduction to this, see Lin 1999: 184 and its footnote 3.

8. For a more detailed illustration of Liang's discussion of the four arts of ruling, see Chen 1996: 36–8.

9. However, what should be noted is that Liang believed that politically Chinese democracy should first take the form of constitutional monarchy, given the quality of ordinary Chinese at that time. Although there was a short period when he tended to support revolutionaries to establish a republic in China, he changed his mind after his first visit to the United States in 1903. On the one hand, he saw that American democracy was built from the bottom up and based on social foundations that were very different from those in China; on the other hand, his stay in Chinatown in San Francisco made him more pessimistic about the Chinese national character, and therefore he more firmly believed that the Chinese were not ready for a democratic republic.

10. The definition of civil society I use here is stated as follows:

Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.

(See the website of the London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm.)

11. For detailed discussion on this issue, see Bonner 1986: 98–102.

12. Bao Yu is the main hero in *The Dream of the Red Chamber*.

13. This is my translation, but Bonner's is often consulted (see Bonner 1986: 111).

14. Rickett's translation (see Rickett 1977: 40–1).

15. For more detailed discussion of *gu-ya*, see Liu 1996: 44–50, and Bonner 1986: 109–10.

16. For more detailed discussion of his advocacy of focusing on specific problems rather than on abstract theories, see Hu 2002: 95.

17. Zhang was even considered by some of his contemporaries the most distinguished in introducing Western philosophy to China systematically. See Guo 1935: 183.

18. Zhang's own philosophy was first presented in his 'An Embryonic Form of Philosophy' in his *New Essays on Philosophy* (1929). Other Chinese philosophers at this time, such as Fung Yu-lan, Xiong Shili, and Jin Yuelin, formed their philosophies during the 1930s or even later. Therefore, it seems plausible to regard Zhang as the first one who established his own systematic philosophy in contemporary China. See Fang 1997: 138; He 1947: 30; and Zhang 1995a: 5.

19. Zhang considered that his admission of the existence of an external order is one difference between his view and Kant's. In Zhang's understanding, Kant believed that the order of the objects of experience exists only within our consciousness (Zhang 1934: 51; 1932: 14). However, Zhang seems not to have realized that as long as the three kinds of external order he asserts depend on time and space they cannot be independent from human beings, given his agreement with Kant that time and space are merely intuitive forms of human knowledge. Zhang probably realized this weakness in his epistemology. That seems to explain why he replaced 'external order' with other terms after 1936. It has been observed that, instead of 'external order', in his *The Restatement of Pluralistic Epistemology* (the first version in 1936, and the revised version in 1937), he used 'external ground', and in his *Knowledge and Culture* (1946), he used 'external correlate' (see Zhang 1995b: 88).

20. In his *Epistemological Pluralism* (1932), he listed 'implicative relation' as one of cognitively *a priori*

forms (Zhang 1932: 26) but in his later work *Epistemology* he moved that from the category of cognitively *a priori* forms to the category of logically *a priori* forms (Zhang 1932: 85).

21. Correlative thinking in Chinese philosophy has been discussed by many scholars since Zhang (see Hall 1992: xi–xii). For the best-known elaboration on correlative thinking, see Graham 1985; 1992. For more detailed discussions on analogical arguments in early Chinese thought, especially in Mencius' philosophy, see Lau 1970.

22. The section on Zhang Dongsun is based on my 'Zhang Dongsun: Pluralist Epistemology and Chinese Philosophy' – a much more comprehensive and detailed discussion on Zhang Dongsun (see Jiang 2002).

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Chapter 16
DEVELOPMENT OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM IN CHINA

Chenshan Tian

Marxism is definitely the most significant element in Western thought that has provided an opportunity for a philosophical conversation with Chinese tradition in modern times. And, in the process of this conversation, a Chinese version of Marxism started to develop and finally came to fruition in the thought of Mao Zedong (毛澤東). What is particularly worth noting, firstly, is that this conversation was not a government or official campaign, but the efforts made on the part of countless individual intellectuals who conceived a deep concern for the future of turbulent China after the downfall of Qing Manchurian rule. Secondly, the philosophical conversation had a striking feature of 'dialectics', or *bian-zheng-fa* (辯證法), which not only pervades philosophical levels of discourse in China, but also the thinking and speech of ordinary persons in their everyday lives, particularly for the two decades of the 1950s and 1960s, and until the ending of the 1970s when Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平) came to power and openly declared the start of his capitalist 'Economic Reform' with the name of 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics'.

1 A Different Form of Marxism

What is the historical development of Marxian dialectics in China? First of all, we need to understand that the form of Marxian dialectics, wherever one finds it in the West, is different from what appears to be the Chinese analogue. Marxian dialectics in China is not the same as the inherited legacy of Marxian dialectics in Europe. What are the differences between the Chinese form and the original Western form? This study aims to address directly how and why Marxism has assumed the form it has taken in China.

There are at least five corollaries to the thesis:

(a)   There is a clear style of 'thought' or philosophy that is distinctly but not necessarily uniquely Chinese that is available to Chinese intellectuals.

(b)   There is a strand of Chinese Marxism that draws on the Chinese tradition and that overcomes some of the difficulties that have attended Western Marxisms.

(c)   This form of Chinese Marxism is found in many writers, including Qü Qiubai (瞿秋白), Ai Siqi (艾思奇), and Mao Zedong, and it exemplifies this powerful strand of Chinese philosophy.

(d)   Mainstream Western Marxisms find their roots in Engels whose formulations are alien to Chinese thought.

(e)   Although Chinese Marxism finds some of its roots in Engels as well, Chinese Marxists read his philosophy in a different way.

Chinese Marxism is clearly similar to Western Marxism in some important respects; however, it can probably be safely claimed that it represents a third alternative between Marxism on the one hand and traditional Chinese thought on the other.

In fact, in the West, the word 'dialectics' has different meanings in the writings of different Western philosophers: the early Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, Engels, and Lenin all understood something different by the term. For this reason, a comprehensive comparison of the many doctrines of dialectics in the West and then a comparison with the dialectics in China would be too enormous an undertaking for this project to pursue. Therefore this work is rather about how and what the Chinese conceived the dialectics of Marxism to be at about the turn of the nineteenth century and after. It is an account of *bian-zheng-fa* – a Chinese translation of 'dialectics' – in terms of how that term encountered China and was and is understood in China. Arif Dirlik suggests that the articulation of Marxism in China underwent a process of 're-creating', 'rephrasing', and 'restructuring'. Mao Zedong, as well as many others of his time, did not just read Marxism in accordance with a Chinese historical experience but also insistently read the Chinese historical experience into Marxism. Dirlik points out that the Sinification of Marxism was made into a theoretical project especially for the problem of a Marxist revolution in agrarian China (Dirlik 1997: 602). Dirlik says of this Chinese vernacularized Marxism: 'The Marxism (Marxism-Leninism) that Chinese Communists inherited was a Marxism that had already been 'deterritorialized' from its original terrain in European history,' and was reterritorialized upon a Chinese terrain (Dirlik 1997: 613–14). Dirlik notes that there are tantalizing traces in Mao's philosophy of various traditions in Chinese thought (Dirlik 1997: 611), but any parallels drawn between his Marxism and native traditions are of necessity speculative (Dirlik 1997: 593–615). So what is the role of Chinese thought in the vernacularization or reterritorialization of Marxism upon a Chinese terrain? How are we to understand this process? These questions have not been dealt with satisfactorily in Chinese or English.

2 From Dialectics to *Tong-bian*

To respond to these questions, it is important to address the fundamental issue; that is, certain cosmological assumptions embraced by the Western tradition have resulted in significant differences between Western Marxism and the particular philosophical

current in the Chinese tradition, known as *tong-bian* (通變 continuity through change), which developed independently of Western Marxism. The philosophy of *tong-bian* had tremendous significance in the discourse of 'dialectical materialism', or *bian-zheng weiwu zhuyi* (辯證唯物主義), and facilitated reading Marxist 'dialectics' into a worldview of continuity among all things or events, a worldview devoid of transcendence and order; and the conception of the complementary and contradictory interactions of the two basic elements of the polarity of *yin* and *yang* produce change. This distinct modality of thinking has precluded the dichotomous approaches to issues and the similar difficulties that have attended Western Marxisms.

The kind of correlative polar metaphysics in Chinese Marxism's 'dialectics' (*bian-zheng-fa*), as can also be found in Confucianism's 'polarity', may be traced back to the ancient philosophical text of the *Yi-Jing* (易經 *Classic of Changes*), wherein the functional analogue of the meaning of *bian-zheng* is conveyed in terms of *dao* (道 way), *yi* (易 change), *yin-yang*, and, in particular, *bian-tong* (變通 change with continuity). According to the *Xi-Ci* (繫辭), a commentary transmitted along with the text, 'a door shout may be called an [analogy to] *kun* 坤, and the opening of the door, *qian* 乾. The opening succeeding the shutting may be comprehended as a [case] of *bian* (change); the passing from one of these states to the other may be called *tong* 通 (the constant course of [things or events])' (*Yi-Jing, Xi-Ci*). Moreover, according to the classical texts, 'to comprehend change(s) is [our] affair' (通變之為事); 'transforming and shaping is what we called *bian* (change)' (化而裁之); and 'following and carrying this out is called *tong*' (推而行之). Now the meaning of '*tong*' has changed from 'the constant course of [things or events]' into 'following and carrying it out', which suggests that '*tong*' entails a continuum getting through the changes of the ten thousand things under the sky as well as one getting through humanity's thinking and doing accordingly. These two 'continuums' are interdependent and correlative. This is how the modality of the strand of Chinese thought *tong-bian* establishes itself as a correlative way of thinking.

It is appropriate to suggest an interpretation of the concept *tong-bian* that significantly involves four ideas: (1) Every thing (or event) in the world correlates with another; (2) The manifold and diverse relationships of things (or events) to any other things (or events) are of interconnectedness, and can be viewed as of a basic pattern as *yin* and *yang*, namely, the interaction and interdependence of complementary opposition; (3) It is this basic pattern that ceaselessly brings every thing (or event) in the world into constant change or movement; and (4) Everything is in a process of change and presents itself as a focus-and-field of relationship. Each item is understood as 'this particular focus' which articulates the totality of things from its perspective; and, as of the totality, it focuses totality in its entirety. The totality is itself nothing more than the full ranges of particular foci, each defining itself and its own particular field. In characterizing an item as focal, we are indicating that it inheres in its immediate context in such a manner as to shape and be shaped by that context as field.[1]

It is a way of correlative thinking that tends to preclude the kind of metaphysics, dualisms, ontologies, epistemologies, and even the foundations of objective certainty

itself, which include the Forms of Plato, the will of God, the spirit of Hegel, and the impersonal reason of Kant. For this reason, when Western versions of dialectics are engaged in a dialogue with the style of correlative thinking that developed in the light of *yin-yang* and *tong-bian*, they undergo a process of development which results in their being altered, and call upon the meaning of *xiang-fan-xiang-cheng* (相反相成)*,* that is, 'complementarity in opposition'. If we say, 'the relationship between *yin* and *yang* is *bian-zheng* (辯證) or "dialectical", we are in fact saying that it is *xiang-fan-xiang-cheng.*' Here *xiang-fan-xiang-cheng* and *bian-zheng* ('dialectic') convey exactly the same understanding, that is, '(of two things to) be both opposite and complementary to each other, opposite to each other and yet also complementary to each other'. (*HYCD* 1985: 752).

Dialectics became a worldview and a way of correlative understanding in China's environment. It sensitizes one to the identifiable yet interdependent, interpenetrable, and intertransformable pairs in contradiction, as is symbolized in *yin* and *yang,* or, in Mao Zedong's vocabulary, *mao* (矛 spear) and *dun* (盾 shield).[2] The dynamic interaction between the two in the relationship of complementary opposition makes the inevitability of change both internal and external. This system tends to bear an empirical character and is also a coherent and inclusive modality of philosophical thinking which covers a full range of diverse phenomena and human experience.

For the Chinese, the concerns of *bian-zheng-fa* ('dialectics') are with relationships and change in and among all things and/or events in a manifold, complex, and diverse world, as opposed to anything understood as in Hegel, 'a logic of higher agreement'. It rather uncovers the interaction of complementary opposition, giving a sense of constancy and continuity, inseparability, a contextualized focus, which is always involved in a correlative relationship with other foci in the field.

Moreover, in *tong-bian* the concept 'unity' becomes highly inclusive, and does not necessarily mean 'reconciling' or 'subsuming' various points of view, but rather interdependence, complementarity, or sharing the same field. 'Unity' denotes any kind of relationship in which one thing's (or event's) *becoming* and fleeting existence are a result of the *becoming* and fleeting existence of its opposite. 'Dialectical unity' could thus be understood as coexistence, or mutual *becoming,* or complementarity between any two interdependent things. Wherever a possible relationship could be established between two things or events, the relationship itself already makes sense of 'unity', or we can say, contradiction can also be comprehended to possess the significance of 'unity'.

3 What Dialectics Means in China

Indeed, the Chinese have accepted 'Marxian dialectics' as something similar to their ancient doctrine of *yin* and *yang.* For many influential Chinese intellectuals, 'dialectics' is rather thought as a modality of thinking that brings into focus the full range of changes and interactions that occur in the world. Perhaps Bertell Ollman's view is more comfortable to the Chinese since he states that with dialectics we are made to question what kind of changes are already occurring and what kind of changes are

possible. Many may not deny that everything in the world is changing and interacting at some pace and in one way or another, and that history and systemic connections belong to the real world.[3] But the difficulty is how to convey adequately such a reality so as not to miss or distort the real changes and interactions that we know, and how to give them the attention that they deserve. Dialectics offers a solution to this difficulty insofar as it expands our ideas to include, as aspects of what they are, both the process by which they have become that and the broader interactive context in which they are located (Ollman 1993: 24, 10).

Tradition has played an important role in understanding and representing Marxian dialectics in China. It is necessary to understand the precise cultural particularities that significantly effected China's reception of Marxist thought from the West as well as the historical conditions of the encounter between Western Marxism and the Chinese tradition around the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

4 Marxism from Japan

China's defeat in the 1895 Sino–Japanese War and the failure of the 1898 reform led by Kang Youwei (康有為) can be considered the historical background immediately relevant to the growing interest in orthodox Marxist socialism among Chinese intellectuals before 1917. It is true that Chinese students began to study in Europe and the United States during the early 1870s, but it was only after the Japanese victory in the 1895 Sino–Japanese War that the Chinese government sent a group of thirteen students to study in Tokyo (Ma 1984: 270). Later on there followed a continuous stream of students going to Japan. In 1902, there were more than 650 students from China in Japan, over half of whom provided their own funds. The figure was already greater than the total number of Chinese students studying elsewhere in the world (Bernal 1976: 129). By 1903 the number of students going to Japan had reached 1,300 (Ma 1984: 270). In 1906 there were 13,000 to 14,000 Chinese students in Japan (Li 1971: 108). Among the students were brothers, fathers and sons, husbands and wives, and even whole families. In addition, many reformers and revolutionaries at that time took refuge in Japan, and government officials of different rankings visited Japan for varied reasons (Hiroshi 1980: 58).

Accompanying the stream of Chinese students going to Japan was the encouragement for translating Japanese books into Chinese. By 1900 there had been more than thirty newspapers, journals, and book publishers that assumed large-scale translation activities; the number of books translated from the Japanese language surpassed those from English, French, German, and Russian. It can be well assumed, (1) that the concepts of dialectic and materialism had been introduced into China during a time when a continuous stream of Chinese were going to study in Japan and the Chinese were energetically engaging in 'Xi-Xue' (西學 Western Learning); (2) that the idea of dialectical materialism came to China as part of Marx's theories; (3) that Marxism had been introduced as part of Xi-Xue and, more importantly, as socialism; and (4) that anarchism was introduced as socialism, too, and mingled with Marxism. A striking

characteristic of all that occurred in the introduction of *Xi-Xue* into China was the importance of socialism.

Many important figures were concerned about the social problems in the West and were socialist-oriented. They looked for solutions to problems in China and tried to put theory into practice. Yan Fu noted even in 1895 that scientific progress in the West had led to extreme economic inequality (Li 1971: 4); Kang Youwei's *Da-Tong-Shu* (大同書 The Book of the Great Community) mentions the economic practices in the West and the United States and points out the root of economic ills – the institution of private ownership of property (Li 1971: 4–6). Liang Qichao introduced socialist ideas and terminology through popular writings in *Xin-Min-Cong-Bao* (新民叢報) and set up a publisher to provide translations of books on socialism from Japanese (Li 1971: 10, 13). As Martin Bernal maintains, the period from November 1905 to June 1906 can be considered the highest point of interest in orthodox Marxist socialism among Chinese intellectuals until the 1920s (Bernal 1976: 107). The Chinese believed translating from Japanese was faster and more efficient; both Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao preferred translation from Japanese. The Japanese language is similar to ours; as Kang says, 'The Japanese language is 80 per cent Chinese; therefore, translating books from Japanese takes less effort and time.' (Ma 1984: 249).

5 Socialism and Marx

We do not know exactly when Marxism was first introduced into China, but we do find that under the historical conditions mentioned above, Marx's name and some of his theories were first mentioned in scholarly articles and talks. As Li Yu-ning notes, the first Chinese reference to Western socialism seems to be in an essay by Yan Fu, a famous translator and advocate of social Darwinism, who studied naval science in England between 1877 and 1879 (Li 1971: 3).[4] And, as early as 1899, a Chinese translation of Benjaman Kidd's *Social Evolution* was published in the *Review of the Times*;[5] Marx was mentioned three times, and Engels, once (Qiu 1985: ii).

By general consensus, Liang Qichao had greater influence upon Chinese intellectual development than any other individual during the period between 1898 and 1905. He was definitely among those intellectuals who had first encountered socialist ideas and learned the name of Marx through extensive reading of Western writings. In October 1902, he wrote 'Gan-She-Yu-Fang-Ren' (干涉與放任 On Intervention and *Laissez Faire*). As Bernal comments, Liang's evolutionary scheme in the article 'is similar to the development described by Marx in *The Poverty of Philosophy* by which Kidd appears to have been influenced either directly or indirectly' (Bernal 1976: 93 n. 3).

Ma Zuyi claims that Zhao Bizhen's translation of Fukui Junzo's *Modern Socialism* in 1903 was probably the first comprehensive introduction of Marxism into China (Ma 1984: 277). The book also provides information on how Marx and Engels wrote and completed *The Poverty of Philosophy* (transliterated as *Zi-Zhe-Li-Shang-Suo-Jian-Zhi-Pin-Kun* [自哲理上所見之貧困]), *The Current Situation of the British Working People* (*Ying-Guo-Lao-Dong-She-Hui-Zhi-Zhuang-Tai* 英國勞動社會之狀態), *A Critique of*

Political Economy (*Jing-Ji-Xue-Zhi-Ping-Lun* 經濟學之評論), and *Capital*, which was especially praised as a 'great work of the generation' (*yi-dai zhi da zhu-shu* 一代之大著述) (Ma 1984: 277).

Zhu Zhixin (朱執信) probably pioneered in translating into Chinese the works of Marx and Engels. Zhu was born in Panyu, Guangdong Province. In 1902 he founded *Qun-Zhi-She* (群智社), or the Group Wisdom Association, and raised funds to buy publications of new learning. Afterwards he went to Japan and joined the *Tong-Meng-Hui* (同盟會) there. He was seen as the first person to make an effort to understand Marxism in the publication *Min-Bao* (民報 the People's Paper). After he returned from Japan, Zhu became a revolutionary activist and one of the most important assistants to Sun Yat-sen. In 1920 the warlord in Humen, Guangzhou, executed him (Ma 1984: 280).

As study shows, the year 1903 saw an explosion of information on socialism and Marx in Chinese. By 1918 'historical materialism', 'successive revolutions', 'class struggle', and many other of Marx's terms had already entered Chinese vocabulary. And although during the period of 1908 to 1918 there were few articles introducing Marxism and translations of the works of Marx and Engels, the year 1912 witnessed the earliest translation into Chinese of Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, which was serialized in issues 1 through 7 of *Xin-Shi-Jie* (新世界 the New World). Chinese intellectuals learned more about Marx and Engels from the earliest discussions on the nature of Chinese society from a Marxist standpoint and introduced several themes recurrent in later controversies. Marx's name came up repeatedly in the arguments of intellectuals, which included the earliest and the most famous ones between Liang Qichao and the *Tong-Meng-Hui* in 1904 and among Liu Shifu (劉師復) and Sun Yat-sen, and Jiang Kanghu (江抗虎) in 1913–14.

6 Dialectics and Materialism

Simada Saburo's *A General Critique of Socialism* was among the sources that carried the earliest references to Marxian dialectics; the book gives a rough outline of the dialectical materialist interpretation of history (Bernal 1976: 96). Its Chinese translation was published by the *Zuo-Xin-She* (作新社) of Shanghai in 1903.[6] In addition, the earliest references to dialectics and materialism also include the writings of Liang Qichao. As Bernal states, like all dialectical evolutionists after Hegel, Liang was concerned about the issue of the 'negation of the negation', a basic law of dialectics. Liang discussed the issue in his 'Lun Qiang Quan' (論強權 On Power) in 1899. Liang also introduced Marx's materialism in his article on Kidd in 1902, 'The Theory of Kidd, the Revolutionary Evolutionist'. 'This is the time materialism prevails and idealism dies,' he said. In 1902, Liang wrote 'The Big Events of Changes in Western Academic Thought', which introduces Heraclitus and Promenades. While Promenades discusses '*you*' (有 Being), Heraclitus prefers '*cheng*' (成 Becoming), Liang says. Promenades' theory is that the reality of '*wan-fa*' (萬法 a world of plurality and change) is *yiru* (一如 One Being), that is unchanging, and by contrast, Heraclitus' Becoming is the doctrine of perpetual flux.

The earliest introduction of Western Dialectics included the dialectic of Hegel. Jun Wu's 'The Theory of Hegel, A Giant of Idealism' in *Xin-Min-Cong-Bao* (新民叢報) in 1903 was unquestionably one of the earliest articles on Hegel's philosophy (*XMCB* 1903, No. 27). However, the most systemic introduction to the dialectic of Hegel was found in Cai Yuanpei's 1903 translation from Japanese of a lecture on Western philosophy. Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培1868–1940), who had successfully passed the highest level of the Confucian examination system, became interested in German philosophy and aesthetics, particularly those of Kant. As a young man he was attracted to anarchism and to the free exchange of ideas. The lecture had originally been presented in English by a German professor named Keppel at the University of Liberal Arts in Japan and then translated into Japanese by Shimoda Jiro.[7] The translation was entitled *Zhe-Xue-Yao-Ling* (哲學要領 'Some Essentials of Philosophy'); it had a far more detailed explanation of Western dialectics than anywhere else at the time. An analysis of Cai's Chinese translation of the work demonstrates, however, that when it is translated into Chinese, the discussion becomes a discourse of the strand of *tong-bian* philosophy.

7 Preliminary Reading of 'Dialectics'

As I find it, the preliminary stage of reading dialectics involved elements of *tong-bian* for three reasons: (1) '*bian-zheng*' had been utilized by the Japanese to translate dialectics; (2) what '*bian-zheng*' means structurally differs from dialectics; and (3) the Chinese understood dialectics through '*bian-zheng*', which indeed entailed *tong-bian*. Therefore it suffices to say that in the historical process of Western dialectics being ushered into China from the Japanese language there involved a change from a Western conceptual thinking into a style of Chinese correlative thinking, a change fundamental and structural to the worldview and cosmological consumptions of the West.

Like all Chinese concepts, *bian-zheng* is explained with events or analogical relations in Chinese lexicons. It consists of two characters, *bian* (辯) and *zheng* (証), which are implicated in analogical relations with other related characters, involving the association of images or image clusters related by meaningful disposition. They are indeed not 'conceptual' but particular images. As the priority of process over fixed form is evident in classical Chinese, the notion of *bian* (argue) is often translated variously as concrete events: (a) to argue, dispute, debate, contend, and *qiao-yan* (巧言 talk resourcefully); (b) to cause people to listen with appropriate and straightforward remarks; (c) to talk as regards rules, things not appropriate or something that people can do accordingly; and (d) to present convincing remarks in front of the head of the masses (*ren-jun* 人君), suggesting that one acts appropriately and exemplarily;[8] and *zheng* may also suggest attracting people to listen to right talk, or talk as regards rules, un-wrongdoing, or something people can do accordingly;[9] and yet, *zheng* is supposed to indicate *jian* (諫), which more directly means 'to present convincing remarks to the head of the masses, and that he acts appropriately and exemplarily'.[10]

In exploring the way in which the Chinese read dialectics for the first time through '*bian-zheng*' and adopted the Japanese usage of '*bian-zheng*,' we find that the

Xin-Er-Ya (新爾雅) was one of the dictionaries around the turn of the nineteenth century which had the earliest entries of Western philosophical and sociological terminology, including 'dialectics' and 'materialism'. The *Xin-Er-Ya* is very important as an indication that at the turn of the nineteenth century the Japanese *kanji* translation of Western terminology permeated the writings of many Chinese intellectuals, comprising a substantial part of their vocabulary. In the lexicon, the Chinese for dialectics was *bian-zheng*, which had existed in classical language and still carried its classical meaning.

An examination of the key terms relevant to the development of a Chinese version of 'dialectics' shows in the works of Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei, among others, a preliminary reading of the Western concept of dialectics through the eye of *tong-bian*. The Chinese expressions *you* (有), *wu* (無), *cheng* (成), *wan-fa* (萬法), *ze* (則), *xiang* (象), etc. were employed in translating the concepts of 'being', 'not-being', 'becoming', 'the world of plurality and change', 'law or rule', 'form', etc. in Liang's writings. In utilizing these Chinese expressions Liang brought in with them a worldview and way of thinking that articulated a structure that was no longer the same as that of the original concepts but entailed the elements of *tong-bian*. For example, to introduce Promenades' theory that the reality of a world of plurality and change is One Being, Liang says that the actuality (*shi-zai* 實在) of 10,000 things (*wan-fa*) entails a continuity and *so-ingness* (*yi-ru* 一如).[11]

Another example. Hegel's dialectics in Cai Yuanpei's translation of the lecture in 1903 employed the dyadic pairs *jing-dong* (靜動) and *you-wu* (有無) as equivalents for stillness/motion, and being/not being. Thus, the two pairs are rendered in a way that is outside the conceptual inventory of a host of disjunctive concepts. *Jing-dong* wards off the sense of an end or aim (*telos*), as it exists in 'stillness/motion', and transcends the natural world. *Jing-dong* is a non-dualistic category in which 'stillness' and 'motion' are a shared continuum and differ from each other in degree rather than in kind. It is interesting that Cai used *tai-ji* (太極) as an equivalent for synthesis in his description of Hegel's dialectics as mutual opposite and thesis, mutual combining and integrating (*di-xiang-fan-zheng*, *di-xiang-jie-he* 遞相反正遞相結合), and thus, an endless *yin-yang* process of opposing and combining, which brings forth *wu-ji* (無極), a harmony and great continuity. What Cai has presented is indeed a distinctive Chinese acosmotic worldview. In fact, there were differences in Cai's translation from the original meaning of Hegel's dialectics simply because of the fact that his translation employed Chinese character-clusters or compounds in referring to (or in representing) Hegel's original concepts; and the differences were further reinforced because of the Chinese sentence structures and grammar of the newly reproduced text.

8 Qu Qiubai's Reading of Dialectical Materialism

Serious discussions on and transmission of Marxism in China started after the 1917 Russian Revolution and lasted well into the late 1930s. Initially, the debates over historical materialism arose after the publication of the special issue of *Xin-Qing-Nian*

(新青年) in 1919,[12] and then the translation of dialectical materialism from Russian in the 1920s and 1930s included Qu Qiubai's lectures in Shanghai.

Initially, the intellectual vitality was due in large part to the activities of Li Dazhao, Chen Boxian, Hu Hanmin,[13] and Chen Du-xiu (陳獨秀). Marxist theories of historical materialism and economics were systematically introduced and discussed for the first time. It is worthwhile noting that the Chinese intellectuals either did not pay much attention to the deterministic pattern of historian change or pointed out that superstructure and economic base should affect each other. Chinese Marxists adopted the theories of historical materialism based upon a most undogmatic and flexible reading (Luk 1990: 23, 26).

Qu Qiubai first enlightened the Chinese with the theories of dialectical materialism and made the greatest contribution to the earliest introduction of Marx's philosophy. He was born in Changzhou, Jiangsu in 1899. In October 1920, he was dispatched as a special correspondent for *Morning News* (*Chen-Bao* 晨報) to work in the Soviet Union, to send back direct reports on the first country that was run by Communists. The stories he wrote in the more than two years of his stay in the Soviet Union were so impressive that they exerted a tremendous influence on the Chinese intelligentsia. After his return to China at the beginning of 1923, Qu became an enthusiastic advocate of historical materialism and also the first teacher of dialectical materialism in China. As he said, he would like to let the Chinese know that Marxism was not limited to historical materialism and the theory of political economy (Luk 1990: 95). And he did become the one who wrote more than anyone else on the issues of dialectic in the 1920s. From 1923 to 1924, as a lecturer at the Shanghai University and for the Shanghai Summer Study Program (Shanghai Xia-Ling Jiang-Xue-Hui 上海夏令講學會), Qu presented his reading of the dialectics of Marxism mainly in the form of lecture handouts. In his seminal lectures, he demonstrated great intelligence in attempting to make the philosophical issues of the Western tradition understandable to his Chinese students by using classical expressions rather than inventing terms or borrowing words from other languages. In the same period, as a pioneer in encountering the revolutionary thought of the West, he also developed – based upon his lecture handouts – his understanding of the dialectics of Marx (or Marxism), which was epitomized in such works as 'Zi-You-Shi-Jie-Yu-Bi-Ran-Shi-Jie' (自由世界與必然世界 The Realms of Freedom and Necessity) (*XQN* 1923: No. 2), 'She-Hui-Zhe-Xue-Gai-Lun' (社會哲學概論 Outline of Social Philosophy) (1923),[14] 'Xian-Dai-She-Hui-Xue' (現代社會學 Modern Sociology) (1924), 'She-Hui-Ke-Xue-Gai-Lun' (社會科學概論 An Outline of Social Science) (1924),[15] 'Shi-Yan-Zhu-Yi-Yu-Ge-Ming-Zhe-Xue' (實用主義與革命哲學 Pragmatism and Revolutionary Philosophy) (*XQN* 1924: No. 3), 'Wei-Wu-Lun-De-Yu-Zhou-Guan-Gai-Shuo' (唯物論的宇宙觀概說 Outline of Materialistic Cosmology) (1926), and 'Ma-Ke-Si-Zhu-Yi-Zhi-Yi-Yi' (馬克思主義之意義 The Significance of Marxism) (1926).[16] Qu also translated Gorrief's *Materialism: The Proletariat Philosophy* (無產階級之哲學 – 唯物論) in 1926.[17]

What Qu found in 'dialectical materialism' was something similar to the style of *tong-bian* in the Chinese tradition. To a Western scholar, Qu's reception may be rather superficial in his introduction and discussion of Marxist philosophy. Yet this is where

we gain an understanding of why, in comparison with other schools of thought in the West, Marxism provided an opportunity to be engaged in conversation while not colliding with its Chinese counterpart. And, this is also where things get interesting – this is the beginning of the conversation in which a very *Chinese* version of Marxism was developed.

Our sensitivity ought to be aroused by the fact that Qu was Chinese and came to a reading of all the texts of dialectical materialism he had access to through the eyes of his own Chinese experience and cultural tradition. Qu was very learned at the age of twenty; he had diligently studied classical philosophers, particularly Lao Zi (老子) and Zhuang Zi (莊子) (*YQB* 1981: 107). He even had a substantial command of *Shuo-Wen* (說文), a classical lexicon. And yet, he cherished an obvious sense of being Chinese. Judging from Qu's deep roots in Chinese tradition – his knowledge, his skillfulness in using Chinese language, and particularly his awareness of being Chinese – one would not have difficulty in assuming that Qu gained his understanding of Western ideas from the perspective of Chinese tradition and his own experience and culture, and in particular through the eyes of Chinese correlative thinking *tong-bian*. Qu thus developed a very *Chinese* version of 'dialectical materialism', or 'Marxist philosophy' at the very beginning of his discussion. In this version, the causality formula 'whenever this, then that' with regard to economic base and superstructure was precluded, and the determining and determined, thought and matter, agent and act, the objective and subjective, epistemological and ontological, and so on, have all become correlative and entail each other, or *tong* (getting through) to each other.

The Chinese characters that Qu used as a translation for 'dialectical materialism' were *hu-bian-fa-wei-wu-lun* (互變法唯物論), or a mutual-changing view of materialism, which is, in fact, a modern expression of *tong-bian*. And yet, *gui-lü* (規律 law), *dong-lü* (動律 law of motion), *xian-suo* (線索 clue), *yuan-yin* (原因 causality), *lian-xi* (聯系 link), or *guan-xi* (關係 connection), *luo-ji* (邏輯 logic), *ying-xiang* (影響 influence or impact), and so on, can all be understood as alternate channels or expressions of *dao*; *xi-tong* (系統) or *ti-xi* (體系 systems) exemplifies continuity; *she-hui* (社會 society), mutual movement (互動 *hu-dong*); and *xian-xiang* (現象 phenomenon), concrete images or events. Moreover, *shu-liang-zhi-liang-de-hu-bian* (數量質量的互變 the mutual change of quantity and quality), *fou-ding-zhi-fou-ding* (否定之否定 negation of the negation), and *zheng-ti-fan-ti-he-ti* (正題反題合題 thesis–antithesis–synthesis) are more easily comprehensible as denoting alternate characterizations of the functional analogue of a door's opening and shutting: 'quantity' as referring to continuity between opening and shutting, 'quality', as either opening or shutting, and 'dialectical', or 'mutual changing', in Qu's term, as succession and alteration of opening and shutting. For opening, shutting is a 'negation', and vice versa; and opening and shutting make a 'negation of the negation' to each other. 'Negation of the negation' may refer to the succession and alteration of the door's opening and shutting, whereby either opening or shutting of the door can be seen as a 'synthesis', each as an 'antithesis' of the other, and 'synthesis' as referring to the continuity between opening and shutting. Qu's modern discourse of dialectical materialism reflects the traditional one that explains all changes in terms of *yin* and *yang* in the *Yi-Jing*. Large portions of Qu's

discussion on dialectical materialism provide explanations of specific issues in social, economic, political, and cosmological processes, are ingrained in conceptual polarities and interaction of complementary contrasts. He presents dialectical materialism as a worldview in which everything and every event in the world and society is in the midst of floating, changing, alternating, and mutually *becoming* (Qu 1988, vol. 2: 354). Nothing is static and unchangeable with a predetermined form. Everything is a *becoming* process (Qu 1988, vol. 2: 450). All aspects of social life change constantly (Qu 1988, vol. 2: 453).

9 Making Dialectical Materialism Understandable in China

Following Qu Qiubai's first systematic reading of dialectical materialism between 1923 and 1927, Ai Siqi became the most prominent of the leading popularizers of Marxian dialectics in the 1930s. There were also many other figures involved in this important historical campaign of transmitting Marxist philosophy into China as intellectuals looked to Western ideas to help with the problems in China.

As Guo Zhanbo recorded, 'there was a boom of studying social sciences in 1927, in which dialectical materialism rose to prominence' (Guo 1965: 384). Rapidly, 'Marxism or dialectical materialism, as it was commonly referred to, emerged as the defining feature of modern Chinese thought in the early 20th century' (Guo 1965: 196). In those days, dialectical materialism was popularly called the 'new philosophy', representing the beginning of a new chapter of Chinese philosophy. As He Lin states, dialectical materialism 'was in vogue for about ten years between 1927 and 1937 … almost all the promising young intellectuals were influenced by the trend of thought … the translations from Japanese congested every bookstore; and the new thought almost poured into the mind of all young intellectuals' (He 1947: 72).

According to Huang Jiande, approximately forty new titles of the works of Marx and Engels were published between 1928 and 1930, which included Engels's *Anti-Dühring*, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, and *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*. Later on came translations of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* and Hegel's *Logic*, plus those that had already been published in earlier years, that is, *The Communist Manifesto*, *A Critique of the Gotha Programme*, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, and Lenin's *State and Revolution*. As Huang Jiande claims, the major philosophical works by Marx, Engels, and Lenin had been translated into Chinese (Huang 1991: 476).[18] As Y.T. Wu reports, 'Five-sevenths of the works on social science published from 1928 to 1930' (or 50 per cent of the 400 books published) were 'related one way or another to Marxism and dialectical materialism' (Wu 1931: 265). The voluminous translations from Russian, Japanese, and German of Marxist philosophy also included works by Plekhanov, Kawakami Hajime, Deborin, and especially those written by the younger generation of Soviet Marxists.

In this situation there came the problem of how to make dialectical materialism understandable to the Chinese audience. Guo Moruo (郭沫若 1892-1978, historian) was a pioneer in looking for dialectics in classical Chinese philosophy. In his 'The Historical and Cultural Settings of the Classic *Zhou-Yi*' (周易), Guo claimed that he

had discovered forms of dialectical thought in ancient Chinese literature. In addition, Zhang Jitong, Li Shicen, Chen Baoyin, and Guo Zhanbo were all well-known scholars engaged in exploring Chinese *bian-zheng-fa* (dialectics) in the philosophical classics of the pre-Qin dynasty period (ca 2100–221 BCE). The *Yi-Jing*, *Lao-Zi*, and *Zhuang-Zi* were found to be exemplary works of *bian-zheng-fa* (dialectics) in the Chinese philosophical tradition (Guo 1965: 265). The many important individuals who dedicated abundant time to the campaign of making dialectical materialism understandable in China include firstly those who had once contributed to the rise of Hegel Studies in China and then Li Da, Wu Liangping, Shen Zhiyuan, Zhang Ruxin, Chen Weishi, and, of course, Ai Siqi.

Ai Siqi played a major role in the later debate with Ye Qing, which followed the one between Zhang Dongsun and Ye Qing, ending in 1936. He published several rebuttal essays to Ye. In 1937 Ai included these essays in a collection entitled *Philosophy and Life*, which had a long article responding to Ye's condemnation of his *Talks on Philosophy* in 1936. These polemics demonstrated the interest and curiosity many Chinese intellectuals had about the New Philosophy at that time. The debates drew tremendous attention from the nationwide campaign of transmitting dialectical materialism.

Li Da (李達 1890–1966) should be the first to be mentioned as one of the major figures that made a substantial amount of Russian literature on dialectical materialism available in China. As a young intellectual, he received sponsorship from the government to study in Japan in 1913. Li was heavily influenced by leftist thought and Marxism after the 1917 Russian Revolution and became one of the earliest Chinese Marxists. On his second trip to Japan in 1919, Li was passionately thirsty for Marxist ideas. He translated from Japanese *An Introduction to Historical Materialism* (*Wei-Wu-Shi-Guan-Jie-Shuo* 唯物史觀介說), *A Comprehensive View on Social Issues* (*She-Hui-Wen-Ti-Zong-Lan* 社會問題綜覽), *The Economic Theory of Marx* (*Ma-Ke-Si-Jing-Ji-Xue-Shuo* 馬克思經濟學說), etc. (Li 1980: iv).[19] He joined the editorial staff of the well-known *New Youth*, when it became the official journal of the Communist Party in August 1921.

With the invitation of Mao Zedong in 1922, Li, as the President of the Self-Education University in Hunan, lectured on Historical Materialism, the Surplus Value Theory, and Scientific Socialism, which were then considered the basic components of Marxist thought. Li also compiled teaching material entitled *Ma-Ke-Si-Zhu-Yi-Ming-Ci-Jie-Shi* (馬克思主義名詞解釋 The Terminology of Marxism) and wrote a book entitled *Modern Sociology* (現代社會學) published in 1926. In the book he discussed historical materialism and basic principles of scientific socialism. His other works included one of the earliest Chinese translations of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (*De-Guo-Lao-Dong-Dang-Gang-Ling-Lan-Wai-Pi-Ping*) between 1922 and 1923 (Li 1980: xi).

In 1928 Li and his friend Deng Chumin opened a press named Kun-Lun (崑崙) in Shanghai and in 1932 he opened there a second one called Bi-Geng-Tang (筆耕堂) under his wife's name. The two presses published many titles on Marxism; and in this period, either in collaboration with others or by himself, Li was

engaged in translating five works on dialectical materialism, including Sugiyama Shigeru's *A General Introduction to Social Sciences* (*She-Hui-Xue-Gai-Lun* 社會學概論), Thalheimer's *Modern World View* (*Xian-Dai-Shi-Jie-Guan* 現代世界觀), Kawakami Hajime's *A Rudimentary Reading of Marxist Economic Theory* (*Ma-Ke-Si-Zhu-Yi-Jing-Ji-Xue-Ji-Chu-Li-Lun* 馬克思主義經濟學基礎理論), Soviet writer E.K. Lupel's[20] *The Fundamental Issues of Social Science: Theoretical and Practical* (*Li-Lun-Yu-Shi-Jian-De-She-Hui-Ke-Xue- Gen-Ben-Wen-Ti* 理論與實踐的社會科學根本問題), and *Teaching Material of Dialectical Materialism* (*Bian-Zheng-Wei-Wu-Lun-Jiao-Cheng* 辯證唯物論教程), which, authored by the younger school of Soviet philosophers headed by Shirokov, systematically expounds dialectical materialism based upon the doctrines of Marx and Lenin, attempting a comprehensive understanding of theory and praxis, and philosophy and politics. *Teaching Material of Dialectical Materialism* had an enormous impact on his own later writings, such as *Outlines of Social Studies* (*She-Hui-Xue-Da-Gang* 社會學大綱), and also on Mao Zedong's speech 'The Teaching Outlines of Dialectical Materialism' in 1937. Mao's speech contained the original versions of Mao's 'On Contradictions' and 'On Practice'.

Li Da became well known for his introduction of Marxist philosophy and his works were widely read by Chinese intellectuals. He was twice invited to give lectures on dialectical and historical materialism to Feng Yuxiang, a well-known Anti-Japanese Commander of the Guomindang Army at Mt. Tai, Shandong in May 1932 and September 1939. Li also lectured on Marxist philosophy in Beijing and Shanghai between August 1932 and 1937. Li was particularly well received for his *Outlines of Social Studies* in 1935 (Huang 1991: 482 n.),[21] which was a weighty tome of more than 800 pages and more than 470,000 Chinese characters, which gave a complete account of the materialist conception of history and dialectical materialism.[22] Mao Zedong read Li's book enthusiastically and recommended it to the Yan-an Philosophical Study Group and Anti-Japanese Military and Political University. He wrote to ask Li to send ten more copies to him (Guo 1965: 34), pointing out that the work was very valuable and was the first textbook of Marxism that had ever been written by a Chinese; and Mao praised Li as 'a true man' (*zhen-zheng-de-ren* 真正的人) (Zeng 1991: 190).

From the early 1930s many intellectuals may have been attracted to the Communist Party for intellectual reasons. Through debates in the underground and semi-underground press in Shanghai, intellectuals for the first time began to discuss with sophistication the issues of Marxism and dialectical materialism.

Other exponents of dalectical materialism also include Wu Liangping, Zhang Ruxin, Zhang Weishi, Shen Zhiyuan, and Chen Weishi. Wu translated Marx's *Civil War in France*, Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, and Lenin's *Two Strategies* and *State and Revolution* even before 1929.[23] He also made the first complete Chinese translation of Engels's *Anti-Dühring*, and translated and edited *Dialectical Materialism and Materialist View on History* from Russian texts in 1930. Zhang Ruxin edited four books: *Wu-Chan-Jie-Ji-De-Zhe-Xue* (無產階級的哲學 The Philosophy of the Proletariat), *Bian-Zheng-Fa-Xue-Shuo-Gai-Lue* (辯證法學說概略 A General Introduction to the Theory of Dialectical Materialism), *Su-E-Zhe-Xue-Chao-Liu-Gai-Lun* (蘇俄哲學潮

流概論 A General Introduction to Philosophical Schools of Soviet Russia), and *Zhe-Xue-Gai-Lun* (哲學概論 Outlines of Philosophy).

Shen Zhiyuan had been a translator and editor at the Office of Translating and Editing Chinese Books and Periodicals affiliated to the Comintern and later on became a specialist in the dialectics of both Hegel and Marx. He translated and wrote many books and essays on political economy, philosophy, and Hegel's dialectic, including a translation of Mark Mitin's *Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism* between 1936 and 1938; this work contains 720,000 Chinese characters; volume I of the book had been printed eighteen times, and volume II thirteen times by 1950. Shen had written 'Su-E-Zhe-Xue-Si-Chao-Zhi-Jian-Tao' (A Survey of Philosophical Trends in Soviet Russia) even earlier in 1934. However, what specially interests us is his energetic role in the popularizing drive of dialectical materialism. For Shen, dialectical materialism was a kind of philosophy that could serve as a guide for the masses in everyday life and in their social practices. Popularizing dialectical materialism means to explain concisely the complicated theories to friends among the common people, who worked hard from morning till night, but had little money for books and time for reading. In 1933 Shen compiled one of the earliest dictionaries of dialectical materialism *Xin-Zhe-Xue-Ci-Dian* (新哲學辭典 A New Philosophy Dictionary) and prepared a popular pamphlet, *Basic Issues of Modern Philosophy*, in 1936. Shen became one of the strongest allies of Ai Siqi and joined him in the polemic against Ye Qing (*DSSH* 1936, vol. 1, No. 5).

We may consider Chen Weishi the most important popularizer of dialectical materialism apart from Ai Siqi. Between 1936 and 1937, he wrote for the popular journal *Du-Shu-Sheng-Huo* (*Reader's Life*) and also published *Tong-Su-Bian-Zheng-Fa-Jiang-Hua* (通俗辯證法講話 A Talk on Vulgarizing Dialectics), *Tong-Su-Wei-Wu-Lun-Jiang-Hua* (通俗唯物論講話 Talks on Vulgar Materialism), *Xin-Zhe-Xue-Ti-Xi-Jiang-Hua* (新哲學體系講話 Talks on the Systems of New Philosophy), and *Xin-Zhe-Xue-Shi-Jie-Guan-Jiang-Hua* (新哲學世界觀講話 Talks on the World View of New Philosophy). His *Tong-Su-Bian-Zheng-Fa* was reprinted three times in four months after it was first published in June 1936 and still reprinted secretly in Beijing after the Guomindang government banned the book.

We ought to pay attention particularly to the fact that all these intellectuals made great efforts to make Marxism understandable to the Chinese audience apparently based upon a comprehension of dialectical concepts from the perspective of classic Chinese thought. For example, in Shen's reading of dialectical materialism, 'the unity of opposites means mutually going through each other' (*hu-xiang-guan-chuan* 互相貫穿) as well as mutually struggling against each other, and is the source of self-moving and self-developing. For him, the internal driving power is caused by two internal contradictions and gives rise to internal impetus of development; and the law of reciprocally qualitative and quantitative changes discloses the process of development itself, including its particular qualitative stage and sudden bouncing as a style of revolutionary process, that suggests a suspension of continuity (*lian-xu: jian-bian* 連續:漸變) as well as the inseparable mutual relationship between quality and quantity. In addition, 'the negation of negation' may even more deepen our comprehension of

a developing process (Huang *et al.* 1991: 502). As for Chen Weishi, like Guo Moruo and others, he also includes in his book a special chapter dealing with the dialectic in Chinese tradition. He examined diligently various historical schools of thought and regarded highly the *Yi-Jing*, *Lao-Zi*, and *Zhuang-Zi* as rich sources of dialectic in Chinese tradition. He claimed that these classical texts contain a well-developed discourse of dialectics, which deserves our admiration (Huang *et al.* 1991: 518)

10 Ai Siqi: Sinicizing Dialectical Materialism

We can well agree that Ai's conception of dialectical materialism was derived from Engels and Russian literature. However, like many, what he found in it was something similar to *tong-bian*. An examination of the differences between the English terminology and the Chinese translation suggests that dialectical materialism has become *tong-bian* even beginning with the process of translation as it was first introduced to China, and it became even closer to *tong-bian* as Ai employs Chinese philosophical expressions in his explanation. This had been an ongoing process particularly in the campaign of the 'Sinification of Marxism' and in Ai's case of both Sinification and popularization.

The first time Ai presented a popularized and concise form of dialectical materialism and historical materialism was in 1929 when he published over a dozen essays in the *Yun-Nan-Min-Zhong-Ri-Bao* (雲南民眾日報 Yunnan People's Daily). He resumed the work of popularizing dialectical materialism after his return from Japan. He published the *Chou-Xiang-Zuo-Yong-Yu-Bian-Zheng-Fa* (抽象作用與辯證法 The Use of Abstractions and the Dialectical Method) in Shanghai in 1933 (*ZL* 1933, June 1). His endeavor became extremely successful as he wrote twenty-four 'talks' on philosophy to compose an exposition of dialectical materialism between 1934 and 1935, which became popular rapidly and turned out to be a commemorative milestone in the campaign of Chinese dialectical materialism. Ai demonstrated great intelligence; virtually all his articles and speeches sought to explain the complexities of philosophical analysis and the categories of thought to the common people.

Translating was another important part of Ai's effort to popularize Marxist philosophy, which included a selection of the correspondence between Marx and Engels. It came out in 1934 and was enlarged and reprinted in 1951 and 1962. He joined Zheng Yili in translating the entry on 'dialectical materialism' from the *Bol'shaia Sovietskaia Entsklopediia* (*Great Soviet Encyclopedia*), which was published with the Chinese title *Xin-Zhe-Xue-Da-Gang* (新哲學大綱 An Outline of the New Philosophy). It came out as a 450-page tome that hit the bookstores in Shanghai and elsewhere in June 1936 (Fogel 1987: 26). It is interesting to note that he and Zheng relied heavily on the Japanese translation as well as the original Russian text. The year also witnessed the publication of two more of his books, *Xin-Zhe-Xue-Lun-Ji* (新哲學論集 A Collection of Essays on the New Philosophy) and *Sixiang fangfalun* (思想方法論 Methodology of Thought). In April 1937, another essay collection of Ai, *Zhe-Xue-Yu-Sheng-Huo* (哲學與生活 Philosophy and Life), was published. *Philosophy and Life*

caught the eye of Mao Zedong, who was then far off in northwest China. Mao not only read but also wrote down a great number of notations on Ai's book in September 1937. Mao regarded the book highly, as attested by a letter of congratulation he wrote to Ai, in which he related that he had copied a number of passages from the book. He complimented Ai that his work was so profound that he had learned a lot from reading it.[24]

Ai was a lifetime popularizer of dialectical materialism. He wrote more than twenty books and approximately 300 essays and speeches. All of his works suggest his effort to effectively make the complexities and jargons of philosophical thought understandable to the common people. Since the Party had sent him to Yan'an in 1937, Ai had virtually become an official thinker of the Party.

Ai denied that philosophy was a highbrow enterprise. He often tells his readers that philosophy is no mystery but a continuity of life (Ai 1981, vol. 1: 135), and explains that popularization could not rely on abstractions but had to be concrete with clear links to real life (Ai 1979: 278–80). Philosophy starts to grow in the soil of everyday life; it is not something mysterious or abstruse but lays everywhere and all the time in details of everyday life. Philosophy should be constantly applied to and proved mutually with practical life. In order to understand a philosophy, just start from recognizing traits of philosophy and understanding life (Ai 1981, vol. 1: 135).

Ai's approach to popularizing dialectical materialism involves repeatedly using commonsensical or everyday life expressions and examples; he stresses application and applicability, specifying concept with concrete content, and establishment of continuity between theory and practice. Ai often changes terms that are more abstract into specific expressions. He cites examples in order to render abstract concepts with concrete meanings. He analyzes specific examples, giving philosophical concepts historical relevance. As Father Brière comments, Ai shows his unique talent in the deed; he had mastered an appropriate way of making Marxist–Leninist philosophy accessible to virtually anyone who could read (Brière 1965: 78–9).

Ai argues that one cannot use a concept but ignore 'the stuff it represents'. Ai's popularizing of dialectical materialism undergoes a process in which he specifies and reorders the content of concepts thereby establishing continuity between philosophical concepts and actuality. He accomplishes this by drawing on new and historical events, citing examples, and fortifying images to make philosophical terminology, which has been translated into Chinese from Western languages, obtain the full meanings that the common people have in their daily life. Many key Western concepts have undergone such a process of Chinese translation and become Chinese terminology, which symbolizes concrete images and events out of Chinese circumstances. In the process of Ai's popularization the concepts were explained with even more concrete images and events of new and specific historical circumstances. Hence, the strand of 'dialectical materialism' obtained rich Chinese significance and turned out to be very different than what looks like the Chinese analogue. It was no longer exactly the same inherited legacy of Marxian dialectics as in the West.

What particularly leads to Ai's 'dialectical materialism' being different from Engels and Russian Marxist literature is the so-called 'Sinification of Marxism' campaign in

1938 and over the 'Rectification Campaign' in 1942, which legitimized a popularization of Marxism in China. The rise of Sinifying Marxism probably started with Mao who eventually pointed out that:

> Marxism must be made engaged with the specific and particular of Chinese situation and come to fruition in specific forms of the nation. The great power of Marxism–Leninism lies in its continuity with the revolutionary practices in various countries. For Chinese Communists, [we] must learn how to apply the theories of Marxism–Leninism to specific situations in China … To make Marxism particularized, let it possess natures that are necessarily and particularly Chinese in each circumstance … This means, use Marxism in accordance with Chinese particularities. We must substitute doctrinism with forms that are popular to common people, and with Chinese styles and endowment (Mao 1968: 449–500).

What does 'Sinification of Marxism' mean? As Ai holds, in principle, there are two points: firstly, a good command of the philosophical thoughts of the Chinese tradition and their modalities; and secondly, a good awareness of our experiences and lessons in Anti-Japanese War practices (Ai 1981, vol. 1: 420). It is made even more clear in Ai's 'Comments on Several Important Philosophical Trends since the Anti-Japanese War' (Ai 1981, vol. 1: 563). He points out that an important aspect in Sinifying Marxist philosophy and using it in practice is 'to study China's own philosophy and further develop the elements of "materialism and dialectic" in our own tradition' (Ai 1981, vol. 1: 556). Here what Ai calls 'the elements of "materialism and dialectic" in our own tradition' may sufficiently be referred to the strand of *tong-bian* thought. In his 'Yan-Jiu-Ti-Gang' (研究提綱 'An Outline for Study') attached to the Chinese translation of Mitin's *Dialectical Materialism* as a guideline for the study of dialectical materialism, Ai clearly advises his readers that there is a rich heritage of 'materialism and dialectics' that grew naturally from China's own philosophical tradition; that is, Marxist philosophy has roots (precisely, continuity) in the Chinese thoughts of those thinkers like Lao Zi and Mo Zi (Ai 1939: 449). In Ai's view, there are some basic points of the kind of 'materialism' that has naturally grown in Chinese tradition; that is, the guest (*ke-guan* 客觀, or objective) world is regarded as an existence that is *self-so-ing* (*zi-ran* 自然) and *coming-from-itself* (*ben-yuan* 本源); a comprehension of the existence of the objective world, and connections as well as changes in things, does not require the principle in terms of the role of any spiritual being, soul, or other spirit-like entities; and the basic attitude of 'dialectic' is to comprehend things as changing and continuous (with each other) (Ai 1939, 447).

As for 'principles' of 'dialectic', there was Lao Zi in China, whose '*zi-ran*' (*self-so-ingness*) meant *zhou-xing-er-bu-dai* (周行而不殆 that [dao] revolves without pause); *dong-er-yu-chu* (動而愈出 that it moves, reproducing without a rest); and (as a principle of 'dialectic') that comprehending continuity in changes in light of the continuity of the opposites (pairing aspects) in things. As Lao Zi indicates, '*fan-zhe-dao-zhi-dong*' (反者道之動 returning is what *dao* does as moving), '*you-wu-xiang-sheng*,

nan-yi-xiang-cheng' (有無相生，難易相成 Nothing and something grow from each other, difficultness and easiness are *becoming*-each-other), etc.' (Ai 1939: 447).

In Ai's discussion of the three laws of dialectic logic, there is a change in the order of the three laws. While for Engels, the transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa goes first, the interpenetration of opposites, second; this order is switched in Ai's *Talks*, with the unity of contradiction first, and the mutual change between quality and quantity second. This certainly shows that a *tong-bian* reading requires that 'the unity of contradiction' goes first; and this is in a sense a rejection of the order set by Engels. In addition, beyond Engels's schematic picture of the law of the unity of contradiction, Ai indeed assumes a discussion on 'internal changes'; he contests that external change is merely mechanical whereas internal change is substantive. Ai does not seem interested in Engels's view of the penetrating of opposites as change of place consisting in approaching or separating when two bodies act on each other, nor as 'contracting or expanding', nor as 'attracting or repulsion'. Little can be found that can be identified with Engels's law of unity of contradiction in which all motion consists in the interplay of attraction and repulsion, and the form of motion conceived as repulsion is the same as that which modern physics terms 'energy'. It is in the enterprise of either obtaining a *tong-bian* reading or leaving some elements in oblivion or rejecting the views in Engels and Russian texts that sound too alien that Ai contributed to the development of a Chinese version of Marxism, which came later to fruition in Mao Zedong.

11 The Fruition of Dialectical Materialism in Mao Zedong

In the engagement of dialectical materialism with the thought of *tong-bian* of the Chinese tradition, which involved thousands of Chinese intellectuals and translations of voluminous foreign literature, a Chinese version of Marxism eventually developed. It came to fruition in Mao Zedong. As we review this process, we find Mao's infatuation with philosophy, starting in the 1930s, involved a voracious consumption of texts, almost entirely in Chinese translation. He read widely the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, but paid most attention to the texts of a number of Soviet and Chinese authors like Mitin, Shirokov, Li Da, and Ai Siqi. For this reason, Mao's view of dialectical materialism might have been heavily contaminated with positivism and dualism since he had gained his knowledge mostly from Russian texts, which are full of terms and formulas of Soviet orthodox Marxism. Nevertheless, simply on the contrary, Mao identifies many elements in dialectical materialism with *tong-bian* and appeals to classical Chinese expressions in his reading.

Mao demonstrates even stronger Chinese characteristics than Qu Qiubai and Ai Siqi; and perhaps is far more sophisticated in Chinese history and philosophy. He is convinced that there is a continuity between dialectical materialism and the kind of *tong-bian* in ancient Chinese thinkers. This may explain why he does not entirely accept whatever is in foreign literature. For instance, he is very critical of Stalin's view. For him, Stalin is quite '*xing-er-shang-xue*' (形而上學) for he does not understand that there is continuity between opposites.[25] Mao has his own version of 'dialectical

materialism', which makes an enterprise of seeking continuity between differences or changes. His discourse develops into a new phase of the traditional strand of *tong-bian* in modern times, but with Marxist terminology. The maturity and sophistication of this new phase of *tong-bian*, or Chinese version of Marxism, is betrayed in the fact that Mao is not only an advocate but also a performer of his theories. His thought clearly informs his practices. His new version of dialectical materialism does not only constitute his own thought but also becomes a major thinking modality for the general theoretical realm of Chinese Marxism. It is his thought that shapes the Chinese revolution and leads it to victory.

Mao's version of Marxism is saturated with correlative thinking. Although he does not formulate a view that has in some way 'recovered Marx' from second International Marxists, Leninists, and Stalinists, we do see that on certain points Mao seems close to Marx, and thus that there is a conversation between them. For instance, neither Marx nor Mao are materialists in Engels's category, and they have a similar view of 'internal relations'. In Ollman's (1993: 337) reading, Marx's dialectic is categorized as the philosophy of internal relations that does not allow absolute distinctions between society and the natural world, which is similar to Mao's.

Mao had not been able to read any Marxist literature in a foreign language until he read the English version of *The Communist Manifesto* at the age of sixty-three, even though he did study English as early as 1920.[26] He read the *Manifesto*; *A Critique of the Gotha Programme*; *The Preface to the Critique of Political Economy*; and some texts in English on logic, and he made detailed marginalia (Gong *et al.* 1987: 249–51). Mao read a Chinese translation of the *Manifesto* and Karl Kaustky's *Class Struggle* as early as 1920. He first quoted Lenin's *State and Revolution* in May and September 1926 when he taught at the Peasants Movement Lecture School, even before the first complete translation of the book by Ke Bonian appeared in January 1927 (Gong *et al.* 1987: 22). Mao read Engels's *Anti-Dühring,* Lenin's *Two Strategies of the Social Democratic Party in the Democratic Revolution*, and *'Left Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder* during the Long March (Gong *et al.* 1987: 23–5). In the years of Yan'an, Mao widely consumed Marxist–Leninist works. A number of books that he read then are still kept in his house today, which include Marx's *Capital*; *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*; *Selected Works of Lenin*; Lenin's *The State and Revolution*, and Stalin's *Theory and Strategy* (a collection including *The Foundation of Leninism*), and *Several Issues of Leninism*, and also *Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin on Arts* (Gong *et al.* 1987: 24).

Pang Xianzhi records in his diary of October 23, 1959 that, as preparation for one of his inspection trips, Mao ordered hundreds of books, which included *Capital*; *Selected Works of Marx and Engels*; *Wage, Price and Profit*; *A Critique of the Gotha Programme*; *The Critique of Political Economy*; *Anti-Dühring*; *The Dialectics of Nature*; *The Letters of Marx and Engels*; *Selected Works of Lenin*; Lenin's *From the February Revolution to the October Revolution*; *the Proletariat Revolution and the Traitor Kautsky*; *State and Revolution*; *'Left Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder*; *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*; *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*; *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward*; *What is to be Done*; *What is 'the People's Friend'?*; *Anarchism or Socialism?*; Stalin's *The Foundation of Leninism*; *The Issues of Leninism*; *A History of the*

Soviet Communist Party; *A Textbook of Political Economy (Soviet)*; Mitin's *Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism*; and Kawakami Hajime's *An Outline of Political Economy*. Mao's order also listed some works by Hegel, Feuerbach, and other Western writers, and in addition to those, there were also more than ten titles by Lao Zi (老子), Xun Zi (荀子), Han Fei Zi (韓非子), and Zhang Zai (張載) (Gong *et al.* 1987: 18). Mao read a great deal of Lenin and loved his writings. As he stated on April 21, 1965, 'I studied Lenin first, then the writings of Marx and Engels. Lenin is easier to read' (Chen 1996: 700). The works of Lenin that Mao read most were *The Two Strategies of the Social Democratic Party in the Democratic Revolution*; *'Left Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder*; *The State and Revolution*; *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*; and the *Notes of Philosophy*. Mao studied *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* in Yan'an, and considered it a classic of Marxist philosophy.

Besides Marxism, Mao had adequate knowledge of other Western philosophy. He had showed great enthusiasm about Western thought as a young man. When John Dewey lectured at Peking University in 1919, Mao was not in Beijing but he kept track of the coverage of Dewey's lecturing activities in various newspapers and magazines. Mao did attend one of Dewey's lectures entitled 'The Three Contemporary Philosophers' at Peking University in 1920. He was then one of the stenographers at the symposiums in Hunan when Dewey and Russell gave presentations. Mao also studied Hegel when he was in the Hunan First Normal School between 1914 and 1918. He read even more on Western thought in the period of Yan'an and after 1949 when the People's Republic was established.

It is not difficult to assume that Mao's attraction for classical Chinese expressions in reading Marxist dialectical materialism was as a result of his deep roots in *tong-bian*. By the age of sixteen, he had learned *The Four Books* – namely *The Great Learning* (*Da-Xue* 大學), *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong-Yong* 中庸), *The Analects of Confucius* (*Lun-Yu* 論語), and *Mencius* (*Meng-Zi* 孟子) – and *The Five Classics* – namely *The Book of Songs* (*Shi-Jing* 詩經), *The Book of History* (*Shu-Jing* 書經), *The Book of Changes* (*Yi-Jing* 易經), *The Book of Rites* (*Li-Ji* 禮記), and *The Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chun-Qiu* 春秋). He had loved Confucius. Mao had never suspended his study of classical Chinese philosophy, especially pre-Qin Confucianism, Daoism, and the Li Learning (*li-xue* 理學) of the Song and Ming dynasties, even though he was heavily influenced by Western thought during the New Culture period around the 1920s. Mao was particularly interested in classical Chinese 'dialectics', sophisticated in the 'dialectic' of Confucius, Mencius, Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi, Xun Zi, Mo Zi (墨子), Qu Yuan (屈原), Sima Qian (司馬遷), Zhu Xi (朱熹), Zhang Zai, and Wang Fuzhi (王夫之), and finally developed his early 'dialectical' style of thought and employed it in his own thinking and writings (Li 1991: 234). Mao's deep roots in *tong-bian* are seen in two concurrent respects: on the one hand, he represents a *tong-bian* reading of Marxist texts, and on the other hand, he read elements of classical thought as 'dialectical materialism' (*wei-wu-bian-zheng-fa* 唯物辯證法).

Besides *bian-zheng-fa* (dialectic method), *dui-li-tong-yi* (對立統一 the unity of opposites), *xiang-fan-xiang-cheng* (contradictory but complementary), Mao has other expressions to suggest 'dialectics', which are *mao-dun* (spear-shield), *yi-fen-wei-er*

(一分為二　one divides into two), and *liang-dian-lun* (两點論 the two-point theory). These expressions all come from the classical text of the *Yi-Jing*. *Yi-fen-wei-er* is also found in Shao Yong (邵雍) and Zhu Xi, the Li-Xue school philosophers of the Song dynasty.[27]

Since Mao read dialectical materialism from the perspective of *tong-bian* and appealed to classical Chinese expressions, the difference in Mao's reading of Marxist dialectics is that 'the unity of opposites' (*dui-li-tong-yi*) suggests a continuity of two pairing aspects and that the mutual transformation of quantity and quality and the negation of the negation are rather patterns of continuity or correlativity of two pairing opposites. For example, Mao has two interesting analogues for the concept of negation, or *fou-ding* (否定): one was from the *Yi-Jing*, the other, *Nan-gong-ci-ji* (南宫詞纪).[28] Mao wrote '*wan-quan-fou-ding, qian-kun-huo-ji-hu-xi*' (完全否定乾坤或幾乎息　entire negation, *qian* and *kun* would almost cease to act) on the margin of the paragraph in which Shirokov and Aizenberg quote Lenin, 'If I grind wheat grain, or kill insects, I am accomplishing the first action of negation, but the second action becomes impossible.'[29] The phrase that Mao quotes, '*qian-kun* would almost cease to act', is from the text of *Xi-Ci*, the *Yi-Jing* (Sung 1969: 303).[30] For another analogue, Mao wrote, 'with the body of sister is brother, and with the body of brother, sister'[31] (Chen 1996: 812) by the paragraph in which Shirokov and Aizenberg claim, 'dying out is also preserving' at the same time, dialectical negation is the dynamic cause of development process. On the one hand, it makes sublation, which is, overcoming the old thing. On the other hand it preserves the old thing as a subsidiary dynamic cause' (Mao 1988: 124).[32]

The function of these two analogues in Mao's reading of negation demonstrates it adequately, that is, to indicate correlativity or continuity. For Mao, negation does not suggest separation, not clean cut, but rather that something going first entails (or in a continuum with) something else going after it; and vice versa. (Mao 1988: 121).

What is dialectical materialism about? For Mao, it is about 'continuity', or *tong-yi* (統一). As he repeatedly states, the kernel of *bian-zheng-fa* (dialectics) was *dui-li-tong-yi* (or continuity of opposites); to juxtapose the three laws, as has always been the case in the old texts, is not appropriate, and those categories (perhaps there are more than a dozen of them) should all be explained as continuity of contradictions and opposites in things (Mao 1988: 505–7). As Mao states again and again, so far and so much as 'dialectics' is concerned, it is nothing else but continuity as long as we think about 'opposites' (Mao 1988: 81–2). It may suffice to say that for a Chinese version of 'dialectical materialism', which has developed amid Marxism's encountering of Chinese tradition, and comes to fruition in Mao, it is explicitly about *tong-yi* (continuity), rather than dichotomy. Mao has developed the concept of Sinification of Marxism from the perspective of *tong-bian*, that is, he construed the continuity of Marxism with the particular circumstances of China. His thought with Marxist rhetoric marks a new and more sophisticated phase of the traditional strand *tong-bian*. Its sophistication and maturity lies in the fact that Mao not only advocated but also performed it. His modern version of *tong-bian* is so articulate that it not only becomes a major thinking modality for the general theoretical realm of Chinese Marxism but also has a profound impact on the entire history of modern China due to the revolution under his leadership.

12 Conclusion: Dialectics after Mao

The form that Marxism assumed on its encountering China was no longer the same inherited legacy of Marxian dialectics in Europe. It is found to be a third alternative, a rendered version that indeed articulates *tong-bian*, a traditional Chinese modality of thinking in the language composed of the terminology of Western Marxisms yet in Chinese translation. In this sense we can consider it a modernized form of traditional thinking, known as *bian-zheng-fa* ('dialectics').

It seems, however, over thirty years after Mao's death, that what we see today is an utterly different situation in which China is encountering the domination of Western liberalism. The situation is characterized by the Chinese authority's engagement with economic reform, which has appealed to the doctrines of neo-liberalism, and the widespread view of China's future in terms of liberal democracy. Many people interested in Chinese politics, including the international and the Chinese media, are watching closely so as not to miss any sign that indicates political reform taken by the Chinese in the direction of liberal democratization.

Where is 'Marxian dialectics' or *bian-zheng-fa*? Is *tong-bian* still capable of articulating what has been happening and is going to happen in China? It may be interesting to find that, just like the case of the encounter of Marxism in China, liberalism, wherever one finds it in the West, may be significantly different from what appears to be now the Chinese analogue. As we pay close attention, it may be found that neo-liberalism and liberal democracy have assumed a third form in China, a rendered version that articulates the traditional *tong-bian* in the language composed of liberalism's terms yet in Chinese translation. We may call it a Chinese style of liberalism, since one may find, as a clear strand of thought of Chinese tradition, *tong-bian* is still available; it can be found that the current discourse of liberalism in China has been drawing on tradition and overcoming the difficulties that attended its original form in the West. Although Chinese liberalism finds some of its roots in Western ideology, it has apparently read its Chinese roots into the Western ideology.

Notes

1. The focus/field model results from understanding an item's relation to the world to be constituted by acts of contextualization. A correlative order emerges from the coordination of so many 'this's' and 'that's' as various foci and the fields they focus. The act of contextualization involves appreciation of harmonious correlations of the myriad unique details (*wan-wu* 萬物) which make up the world. For this model, see Hall and Ames 1998: 234, 236, 239, 242–4, 268–78.

2. It is interesting to note that the etymology of '*mao-dun*' (矛盾) can be traced to the work of Han Fei Zi (韓非子 d. 233 BCE), which tells the following story: Once upon a time in the Chu state there was a man who made a living by selling both *mao* (矛 spear) and *dun* (盾 shield). He hawked in turn his spear and shield. Holding his shield, he bragged that it was so solid and hard that no spear could damage it. Then, picking up his spear, he reassumed boasting that it was so sharp and powerful that no shield could withstand it. He was not able to make any response, however, when someone from the crowd asked him: 'How about jabbing your shield with your own spear?' In later generations, *mao* and *dun* became a compound to indicate mutual contradiction between events and things. The concept *mao-dun* may be distinguished from *yin-yang* (陰 陽) in terms that *mao-dun* involved genuine contradiction, while they cannot be differentiated from each other in the sense that both concepts entail correlative rather than dualistic thinking.

3. This view is debatable, though. For example, Promenades is often understood as having articulated an ontological theory of permanence in contrast to Heraclitus' ontology of flux. And it is commonly thought that Plato's 'Two-Worlds' ontology was an attempt to reconcile permanence and change. In fact, it is probably accurate to argue that the mainstream of the Western philosophical tradition has focused on permanence rather than change.

4. The Chinese title of the article was 'Yuan-Qiang' (原强) (Li 1971: 3). See also Chapter 15 above.

5. The *Review of the Times*, or *Wan-Guo-Gong-Bao* (萬國公报), was essentially the creation of two missionaries, an American named Young J. Allen and a Welshman, Timothy Richard. It had a predecessor, *Jiao-Hui-Xin-Bao* (教會新报), or *Church News*, between 1868 and 1874. In 1875, Allen, a southern Baptist, established *Wan-Guo-Gong-Bao*, the *Global Magazine*, whose publication was suspended in 1882. It was revived as a monthly with a different English title, the *Review of the Times*. Richard was a Welsh Baptist who had been in China since 1869 and took the position of General Secretary of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese (SDK) in 1891. Allen and Richard, who had retained the editorship of the journal, became its leading contributors. During the height of the reform movement, from China's defeat by the Japanese in 1895 to the abortive Hundred Days' Reform (百日維新) in 1898, they became national figures (Bernal 1976: 22–23).

6. I filed an interlibrary search order through the Hamilton Library of the University of Hawaii at Manoa in March 1996, since Bernal informs us that there is a copy of this book in the library of the University of California, Berkeley. What came out as a result of my request was that the Hamilton Library contacted the National Diet Library of Tokyo, Japan after it had been told that there was no such title in the catalogue of the library of the University of California, Berkeley. As a final result, I received a photocopy of the original book in Japanese from the NDL in Tokyo.

7. Here 'Keppel' is adopted phonetically from the Chinese transliteration of the German professor's name; it may not necessarily be exact.

8. According to *Shuo-Wen-Da-Zi-Dian* (說文大字典), *jun* (君) was explained as the respectful (*zun-ye* 尊也) and senior or head of the masses (*zhang-min* 长民) (Sha 1982, vol. 2: 57).

9. *Bu-fei-zhi-shi* (不非之事 not wrong doings) and *ke-wei-ren-fa* (可為人法 something people can do accordingly) (Sha 1982, vol. 4: 14).

10. *yi-li-yan-jian-jun-qin-you-zheng-ye* (以理言諫君親猶正也 to present convincing remarks in front of ruler) (Sha 1982, vol. 7: 19, 25).

11. Here, although *wan-fa* (萬法) and *yi-ru* (一如) are Buddhist concepts – which may suggest 'everything that has noumenal or phenomenal existence' and 'the absolute in or ultimate reality behind everything', as explained in the dictionary of William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous (Soothill and Hodous, 1976: 412) – they are capable of carrying the meaning in the classical Chinese language, in which *fa* (法) denotes enduring (*chang* 常), way (*fangfa* 方法), and following the example of (*xiao* 效) (Sha 1982, vol. 4: 63, 64) *yi*, or one, suggests continuity which gives birth to *dao* (道 way), in following which the 10,000 things are emerging (*KXZD* 1984: 75) and *ru*, so-ing. *Wan-fa* and *yi-ru* preclude implications of essentiality of the ultimate reality and dualism of the determining 'Truth' and all things that 'It' determines, or the noumenal and phenomenal.

12. Knowledge of historical materialism at this time had mostly been obtained from Japan.

13. Luk, 1990: 24 and 245 n. 84. According to Luk, Hu Hanmin, a leading theorist of the Guomingdang, wrote at length to defend historical materialism against all the criticisms he had come across, mainly by citing Karl Kautsky's arguments (see Hu 1919). Hu's article is more than a direct rebuttal of Li Dazhao's criticisms on historical materialism, as suggested by Tse-Tsung Chow's *May Fourth Movement*: 298–9. Hu discusses eight types of charges against historical materialism, including those that have been raised by Stammler, Struve, Tugan Baranovsky, Bernstein, Eugenio Rignano, Loria, and Shailer Mathews. His dependence on Kautsky can be seen quite clearly on pages 968, 937, 976, 985, and 988–9 of his article.

14. Qu Qiubai was Chairman of the Department of Sociology, University of Shanghai in 1923. He edited a four-volume work of his lecturing material entitled *She-Hui-Ke-Xue-Jiang-Yi* (社會科學講義 Lectures on Social Sciences), which included 'Xian-Dai-She-Hui-Xue' (Modern Sociology), 'Xian-Dai-Jing-Ji-Xue' (現代經濟學 Modern Economy), 'She-Hui-Yun-Dong-Shi' (社會運動史 A History of Social Movements), 'She-Hui-Si-Xiang-Shi' (社會思想史　A History of Social

Philosophy), 'She-Hui-Wen-Ti' (社會問題 Social Problems), and 'She-Hui-Zhe-Xue-Gai-Lun' (Outline of Social Philosophy), published by Shanghai shudian in 1924. Qu wrote on two of the topics, which were 'Xian-Dai-She-Hui-Xue' (Modern Sociology) and 'She-Hui-Zhe-Xue-Gai-Lun' (社會哲學概論 Outline of Social Philosophy).

15. This was lecture material by Qu Qiubai at the Shanghai Xia-Ling Jiang-Xue-Hui (上海夏令講學會Shanghai Summer Seminars) in June 1924, which was published by Shanghai shudian in October 1924.

16. These two articles were supplementary to Qu's translation of *Wu-Chan-Jie-Ji-Zhi-Zhe-Xue: Wei-Wu-Lun* (無產階級之哲學 – 唯物論 Materialism: The Proletariat Philosophy), which was published by Xin qingnian she (新青年社) (Qu 1988, vol. 4: 1).

17. Here 'Gorrief' is adopted phonetically from the Chinese transliteration of the Russian author's name, Guo Lie Fu; it may not be necessarily exact.

18. See also Zeng (1991: 168–9).

19. The book does not provide the dates, publication places, or the original authors of the books Li translated.

20. E.K. Lupel (1883–1936), Soviet philosopher (Mao 1988: 514 and n. 62).

21. According to Huang, Li's *Outlines of Sociology* was first published as teaching material by the Law and Commerce School, Peking University in 1935. Its formal publication was by Bi-Geng-Tang Bookstore in Shanghai in May 1936.

22. Li's manuscripts on dialectical materialism were first published by the Commercial School at Peking University in Beijing in 1935, and then published by Bi-Geng-Tang Bookstore in Shanghai in 1937. In the following years, it was reprinted many times.

23. Wu was born in Fenghua, Zhejiang, in 1908. He was sent by the Party to study at the University of Sun Yet-sen in Moscow in 1925. After he returned from the Soviet Union in 1929, he was engaged in studying Marxist Theory for the Party. He died in 1987.

24. According to Huang Jiande, Mao copied nineteen pages, totaling over 4,500 characters, from Ai's *Philosophy and Life*; perhaps this was the only time Mao had ever done so after he had read a book.

25. *Xing-er-shang-xue* (形而上學) is the Chinese translation of 'metaphysics' though it originated from the classical phrase 'xing-er-shang-zhe-wei-zhi-dao' (形而上者谓之道) in the *Yi-Jing*. The modern Chinese expression may mean 'not dialectical', or not-*tong-bian*. For Mao's critique of Stalin, see Chen 1996: 865–6.

26. Mao told of his study of English, philosophy, and newspapers in his letter of June 7, 1920 to Li Jinxi (Chen 1996: 704).

27. 'Ci-zhi-shi yi-fen-wei-er, jie-jie-ru-ci, yi-zhi-yu-wu-qiong, jie-shi-yi-sheng-liang-er' (此只是一分為二，節節如此以至於無窮，皆是一生二爾) (ZZYL, vol. 67).

28. *Nan-Gong-Ci-Ji* (南宮詞紀) is a collection of scattered Ming dynasty verses, compiled by Chen Suowen. They were a particular type of verse, very popular in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, with tonal patterns modeled on tunes drawn from folk music.

29. The English is my translation, since the original text is not available. However, translating from Chinese to English, it may sound more Chinese, and closer to what was understood by Mao (Mao 1988: 123).

30. I made revisions in the English translation of the passage. For example I changed 'system' into 'continuity', which is more appropriate from the *tong-bian* perspective. This passage runs: 'May we not say that *qian* 乾 and *kun* 坤 (the *yang* and *yin*, or the undivided and divided lines) are the secret and subtleties of the *Yi*? *Qian* and *kun* being established in their several places thereby a continuity of changes constitutes. If *qian* and *kun* were taken away, there would be no means of seeing this continuity; and if this continuity were not seen, *qian* and *kun* would almost cease to act.'

31. The passage runs: 'Brother, let's mold figures of the two of us with brown clay, making one to look like you, the other to look like me. Let's mold them to be an exact replica of us; let's make them to sleep in the same bed. Then we dash them and restart molding. Again, we make a figure to look like you and another to look like me. With the body of brother is sister, and with the body of sister is brother.'

32. The English is my translation, since the original text is not available.

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Chapter 17
CONTEMPORARY NEO-CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY

Sor-hoon Tan

An important development in Chinese philosophy during the twentieth century was the emergence of *Xin-Ru-Jia* (新儒家). Opinions differ as to which thinkers comprise *Xin-Ru-Jia*, and their identifying characteristics (Makeham 2003). In Fung Yu-lan's *History of Chinese Philosophy*, '*Xin-Ru-Jia*' refers to the philosophy of the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi, and this has been translated as 'Neo-Confucianism', a term which in Western scholarship came to include both the Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang schools of Song and Ming dynasty Confucianism; this is distinct from the twentieth-century philosophy we will be examining in this chapter, which some refer to as contemporary (*dang-dai* 當代) or modern (*xian-dai* 現代) Neo-Confucianism or New Confucianism. 'New Confucianism' is brief and avoids confusion, but 'contemporary Neo-Confucianism' registers continuity with Song–Ming Confucianism. Liu Shu-hsien (劉述先) recently suggested reserving 'contemporary Neo-Confucianism' for the philosophical movement initiated by Xiong Shili (熊十力), further developed by his students Mou Zongsan (牟宗三), Tang Junyi (唐君毅), and Xu Fuguan (徐復觀), with Liu himself and Tu Wei-ming (杜維明) as the third generation. 'New Confucianism' is a more appropriate translation for '*Xin-Ru-Jia*' when, as in New Confucian studies (*xin-ru-xue* 新儒學) in the People's Republic of China, it identifies a larger group, including Xiong Shili, Liang Shuming (梁漱冥), Ma Yifu (馬一浮), Zhang Junmai (Carsun Chang 張君勱), Fung Yu-lan (馮友蘭), He Lin (賀麟), Qian Mu (錢穆), and Fang Dongmei (Thomé Fang 方東美) in the first generation, Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi, and Xu Fuguan in the second generation, and Liu Shu-hsien, Tu Wei-ming, Cheng Chung-ying (成中英), A.S. Cua (Ke Xiong-wen 柯雄文), and Yu Ying-shih (余英時) in the third generation (Liu 2003: 24–6).

New Confucianism is less a school of philosophy than a trend of thinking produced by the intellectual crisis around the May Fourth period in China (Chang 1976). Confronting the challenge by Western modernity and the attacks on traditional Chinese culture, New Confucians are committed to promoting Chinese culture with Confucianism as its core; they believe in the perennial relevance and value of

Confucianism, and their strategy for reclaiming Chinese cultural superiority or at least equality involves creative transformations of Confucianism with the aid and criticisms of non-Confucian ideas, especially modern Western ideas such as those of science and democracy. Within this broad and still expanding trend of thought, we may discern a narrower meaning of '*dang-dai-Xin-Ru-Jia*', which refers to a specific school of Chinese philosophy – exemplified by Xiong Shili, Mou Zongsan, and Tang Junyi – and is more appropriately translated as 'Contemporary Neo-Confucianism'.[1] These modern Chinese philosophers share a distinctive view of philosophy as primarily metaphysics; they believe that a (re)construction of Confucian metaphysics, based on Song–Ming study of heart-mind and nature (*xin-xing-zhi-xue* 心性之學), is the key to revive Confucianism and meet the challenges faced by Chinese civilization. Their philosophy actively engages Buddhism and Western thought, favoring German Idealism. Their borrowings and criticisms of Western philosophy mark important steps in the modernizing of Chinese philosophy in the twentieth century.

1 Xiong Shili

Xiong Shili (熊十力 1885–1968) is often considered one of the most innovative Chinese philosophers of the modern period. Few could match him when it comes to building his own distinctive comprehensive philosophical system. His philosophy arose from resisting the tide of scientism that threatened to sweep away traditional Chinese culture and much else besides (Chang 1976). Xiong insisted that philosophy's role is beyond science. The latter is concerned with studying the physical world and its proper method combines empirical observation and logical reasoning; philosophy's proper domain is metaphysics, dealing with the nature of ultimate reality and ontology (*ben-ti-lun* 本體論), clarifying 'the root-source of ten thousand transformations' (Xiong 1953: 27). His greatest achievement is the construction of a metaphysical system that attempts to transcend materialism and idealism and, in uniting substance and functions, matter and mind, is monistic without being reductionist.

1.1 *Critique of Buddhism*

Xiong began his philosophical career by joining the China Institute of Buddhism in Nanjing to study Buddhism with its founder, Ouyang Jingwu.[2] Upon completing his studies, Xiong was invited to teach Consciousness-only (*wei-shi* 唯識) philosophy – *Vijñāna-vāda* philosophy of the *Yogācāra* school – at Beijing University in 1922. His published lecture notes, *Outline of Consciousness-only Theory*, won high praise from his former Buddhist colleagues. The strong influence of Buddhism pervades his philosophy, but Xiong was dissatisfied with the *wei-shi* doctrine from the beginning. His untiring efforts at resolving the philosophical difficulties eventually led him back to the Confucian fold and the creation of his unique philosophy. Despite its Buddhist-sounding title, his *New Consciousness-only Theory*, first published in 1932 in classical Chinese, is a critique of various schools of Buddhism that presents his own syncretic philosophical system, based on the 'unceasing creativity' philosophy of the *Book*

of Change (*Yi-Jing* 易經).[3] In his preface to the 1953 revised edition of the work, Xiong described the first classical Chinese edition as merely 'merging the *Yi* into Buddhism', but the vernacular version of 1942 'took the *Yi* as its guiding source' (Xiong 1953: 19).

Wei-shi belongs to the school of being (*you-zong* 有宗) in Chinese Buddhism. It explains the phenomenal world as the result of transformations of eight consciousnesses: the five sense consciousnesses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch), the sixth sense-centered consciousness, the seventh thought-centered consciousness, and the storehouse consciousness (so named because it stores the 'seeds' of phenomena). Positing multiple consciousnesses and innumerable seeds as causes is too fragmentary and piecemeal an approach for Xiong. Moreover, since seeds being causes are real and yet reality for Buddhists is suchness (*zhen-ru* 真如, tathatā), this results in metaphysical dualism that Xiong considered unviable (Xiong 1953: 99–101, 144-8). In contrast, the emptiness or śūnyata school (*kong-zong* 空宗) shows the unreality of all phenomena in order to reveal its nature as emptiness. Xiong praised it for being thorough in sweeping away our 'grasping' opinions and feelings. While he acknowledged a role for knowledge of phenomena, Xiong maintained that unless one could overcome the tendency of our measuring intelligence (*liang-zhi* 量智), encompassing empirical knowledge and logical reasoning, to grasp at external things, one would not be able to rise to the truth of the oneness of ultimate reality, accessible only with one's original or self-nature intelligence (*xing-zhi* 性智) by returning to oneself (Xiong 1953: 110–11).[4]

Buddhists affirm that suchness is the real nature of phenomena. Xiong, taking suchness as equivalent to original substance (*ben-ti* 本體), would say, as Buddhists would not, that 'suchness is manifest as phenomena'.[5] The Buddhist view separates substance and functions, emptying phenomena, thereby 'completely destroying phenomena'. For Xiong, original substance, reality, is manifest in phenomena, hence we may tentatively establish or suppose (*jia-li* 假立) the existence of phenomena and even investigate its regularity (1953: 111–12). While he admired the śūnyata school's 'breaking through phenomena to reveal nature', he disagreed with their characterization of nature or reality as emptiness and nothingness, which he considered negative in its opposition to worldly life (*chu-shi* 出世).[6] In Xiong's judgment, the major weakness of Buddhism is not allowing for creativity in its bias toward emptiness and quiescence (*kong-ji* 空寂). In its doctrine of impermanence, Buddhism emphasizes the instantaneous destruction accompanying generation, while Xiong stresses that instantaneous generation accompanies every destruction, so that the world as a process of change renews itself through unceasing creativity (1953: 88–96).

1.2 Metaphysical monism without reductionism: beyond materialism and idealism

The keystone of Xiong's metaphysical monism is the non-duality of substance and functions (*ti-yong-bu-er* 體用不二), wherein 'substance' refers to the original substance of the cosmos while 'functions' refers to the multitude of changing particulars that is

the active flow of original substance. Substance is the co-present source of functions, not separate in time and space. Substance is always functioning, while functions are functioning of substance. Xiong's oft-repeated metaphor for this relationship is that of the ocean and its waves: the ocean water and the waves are not two entities, one cannot have one without the other, yet non-duality is compatible with their being different and therefore distinct, although actually inseparable.[7]

According to Xiong, original substance:

1 contains all principles, includes all virtues, causes all change, is by its very nature pure and undefiled;
2 is absolute, otherwise it cannot be the substance of all phenomena;
3 is real being although without tangible form;
4 is eternal, without beginning or end, beyond time;
5 is complete, self-sufficient and indivisible;
6 changes in manifesting as functions, yet is unchanged in itself (1953: 75).

Substance remains unchanged because there is no possibility of it becoming something else, since it is ultimate reality, the root and totality of all being. Yet change is part of that reality, for original substance is also the cosmos's 'great life', its very vitality and unceasing creativity, and, as such, substance is always changing.

In changing, original substance is named continuous turning (*heng-zhuan* 恒轉); this is the process of functions manifesting substance (Xiong 1953: 76). The functioning of substance is a process with two contrary tendencies, closing (*xi* 翕) and opening (*pi* 闢).[8] In the movement of continuous turning, there is a tendency to condense and consolidate, forming innumerable condensing points (*xi-quan* 翕圈). That which is originally without tangible form begins to materialize. The tangible forms of the cosmos are the 'traces' (*ji-xiang* 跡象) of the functioning process. Arising together with *xi* is a contrary tendency that resists the materializing tendency which threatens the self-nature of continuous turning. The countering tendency of *pi* has the virtues of firm assertiveness and purity (*gang-jian-qing-jing* 剛健清淨) characterizing original substance itself and therefore maintains the self-nature of continuous turning. This tendency is its own master and by operating within *xi*, can transform and cause the latter to rise with it. The *pi* tendency forms mental phenomena as *xi* forms material phenomena. Being functions of the same substance, matter and mind are non-dual – they are different and distinct without being actually separable (Xiong 1953: 77–80).

Is mind–matter non-duality a form of panpsychism (Guo 1993: 62)? Xiong maintained that *xi* and *pi* are co-present and interpenetrate each other from the very beginning of the cosmos. People believe that mind is the later result of evolution only because in the early evolutionary stages, the *pi* tendency is hidden and not easily discernible. Xiong is not claiming that everything has some mind in any way resembling the human mind. He understood *pi*, the cosmos's great mind, to be synonymous with the cosmos's great life (Xiong 1953: 83).[9] It is vitality, a kind of dynamic force, spontaneity, rather than mental phenomena commonly understood, that is present in all matter and prevents physical phenomena from being completely inert, inaccessible,

and opposed to the mind. Xiong understood evolution as a process of *pi* manifesting its force-function (*shi-yong* 勢用) through *xi* as instruments. The human mind is the most developed force-function of *pi*, with the most evident governing power (*zhu-zai* 主宰) over *xi* and therefore over matter. Unfortunately, even the advanced stage of evolution does not eliminate the risk of *pi* submerging itself in *xi*; this means the mind abdicates its rule and allows itself to be enslaved by material things (Xiong 1953: 80–4).

Xiong's philosophy has been described as idealism, probably because he equated original substance with original mind (Chan 1963: 763; Ng in Makeham 2003: 219–51).[10] However, Xiong's intention is to build a metaphysics that transcends the opposition between idealism and materialism, which are both reductionist. He supported Mahayana Buddhism's rebuttal of the various forms of Hinayana materialism, claiming that there is an external world of material things, the object world (*jing* 境), existing apart from the mind. However, Xiong does not deny the existence of the object world, nor does he reduce it to the mind. Instead, mind and object world are two sides of a totality (Xiong 1953: 38). While they share one substance, neither should be reduced to the other. For him, '*wei-xin*' (唯心), which is the term in 'idealism' (*wei-xin-zhu-yi* 唯心主義), does not mean only the mind and nothing else exists, but rather that the mind is special and unique because it comprehends the object world and has power and authority over material phenomena.[11] He therefore accepted the description of *wei-xin* – instead of *wei-jing* (唯境), for example – only for emphasis and not because he reduces everything to the mind (Xiong 1953: 48).

Xiong's metaphysics is monistic in claiming that reality is one, the original substance, but in maintaining the non-duality of substance and functions, of matter and mind, his monism contains diversity within itself by resisting reductionism and allowing for difference and distinctness. This rejection of reductionism is important to the connection between metaphysics and practice because denying the existence of physical phenomena would undermine the validity of science and other empirical knowledge as well as the legitimacy of practice that after all must take place within the physical world.

1.3 Epistemology and the elusive way of the outer king

The *New Consciousness-only Theory* was intended to be the first part of a larger work. Xiong subtitled it '*Jing-Lun*' (境論), comprising mainly ontology and cosmology; the second part was intended to be epistemology (*liang-lun* 量論).[12] Although the subsequent vernacular edition dropped the subtitle, it still postponed various questions to a later *liang-lun*, which was never written (Xiong 1953: 49, 110, 152–3). Commentators point out that an epistemology is already implicit in Xiong's metaphysics (Guo 1993: 30; Liu 2003: 61 and Chapter 3). His very characterization of the difference between his metaphysics and other metaphysical theory is epistemological: other philosophers erroneously pursue the object of metaphysics (ultimate reality/original substance) as something external to oneself, to be known with measuring intelligence (experience and reasoning). The result cannot be anything but speculative and without basis, and unsurprisingly led to a rejection of metaphysics (Xiong 1953: 74).

According to Xiong, ultimate reality is accessible only through existential testimony (*zheng-hui* 證會; *shi-zheng* 實証; *zheng-wu* 証悟). Human beings and all things in the cosmos share one original substance, and human mind is the force-function of original substance, which in its self-governing power is known as original mind (*ben-xin* 本心). Each individual human mind is therefore manifestation/function of original mind which is self-aware and self-knowing. Existential testimony is human mind's sharing in that self-awareness and self-knowledge. One's mind is able to become aware and to know itself not only as individual human mind but also as original mind, and hence to know the totality of original substance. Original intelligence, corresponding to existential testimony, is this revelation of totality and attaining of original substance (Xiong 1953: 28). Testimonial knowledge (*zheng-liang* 証量) is not obtained from without but by returning to oneself. Most people are prevented from making this return because, mired in material existence, defiled by habitual energy-matter (*xi-qi* 習氣), their habitual minds (*xi-xin* 習心) are different from the original mind (Xiong 1953: 193). The clinging to phenomena which sustains habitual minds renders necessary the Buddhist's 'breaking through phenomena' before existential testimony is possible.

Practice rather than theory or discourse provides the access to testimonial knowledge (Xiong 1947: 172). Realization of original substance is not acquisition of intellectual or empirical knowledge; besides being ultimate truth, it is also ultimate ethical subjectivity and creativity. Original substance includes all virtues because it is *ren* (仁), the original virtue (*yuan-de* 元德, *xing-de* 性德), the virtue of creation and life (Xiong 1953: 115). This comprehensive virtue is the source/substance of everyday virtues (including *ren* as virtue of humaneness) and ethical practice: the latter being its functions. Cultivation of the ethical self is the establishment of the mind as governing agency over one's life, so that one might use objects without being objectified. This gradually releases us from the toils of the habitual energy-matter of defiled materialistic existence, so that one's mind might return to the self-knowledge of original mind, and hence realize original substance. This is the Confucian method of 'giving full realization to heart-mind, understanding one's own nature and knowing heaven' (Mencius 7A1).

Xiong insisted that philosophers should not limit their thinking to abstract theorizing, but should seek knowledge of the phenomenal world so as to change people's erroneous thinking and transform the world (Xiong 1953: 27). He reinterpreted the Confucian classics for contemporary relevance. Xiong believed that the *Li-Yun* is a classic containing Confucius' social ideal of great unity (*da-tong* 大同), which is further explicated in the *Zhou-Guan*, *Chun-Qiu*, and the *Yi-Jing*. The *Yi-Jing* sets up the fundamental principle of 'a group of dragons without a leader' (*qun-long-wu-shou* 群龍無首), which Xiong equated with democracy (Xiong 1961: 629). He read the *Chun-Qiu* as Confucius 'developing production plans and promoting science and technology' and aiming to abolish government and private property to achieve a world common to all (*tian-xia-wei-gong* 天下為公) (Xiong 1951: 668–9). The guiding principles of the *Zhou-Guan* were equality (*jun* 均) and unity (*lian* 聯), advocating pluralism and democracy rather than authoritarianism (Xiong 1945: 600; 1947: 704;

1961: 631). According to Xiong, these four classics reveal Confucius' revolutionary teachings of the 'outer king', advocating freedom, equality, science, and democracy.

Most commentators find Xiong's practical philosophy inferior compared to his metaphysics. Besides being fragmentary, it is often obscure and lacks both good grasp of reality and clear analysis of problems. Even his students rejected his dubious claim that the six Classics were authored by Confucius. He offered an oversimplistic answer to the question, 'Why did China stagnate?': slavish Confucians supporting the imperial system distorted the teachings of Confucius' six Classics, and the Master's true teachings were lost (Xiong 1956: 388–9). Li Zehou attributed the failures of Xiong's epistemology and practical philosophy to his inadequate understanding of science and Western civilization, which prevented him from breaking out of Neo-Confucian inward-orientation and intuitionism, to seek external knowledge of the world (Li 1987: 276–7). Guo Qiyong looked to Xiong's monism and its inherent contradictions and tensions to explain these weaknesses (Guo 1993: 99–102).

A key element of New Confucianism is accommodation of science and democracy in a practical philosophy of the outer king. This will remain elusive unless some critical epistemological issues are resolved. Xiong distinguished metaphysical and scientific or phenomenal truths/knowledge: one is concerned with original substance, the other with functions, that is, phenomena; one involves testimony through original intelligence, the other observation and inference with measuring intelligence (Xiong 1947: 202; 1953: 28–34). Yet science and metaphysics cannot remain two completely separate universes of discourse (Liu 2003: 65), given the non-duality of Xiong's system. Xiong himself clearly thought that his ontology had cosmological and practical implications, which include claims about phenomena; this creates the possibility of contradictions. However, even Xiong's own disciples downplayed his cosmological claims (Guo 1993: 98–9); if one accepts Xiong as having achieved metaphysical testimony, then this did not seem to bring about better phenomenal knowledge. If scientific knowledge and metaphysical testimony are both necessary to living and solving problems, how are they to be combined? For those who rely on Chinese Classics as sages' testimony, which should be followed if the former's message differs from that of modern science? If we always interpret the Classics so that contradictions do not occur, then metaphysical testimony would not have the restraining effect on material life that Xiong intended.

There is some evidence that the metaphysical restraint on science is ethical rather than epistemological (Xiong 1945: 644), even then there remains the problem of how to make the restraint effective. More important, Xiong maintained that philosophy (i.e. metaphysics) is about truth as well as the good (Xiong 1947: 106–8). Xiong's resistance against scientism is attractive to many who have become disillusioned with science, but even if science does not have answers for everything, Xiong's insistence that philosophical truth is all-embracing, includes ethics as well as science, means that his practical philosophy requires clearer epistemological guidance on the inter-action between metaphysical testimony, ethical practice, and scientific knowledge. Xiong laid the metaphysical foundations and indicated a direction for contemporary Neo-Confucian philosophy, but he left unanswered some important questions for

those hoping to open up a new way of the outer king by returning to the traditional Confucian teachings on the way of the inner sage.

Contemporary Neo-Confucian philosophy found mature expression in the works of Xiong's students, Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan. Both shared Xiong's belief in the importance of metaphysics and the moral focus of Chinese philosophy. They took over Xiong's metaphysical holism. They were less equivocal about the idealistic bent of their philosophy, partly out of resistance to the dogmatic materialism of the Chinese Communists, but their idealism, like Xiong's, was also more concerned with affirming the priority of moral ideals than denying the objective existence of an external material world. They produced more comprehensive and persuasive works on the history of Chinese thought that elucidate the philosophical issues (Tang 1966; 1968; 1973; 1975; Mou 1963; 1968–9; 1977; 1979a; 1979b) and argue for the primacy of Confucianism in Chinese culture as well as reinterpret it in the context of contemporary challenges. Compared to Xiong's often superficial and simplistic East–West comparisons, they had much better grasp and deeper understanding of Western philosophy; a more sophisticated engagement between East and West informs most of their works. Tang's contribution is greater in the philosophy of life and culture; Mou strengthened and systematized the metaphysics central to the movement. Both employed Western philosophical concepts and methods to elucidate traditional Chinese philosophy, and brought it into modern philosophical discourse. Tang's style has high literary quality that could move and inspire while Mou's painstaking analysis adds considerable rigor to the arguments for their common positions.[13]

2 Tang Junyi

The *Chronicles* of the life of Tang Junyi (T'ang Chün-i 唐君毅 1909–78) tells of how he incurred Xiong's wrath by refusing to devote himself solely to Xiong's philosophy (Tang 1988: 23, 42).[14] The refusal to be *only* Xiong's disciple did not prevent him becoming 'a fellow traveler'. As an original thinker, Tang always relied on his own innermost experience but learned from many different sources to shape his own thought. Before he was thirty, Tang preferred Western thought to traditional Chinese thought, even though he published works on both. He started out subscribing to realism, believing that philosophy is best approached through science; but his growing conviction that there *is* a transcendent subject led him from dissatisfaction with the philosophy of evolution (Morgan, Alexander, and Whitehead) to the Idealism of Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Bosanquet, and Bradley (Tang 1988: 23–6; Tang 1955: 566–72). While he admired and delighted in various Western philosophies of life, from the ancient Greeks to Nietzsche, found Indian philosophy and Buddhism elevating and liberating, it was in Chinese philosophy that he found his refuge (1944a: 12–30). His own experiences became a personal testimony of striving for Chinese wisdom.

2.1 The moral self and cultural expression of moral order-nature

For Tang, philosophy begins with the questions: 'Who am I?' 'Who is the world?' 'How am I and the world connected?' Philosophical wisdom begins with the realization that the self and the world were not separate to begin with, that both the subject and object are united in direct experience (Tang 1944a: 120). Life, matter, and spirit exist simultaneously and interpenetrate one another in the mind. Matter sustains life, which rises to the spiritual, which transforms matter through life (1944a: 158). Tang's idealist philosophy of life reflects on the development of the mind, the expansion and enrichment of the inner self to encompass the outer world, so that inner and outer interpenetrate, and the mind becomes one with the cosmos. Central to this unending process is 'building the moral self'.

What makes human life human is self-consciousness, and with self-consciousness, humans are capable of autonomy, which is central to moral life (Tang 1944b: 27). From an analysis of self-consciousness, Tang argued that external goals (happiness, satisfaction of desires, expanding life activities, etc.) cannot be self-consciously adopted as the end of life, which lies instead in completing the self-governing activities of the self-conscious mind, in doing what one should do (1944b: 43–52). All life activities could be subject to the question, 'Should I or shouldn't I?' and can be rendered moral insofar as they are subordinated to (provide the conditions for) self-transcendence. For the essence of moral activities is self-consciously determining and directing oneself in order to transcend the actual self immersed in and limited by time and space, that is, liberating the phenomenal self to realize the metaphysical self, which Tang understood in Neo-Confucian terms of original mind or original nature (1944b: 29–30). For example, truth-seeking is moral because it involves transcending the limitations of one's present opinions to assimilate the essence of objects; the Golden Rule is moral because it breaks through self-limitations that divide one's small self from others (1944b: 57–8). Moral values always transcend the actual self and are expressed in the mentality of self-transcendence. Yet, this mentality stems from oneself, not the actual self, but a self that transcends actuality. This transcendent self that contains all moral values is the mind's original substance, and all moral activity is to realize the transcendent (a.k.a. metaphysical or moral) self (1944b: 76–7).

In an introspective exercise resembling Descartes's meditations, Tang inferred the existence of the mind's original substance from dissatisfaction with the world's lack of reality (because impermanent) and benevolence, which implies a demand for eternal reality and perfect goodness. He argued that such a demand for the transcendent requires a transcendent source, which is the mind's original substance (Tang 1944b: 101–4). It is infinite in its perfection: eternal, real, and good. Infinity is the negation of the finite, an overcoming of the limitations of the phenomenal world. The infinite transcends all that is finite, yet is expressed only within the finite, and is therefore immanent in all that is finite (1944b: 119–20). One's finite body is a 'primitive formal limitation' of the expression of the mind's original substance (1944b: 126). Suffering, error, and wrongdoing arise from 'treating the finite as infinite' – spiritual ideals imposing a burden beyond the finite capacities of one's body, or taking the actual self

that only exists in mutual limitations with others as the only unlimited existence, or pushing our knowledge beyond its limits. That humans abhor these imperfections proves that the mind's original substance can overcome the limitations of the body (1944b: 128–30; also 154–7). Specific imperfections can always be overcome, but the actual world will always be imperfect, and only by acting against sufferings, errors, and wrongdoings will we express the self-nature of the mind's original substance, thereby negating the imperfections of the world and transcending its limitations (1944b: 132–8).

According to Tang, to know that it will be possible to realize the ideals of the moral self in the world is to confirm the reality of the world. The world is real insofar as 'it exists for realization of the metaphysical mind's substance', 'for the moral self to realize morality' (Tang 1944b: 33). Human beings, viewed from the outside, are material existents in time and space; viewed from the inside, they are spiritual existents (1944b: 139). All human activities are spiritual activities and the material world expresses the human spirit (1944b: 142, 161). Spirit is the mind viewed from the perspective of its expanding outwards to realize itself in the world: mind is substance and spirit its function. For Tang, 'all human cultures are the spiritual expressions of human minds' search for truth, beauty, and goodness, or human spiritual creations' (1954: 188). Both 'culture' and 'spirit' are concepts integrating subject and object, inner and outer, mind and things, mind and life, life and things, individual and society (1944b: 31). The search for truth and beauty involves a projection of the spirit into the material world. Without the material world as medium, the spiritual communion required for empathy and pure unselfish love among spirits which are one at the metaphysical level would be impossible.

The central idea in Tang's philosophy of culture is Confucian: all cultures are rooted in human mind-and-nature, governed by character and for its completion (Tang 1958: 7). Cultures become bad and harmful when they are no longer governed by the moral self, when they fail to express moral order-nature (*dao-de-li-xing* 道德理性). Although his philosophy of culture falls 'within the idealist tradition of Kant and Hegel' (1958: 12), Tang distinguished '*dao-de-li-xing*' from Kant's 'moral reason'. The latter includes only self-conscious autonomous activities (1958: 14); Tang uses '*li-xing*' in the neo-Confucian sense of human nature that manifests and follows the cosmic order or principles (*li* 理).[15] For Tang, *li-xing* is also *xing-li*. It includes logical reason and reason that functions in seeking knowledge, but is only concrete and complete as order-nature in moral practice. It is the essence or self-substance of our moral self, spiritual self, or transcendent self, which cannot be intellectually grasped but only tacitly apprehended through self-reflection on 'the instinctive desire in moral, spiritual activities to transcend the actual self' (1958: 19, 105).

Adopting Western methods that investigate culture as an objective existence, Tang systematically inquired into various cultural activities – family, economics, politics and nation, science and philosophy, art and the quest for truth, religion, physical education, military and law – to show that they all unconsciously or supra-consciously express moral value, with ends that are moral ideals created by moral order-nature of the moral self. Physical environment, biological drives, and utilitarian calculations

constrain but do not determine culture; instead, in cultural activities, the spirit can transform limits of actual existence to realize transcendent self (Tang 1958: 49–54). From this perspective, democracy is superior to monarchy and aristocracy because equality before the law provides universal constraint on selfish desires, which increases the chance of realizing everyone's common rational will and moral will (1958: 273–9). However, Tang warns that citizens in a democracy, like kings and aristocrats, could also use the system solely to protect and satisfy selfish desires, rather than restrain such desires to realize order-nature (1958: 281). The law alone could not overcome this weakness, and he advocated a democracy enhanced by the spirit of Confucian rule of ritual, cultivated persons, and virtue (1958: 289).

One could remain skeptical that Tang could avoid the authoritarian tendencies of his Hegelian idea of self-transcendence by simply insisting that individuals remain the basis of the state because the latter is affirmed through individuals' transcendent moral will (Tang 1958: 265). One could object to Tang's individual claims, for example, by explaining family consciousness such as Shun's unabated desire for parental approval despite his father's viciousness, in terms of acquired social prejudice instead of metaphysical basis (the humane mind-and-nature) as Tang claimed (1958: 75). Or one could argue against Tang that, even if particular individuals achieve self-realizations through their autonomous use of material objects, this does not prove the necessity of institutionalizing private property (1958: 164). However, such logic chopping would miss the point of Tang's endeavor. Tang is not offering empirical proof of his Neo-Confucian metaphysics of humane mind-and-nature and self-transcendence. Tang is explicit that such 'proof' lies in personal testimony 'beyond experience' (1958: 104). His empirical inquiry into culture as objective existence aims to provide a plausible understanding of the world and its possibilities according to those metaphysical assumptions, and hopefully, through the attractiveness of the neo-Confucian vision of spiritual transformation of an imperfect world, persuade readers to pursue the Confucian way.

2.2 Rebuilding the humanist spirit through cross-cultural comparisons

Tang's idealist philosophy of culture provides the theoretical framework for his explication of the spiritual value of Chinese culture through cross-cultural comparisons (Tang 1953; 1955; 1957) and his critical examinations of how Chinese culture could survive in the contemporary world and help solve problems of world culture (1975b; 1975c). Tang compared the Chinese in the twentieth century to 'flowers and fruits scattered to the winds when a tree fell', as the culture that held them together as a people came under attack by the Communists on the mainland, while overseas Chinese voluntarily or involuntarily assimilated cultures of their adoptive countries, and even societies with Chinese majority, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan, fell victim to a 'slave mentality, allowing others to tell them whether their own culture is worth anything' (1975b: 11–68). To be forced by circumstances to give up one's culture is a tragedy, and Tang had nothing but compassion for such people; but he objected vehemently to those who justified it as progress. Tang argued that given

the difficulty of finding criteria to determine whether change is progress, the only justifiable criterion for abandoning one's own culture is self-conscious certainty that it is totally worthless. Where culture is concerned, it is change that requires conscious justification, not conservatism which is an affirmation of the basis of one's very existence (1975b: 18–20).

From despair at the cultural crisis facing the Chinese is born a cultural ideal, a determination to 'replant the spiritual root' of Chinese culture. Tang spent most of his career showing that Chinese culture is far from worthless and in fact has much to offer world culture. Tang believed that cosmopolitanism must be based not on repudiation of national cultures, but on an inclusive engagement among varied cultures on the basis of equality (Tang 1955: 523). Tang's ideal world is a culturally diverse cosmopolitan humanistic (ren-wen) world (1955: 59). Rather than imposing a Western concept onto Chinese culture to elevate the latter, Tang used the term 'ren-wen', which partly translates 'humanism' (ren-wen-zhu-yi 人文主義) and commonly refers to the humanities or human knowledge, to refer to cultural achievements in the Confucian sense of 'human culture that transforms and completes' (ren-wen-hua-cheng 人文化成) (1955: 26). All cultural spirits are humanistic, and humanistic thinking is that which 'affirms and respects, in their entirety without deliberate neglect, and certainly does not obliterate or distort humanity, human relations, human way, human character, human cultures, their values and historical existence, in order to avoid reducing human beings to the non-human' (1957: 9, 10).

For Tang, the mainstream of the world's humanistic thinking is in China, not the West (Tang 1957: 37), and a thorough integration of Chinese and Western humanism is needed for a world humanism (1975c: 44–57). The Chinese humanistic spirit has its beginnings in immanent religiosity of respect for heaven and the aesthetic use-for-human-welfare attitudes toward nature and things. Without treating nature as objective phenomena to be known independent of human interests, that is non-humanistic thinking about nature, no scientific spirit developed in China (1975c: 13). Instead, the focus was on expressing human ethical nature through cultural activities. Religion is completely assimilated into culture and subordinated to ethics, which means a relative scarcity of supra-humanistic thinking involving radical transcendence (1975c: 14). In ancient China, there was little distance between human and divine, no opposition between divine will and human will (hence heaven's mandate can be changed through human effort and virtue), and divinity has the virtue of all-embracing compassionate love, which became the model for human excellence (1953: 41–9).

Confucius self-consciously developed the humanistic spirit of Chinese culture by teaching humaneness, leading people to model themselves on heaven, to cultivate the excellence of kings and heaven.[16] The essence of Chinese cultural spirit is to transcend and encompass nature and life with the humane mind (ren-xin 仁心) in people, to universalize this humane mind to view nature and life, and realize it therein to achieve culture (Tang 1953: 7). Confucius established the human way as a continuation of heaven's way, and enabled everyone to realize the spirit that unites humanity and heaven (1953: 62–5). Song–Ming Confucians' faith in 'li, qi, or xin that is subjective

yet objective and unites heaven and humanity' affirms the reality of a metaphysical spirit, and expresses the highest philosophical spirit of Chinese culture, a highest moral spirit and religious spirit (1953: 469). The humanistic spirit was weakened during the Qing dynasty with its preoccupation with philology and textual verification. Neglect and failure of objectification of its humanistic ideals in the development of scientific knowledge, industrial and mechanical civilization, production techniques, and other varied areas of social culture led to the 'revenge' of the anti-humanistic materialism of Marxist-Leninism in China (1953: 507; 1955: 274–81; 1957: 29–30).

Developing the Chinese humanistic spirit in the contemporary world means affirming the 'supra-humanistic world' of religion that people aspire to, the value of investigating the science of 'non-humanistic nature', and the value of protecting human rights and expressing equality of persons through free society and democratic politics (Tang 1957: 36). While acknowledging the importance of science, Tang opposed placing it above all other areas of culture (1955: 64). Scientific reason has inherent limits since its own use requires criteria provided by the humane mind, which is the source of all human values (1957: 112–28). Adopting science to fulfill selfish (including narrowly nationalistic) desires through utilitarian and instrumental approaches will not solve China's problems. The value of science must be appreciated on the basis of teachings on humaneness in Chinese culture and meeting its current needs assessed on its own terms, while grasping the spirit of Western culture and its difference from Chinese humanistic spirit (1953: 496; 1957: 148). Rebuilding the world's humanistic spirit requires both Chinese and Western cultures to renew themselves by returning to their respective sources, and each contributing their strengths to world culture, the ideas of freedom and democracy from the West and those of peace and socio-cultural longevity from China (1955: parts 4 and 5).

There is a tension between Tang's humanistic cosmopolitanism that affirms cultural diversity and equality, and his championing of Chinese culture which sometimes leads to claims of superiority, such as 'from one angle the Chinese cultural spirit is superior to the simpler spirit of science and democratic freedom' (Tang 1953: 500), or 'the Chinese cultural problem is at the center of today's human cultural problem' (1975c: 20). This may seem ethnocentric if one understands Tang to be claiming that the Chinese cultural spirit represents the universal human spirit.

2.3 Philosophy of philosophy: nine horizons of the spirit

In the last work of his life, *Life's Existence and Horizons of the Spirit* (1977), Tang grappled with an impressive range of philosophical problems in epistemology, metaphysics, logic, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, aesthetics, ethics, and philosophy of religion, by going through the various Western and Eastern philosophies he had studied and ranking them in a comprehensive system of 'spiritual horizons' opened up by the spirit's or mind's activities. Tang identified nine inter-connecting and mutually inter-penetrating spiritual horizons, marking spiritual progress from attention to object, to subject, and finally transcending object-subject, with higher horizons encompassing the lower ones.

Besides the three levels of objective, subjective, and beyond subject-object, the system is structured by three basic metaphysical categories of substance, forms (*xiang* 相) which express substance in its functioning, and functions, as well as three different directions in the mind's *gan-tong* (感通) activities: up-down vertical view for understanding substance; inner-outer or right-left horizontal view for understanding forms; and forward-backward or before-after sequential view for understanding functions (Tang 1977a: 17). At its most basic, *gan-tong* is feeling, but it is usually more complex in having a dimension of comprehending, communicating, or going through what is felt to reach something beyond, and also having a conative element which arises together with feeling according to the object known by the mind. *Gan-tong* synthesizes cognition, emotion, and action to achieve authentic existence and the ultimate in humanity (1977a: 13, 26) (see the table below).

The most basic cognitive activities are directed outward, resulting in the first three objective horizons. The first horizon of the scattered manifold views discrete things as substances, resulting in atomistic and individualistic philosophies (Tang 1977a: 144). The recognition of discrete individuals at different times in this horizon involves anticipating recurrence of experience, a mental activity which, when applied diachronically instead of synchronically, enables the identification of kinds (*lei* 類). The spirit could

	Vertical view Substance	Horizontal view Forms	Sequential view Functions
Objective	1. Wan-wu-san-shu-jing (萬物散殊境) Scattered manifold Viewing discrete things	2. Yi-lei-cheng-hua-jing (依類成化境) Transformation based on kinds Viewing kinds	3. Gong-neng-xu-yun-jing (功能序運境) Functioning in sequential operation Viewing causality, means-ends
Subjective	4. Gan-jue-hu-she-jing (感覺互攝境) Sensible mutual apprehension Viewing body-mind relation, time-space	5. Guan-zhao-ling-xu-jing (關照凌虛境) Contemplation in complete detachment Viewing meaning, pure forms	6. Dao-de-shi-jian-jing (道德實踐境) Moral practice Viewing virtuous conduct
Beyond object-subject	7. Gui-xiang-yi-shen-jing (歸向一神境) Monotheistic aspiration Viewing world of God	8. Wo-fa-er-kong-jing (我法二空境) Emptiness of both self and world Viewing one reality, undivided absolute	9. Tian-de-liu-xing-jing (天德流行境) Flowing of heavenly virtue Viewing nature-destiny world

therefore move on to the next horizon by overcoming the inadequacies of the first and expanding the mind's activities. The second horizon organizes discrete individuals into kinds on the basis of their forms. Change occurs when individuals enter or leave a kind. While each kind or species tends to perpetuate itself, the process also transforms the kind. This horizon is possible because human minds can form concepts of different kinds and move among them, to view oneself and others as belonging to more than one kind. This implies the capacity to go beyond limited clinging to one kind-concept to reach other kind-concepts, and to form ever more extensive kind-concepts that encompass smaller kinds (1977a: 223–5).

The third horizon is higher than the two previous ones, because the causal relation connects and penetrates the other two horizons of substances and forms. According to Tang, Western philosophy fails to explain and rationalize causality when it precludes anything in common between cause and effect, so that neither experience nor reason can discover any necessity or reality in the causal relation (Tang 1977a: 231–61). Tang believed that Chinese philosophy offers a superior understanding of causality modeled on biological production wherein species nature provides the commonality that unites cause and effect. Its most fundamental view of causality is one original substance (true cause) producing the varied phenomena of the cosmos, with *yin* and *yang* alternating as phenomenal mutual cause and effect. True causality is metaphysical. Substance or metaphysical reality is the common cause, and contains the possibility, of all phenomena. Phenomenal antecedent causal condition must be understood negatively. It acts as a 'leading cause' by negating the appearance of whatever is not the effect (1977a: 271–5). It clears the way for the expression of functioning which is the effect. The mutual negations of varied phenomena, each kind seeking to perpetuate itself at others' expense, cancel out one another and replace the forms of 'the scattered and co-existing many' with the form of 'the inter-penetrating unity' (1977a: 295).

In the fourth horizon, the mind turns inwards. Consciousness is also self-consciousness and the first three horizons are apprehended as objects of self-conscious consciousness. It presents a world wherein all existents (not just living things) feel and mutually apprehend one another through feeling (Tang 1977a: 393). In parallel with moving from being conscious of oneself as an object in the world to subjective self-consciousness, one becomes aware of others as self-consciousness aware of objects in the world and of oneself as another self-consciousness. This is the horizon of the problems of mind–body relations and of time and space. Mutual apprehension is the basis of empathy and mutual accommodation and may give rise to philosophies of world peace, socialism, and humanitarianism. However, in Tang's view, while empathy and the desire to see all things prosper in their proper place express the moral ideal of humaneness, the self-conscious formation of moral character, of worthies and sages, cannot be completed yet in this horizon.

The fifth horizon is a transitional horizon connecting the first four horizons preoccupied with external objects with the latter four concerned with the intangible worlds of meaning and ideals. The spirit opens this horizon by transcending its attachment to both external object and internal consciousness in the fourth horizon. It then contemplates forms detached from external objects and the subject's specific mental

activities (Tang 1977a: 446), to achieve intuitive understanding of pure meanings in philosophy, language, literature and art, mathematics, geometry, and logic. This contemplative horizon is the creative origin of pure culture (1977a: 559). This horizon leads to the horizon of moral practice and that of monotheistic aspiration because moral and religious ideals begin as meanings, which people then seek to realize in conduct (1977a: 560).

In contemplation, there is no moral responsibility for changing the world/self to conform to ideal meanings. To accept that responsibility is to live in the sixth horizon of moral practice. This horizon views the world and life in terms of the need to correct the morally wrong and accomplish the morally good, in a self-conscious and autonomous quest for virtuous life and perfection of virtue (Tang 1977a: 610–14). While his criterion for distinguishing the moral from the immoral is Kantian (1977a: 618), Tang's explication of this horizon – obstacles to a moral life, up-lifting of oneself from habitual life and sequential formation of virtuous conduct, expansion of life through empathy and cooperation, necessity, reality, and constancy of the moral life – is primarily Confucian. To Tang:

> Regardless of how the experienced world is, and what one encounters in this world, nothing can absolutely obstruct the existence of the moral life-and-world. And of the world's philosophies, only Confucianism can know moral life-and-world to be a highest, self-sufficient, and perfect world.
>
> (Tang 1977a: 688)

The first six horizons testify to the human spirit's capacity for apprehending objects and self-consciousness of subject. Consciousness of their difference shows that this spirit can itself transcend the opposition between subject and object and unite them, thereby opening horizons that reveal absolute reality. The last three metaphysical horizons dealing with the world of religious beliefs and ideals can be found in the sixth horizon in the sense that, consciously or unconsciously, they include moral meanings which could be assimilated into moral life (1977a: 605; 1977b: 3–4). Through the human capacity to sacrifice life for moral ideals, which implies a life and world beyond death, the spirit opens the metaphysical horizons. When the spirit rises above the objective and subjective worlds to seek communion with a higher being that removes the contradictions and imperfections of those worlds, it opens the seventh horizon of aspiration to monotheism (Christianity), which views the world of God. The eighth horizon of emptiness of world/self or salvation of all sentient beings (Buddhism) eliminates the opposition between subject and object by revealing the emptiness of both to view the one reality or undivided absolute. By beginning with understanding the nature of sentient life as suffering and asserting the Buddha nature of all sentient beings, this horizon brings a deep understanding of suffering and all-embracing compassion, which may though not necessarily be lacking in the seventh horizon if one's vision is only turned upwards towards God (1977b: 80).

The ninth horizon (Confucianism) views the world of nature-destiny by recognizing that human practice of virtue is the flowing of heavenly virtue. By sequential

viewing of life that affirms the value of the here and now, it establishes destiny through fulfilling nature. In this present-life-and-world focus and its sequential approach to transcendence, Confucianism prevents neglect of the real world and present life that monotheism and Buddhism may fall into (Tang 1977b: 185). Tang seemed to have reached an ethnocentric conclusion in a philosophical system intended to be accommodatingly universal. Tang was convinced that this Confucian horizon is the highest because it could accommodate all religions in harmony with all human cultural endeavors (1977b: 186). Sin-Yee Chan objects that such accommodation changes the other religions (Cheng and Bunnin 2002: 315). However, Tang's accommodation does not require that those religions accept the Confucian view of them, it is more a claim that insofar as religious ideals, by their very nature, must be rooted in moral ideals which are universal, they are best approached in a sequential manner by morally improving oneself and the world here and now, as this is the best if not the only path to transcendence.

According to Liu Shu-hsien, 'Tang did not try to resolve the contradictions between the different worlds he envisaged' but respected different choices that everyone must make in a given context (Liu 2003: 103). However, Tang rejected 'fragmenting' the philosophical world with inevitable clashes of necessary universal claims. The solution lies in having a 'philosophy of philosophy':

> This does not only apply a universal theory or concept to view everything, but is also able, after using it for a comprehensive overview, to transcend it and use another universal theory or concept to view everything. This journey of unceasing transcendence is a sequential journey, through which one's philosophical spirit could traverse all comprehensive overviews, and moreover review all that it has undergone, to achieve an overview of overviews.
>
> (Tang 1977a: 29)

Tang's culminating work presents us with his journey toward a philosophy of philosophy, but he would be the last to claim that his is the final word. He hoped that others would also surpass him as he believed he had surpassed earlier philosophies. He shared his own system with others in the hope that their personal experience would testify to the truth of which his own experience had convinced him, and if not, they would be challenged to continue seeking the truth.

3 Mou Zongsan

Mou Zongsan (牟宗三 1909–95) described Tang Junyi as 'a giant in the cosmos of cultural consciousness'. The two had met in 1939 and thereafter were closely associated and influenced each other in various ways (Tang 1955: 570; Mou 1968: 195; 1989: 98–101). Of the two, Mou's philosophy is often considered closer to Xiong, probably because of its more explicitly metaphysical nature. Mou had met Xiong Shili in his third year at Beijing University (1932), and the two became very close over the next decade. Xiong expanded Mou's understanding of Chinese intellectual and

cultural tradition far beyond Mou's initial interest in Zhu Xi and the *Yi-Jing*.[17] Xiong's insistence that original knowing (*liang-zhi* 良知) is real and immediately manifested, against Feng Yu-lan's claim that it was only a postulate, left a deep impression on the young philosophy undergraduate (Mou 1968: 184; 1989, 78), but it was some years before Mou made a significant advance in the metaphysical direction set by his teacher and developed his own account of Neo-Confucian moral metaphysics.

3.1 Reaching the methodological limits of Western logic and epistemology

Mou kept up his interests in both Western and Chinese philosophy throughout his life, writing works on all three major Chinese traditions – Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism – and rigorously engaging Western philosophies of both analytic and continental traditions – including Russell and Whitehead, Wittgenstein, Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger. From an early period of 'aesthetic interest' and 'imaginative intuitive understanding' marked by his interest in Whitehead's cosmology, Mou entered a period of 'structured reasoning', seeking answers to questions of 'Why?' and 'How?' by exploring the nature of logic and its philosophical basis (Mou 1941). He criticized Russell's logical atomism and theories of formalism and conventionalism; arguing for *a priori* basis to logic, he advocated a subjectivism that assimilates the logical into the epistemological.

Mou's *Critique of Cognitive Mind* (1956), written between 1940 and 1949, demonstrates the depth of his understanding of Western logic and epistemology. He critically examined the philosophical systems of Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Russell, and Wittgenstein, among others, and attempted a 'rewrite' of Kant's first *Critique* (Mou 1956: 10).[18] Mou agreed with Kant that time and space are *a priori* forms of intuitions, but treated them as a formal-scheme (*ge-du* 格度) that is 'established by transcendental imagination from the apperception of intuitions' (1956: 89–93, 292). Pure reason in the subject of understanding is to be found by uncovering the *a priori* basis of logic; purely formal systems of thinking – logic, mathematics, and geometry – are the externalization or objectification of pure reason (1956: 72–4). Instead of Kant's twelve categories of understanding, there are three other formal-schemes of the understanding in Mou's system: ground-consequence (*yin-gu* 因故); part-whole/some-all (*qu-quan* 曲全); and affirmation-negation/is-is not (*er-yong* 二用), which are discovered in the objectification of pure reason in the process of understanding (1956: 301–6).

Mou criticized Kant for assigning to understanding a responsibility beyond it: providing the *a priori* guarantee of the regulated order of phenomena. Kant could only establish the formal possibility but not the actual possibility of knowledge (and existence of objective world) because the epistemological path is metaphysically deficient since it cannot reach the metaphysical mind (*xin-ti*), the original mind in Neo-Confucianism, which alone is equal to that task (Mou 1956: 123–4). According to Mou, understanding in Kant's system is discursive (*qu-qu* 屈曲) (1971: 191) and therefore limited because its activities are in response to the manifold that it cannot itself provide. Understanding is necessarily dialectical and involves self-negation

(*kan-xian* 坎限). The cognitive mind's quest for the absolute requires 'leaping out' of this negation. Direct and unlimited knowledge is possible only on the basis of intuition, rooted in the creativity of understanding that enables the formal-schemes to appear in the activities of understanding, and undistorted by its indirect limited activities. Mou describes the cognitive mind, thus lifted out of its negation, as 'the tranquil illuminating mind' (*ji-jing-zhi-zhao-xin* 寂靜之照心) (1956: 641–7).

However, the cosmic totality comprehended by this tranquil illuminating mind has only epistemological certainty, but lacks ontological certainty. It is the end of the epistemological path, the ultimate reached by Western scholars, as well as Daoists and Buddhists. While knowing the limits of knowledge is the gaining of wisdom, its achievement is negative and unable to 'create heaven and earth, complete humanity and things' (Mou 1956: 655). In contrast, the 'orthodox great lineage' exemplified by Confucius and Mencius advance further in looking for a refuge (*an-dun* 安頓), a rightful place for the cosmos and human life to direct and govern them; one must then seek heaven's mind (*tian-xin* 天心). Mou believed that this can be achieved only in a transcendent metaphysics uniting humanity (*ren* 仁) and wisdom (*zhi* 智). Heaven's mind is also the mind of the substance of the way (*dao-ti-zhi-xin* 道體之心), attaining it is also realizing (testifying to its reality and making real) the original substance. This is crucial to establishing ethics and justifying aesthetic judgments. In Mou's view, Kant's endeavors in these areas were undermined by methodological limitations arising from the cognitive mind being confined to merely logical constructions of the transcendental (1956: 661–738).[19]

3.2 Critical Defense of Confucianism as a Practice of moral idealism

The extremely abstract philosophical thinking of Mou's early career coincided with a very turbulent period, which prompted serious reflections on Chinese culture and politics that continued after his move to Taiwan (1950) and Hong Kong (1961). Xiong's influence was evident as Mou moved from studying abstract Western philosophy toward using this philosophical training and his constantly expanding knowledge of Chinese intellectual tradition in philosophical reflections that establish a new Confucian tradition of the way (*dao-tong* 道統) and open up a new way of the outer king. Reflecting on the development and mission of Confucian scholarship, Mou identified two previous periods when Confucianism flourished: from pre-Qin Confucius to Dong Zhongshu in the early Han, and during the Song and Ming dynasties. Faced with the struggle for cultural and national survival in the twentieth century, China needs a third period of Confucianism to create a new future (Mou 1959: 1–15).

The core commitment of New Confucianism is laid out in Mou's idea of the third period of Confucianism, which must find new historical expression for Confucianism to meet the needs of creating a new era by learning from the West. Different strands of that trend of thought pick out different elements to learn from the West and advocate different methods. Mou identified logical-mathematical

learning that leads to modern science and the building of democratic political systems as universalization of reason as areas the Chinese need to learn from the West to compensate for the inadequacies in Chinese culture (Mou 1959: 4). His Hegelian history of philosophy views Chinese cultural life as primarily expressions of the ethical subject backed by the spirit in synthetic fulfillment of reason and the aesthetic subject backed by the spirit in synthetic fulfillment of energy-matter. In contrast, Western culture primarily expresses the epistemological subject backed by the spirit in analytic fulfillment of reason (1955).

Chinese culture had been dominated by a tradition of the way concerned with achieving sagehood through personal cultivation: politics had been subordinated to ethical and spiritual concerns. This tradition had developed a way of top-down administrative rule (*zhi-dao* 治道) without a way of politics that involved the people as citizens (*zheng-dao* 政道). As a result, its accompanying political tradition (*zheng-tong* 政統) evolved from aristocracy to autocracy, alternating between order and chaos, but could not develop democracy as the people even when liberated were to be ruled with benevolence by sage-kings and had nothing to do with the modern conception of politics. Although its learning of mind-nature could be called a learning tradition in one sense, it develops and relies on the intuition more than the intellect; hence there has been no academic tradition (*xue-tong* 學統) that produces knowledge in the form of logic and science. Chinese culture therefore needs to acquire an academic tradition and reconstruct its political tradition; this will expand its cultural horizon to include science and democracy without sacrificing its strengths in the area of ethics and religion, its tradition of the way (Mou 1959: 195–203).

Mou believed that, while Western scholarship and politics had strengths that could benefit the Chinese, Western culture if unchecked was moving toward self-destruction because metaphysically it did not 'see the true way', and socially it was caught between a dualistic opposition of degrading collectivism and empty individualism (Mou 1959: 5). Mou claimed that the value and function of third-period Confucianism will be global and could save the West from self-destruction and point humanity toward a new direction because Confucianism is committed to transform and complete the world with 'the reason determined by human nature continuous with divine nature' (1959: 8). This 'absolute reason' is *ren*, the universal principle driving human society (1959: 11). Its actualization requires subjective achievement of personal sagehood united with objective results of constructive socio-political actions.

Actualization of absolute reason for Mou means the practice of moral idealism, wherein Confucians as particular individuals actualize the universal principle of *ren* through the person, family, nation-state, and the world.[20] Historically, actualization through personal spiritual life and the emotions of family life have been more successful than at the levels of nation-state and the world.[21] Moral reason is most concretely and intimately expressed in family life, but objective actualization of *ren* requires moving beyond the emotional ties of family to the nation-state's norms of justice. The Confucian concept of *tian-xia* (天下) represents for Mou an international organization of nation-states that seeks unity in diversity (Mou 1959: 81–3). Beyond this, Confucians believe that in practicing *ren*, humanity and cosmos 'form one body'.

Universal *ren*, the source of moral and spiritual creativity, is manifested in a diversity of particular nation-states and cultures.

3.3 Moral metaphysics: seeking the highest good through intellectual intuition

Mou believed that philosophy's contribution to third-period Confucianism lies in metaphysics. Mou's works on Daoism (1963), Buddhism (1977), the often overlooked pre-Qin logicians (1979b), as well as Confucianism (1968–9; 1979a) offer some original views on the history of Chinese philosophy that became influential (Liu 2003: 113–17), but his primary aim was to elucidate the 'study of mind-nature' that provided the metaphysical foundation for Chinese culture. In his study of Neo-Confucianism, Mou elaborated on the comparison between Kant's philosophy and Confucianism begun in *Critique of the Cognitive Mind*; this eventually led to the philosophical synthesis that was to crown his contribution to contemporary Neo-Confucianism.[22]

Mou used a Kantian philosophical framework to clarify Neo-Confucianism and its achievement. Mou discerned three levels of meaning of moral reason. The first concerns the *a priori* nature of morality discussed in Kant's *Grundlegung*. Confucians grasp this through their teachings on 'actualizing *ren* and fully realizing *xing*'; where *xing*, though often translated as '(human) nature', should instead be compared with Kant's concept of autonomy, as Kant's concept of human nature belongs only to the sensible world associated with heteronomy. In Confucian practice, sagehood aspirants realize the 'ought' of moral law by raising moral sense and moral feelings to the transcendental level, whereas Kant confines them to the sensible. Hence, neo-Confucians go further than Kant in realizing two more levels of meaning of moral reason. Moral practice is 'moral knowing' as personal testimony of ultimate reality, different from knowledge through understanding and the senses. In Confucian moral practice, autonomy, synonymous with *xin-ti* (心體) and *xing-ti* (性體), functions as pure creativity, the creative principle of the cosmic process. For Neo-Confucians, autonomy is not merely a postulate of pure reason, an unknowable presupposition whose reality cannot be guaranteed; it is manifest reality in moral practice. Kant missed these levels of the meaning because he mistook the limits of theoretical reasoning for the limits of practical philosophy (Mou 1968: 119–96).

According to Mou, Neo-Confucians were concerned with both the objective and the subjective grounds of ethical practice: the former being the *a priori* ground of the moral (i.e. question of mind and nature) and the latter the method or approach to practice (i.e. question of skillful means, *gong-fu* 功夫). The former is comparable to Kant's 'metaphysics of morals'; Kant did not concern himself with the latter – treating the issue as one purely of philosophy; Western philosophers fail to recognize it as also one of practice. Confucian teaching of complete virtue (*cheng-de-zhi-jiao* 成德之教) includes not only metaphysics of morals but also moral metaphysics. The attention of the former is on morality, but that of the latter is on metaphysics, going beyond explicating the *a priori* nature of morality to ontological-cosmological statements about all existence. Neo-Confucians approached metaphysics not theoretically but through personal testimony of moral practice, in the actualization of the humane mind, the

realization of *xin-ti* and *xing-ti*, a creative reality that is absolutely universal, leaving out nothing, connecting the finite with the infinite (Mou 1968: 10–13, 43–5).

Moral metaphysics contradicts Kant's assertion that human beings, being finite, have only sensible intuition and discursive understanding but not intellectual intuition or intuitive understanding (understanding that intuits and has no need of concepts). Intuitive understanding proceeds from the synthetically universal that supplies its own particulars, and constitutes its own objects as complete, as things-in-themselves not mere appearances. According to Kant, human cognition refers to objects directly by intuition which is sensible because its possibility depends on the human mind being affected in a certain manner (Kant 1996: 72). Discursive understanding supplies only the analytically universal that cannot determine the particulars which are given as the manifold of sensible intuition. Depending on the existence of objects, sensible intuition is derivative. In contrast, intellectual intuition is original, a power of complete spontaneity. Such original intuition belongs only to 'the original being', God the Creator (Kant 1996: 103). Transcendental aesthetic justifies the division of objects into phenomena and noumena but gives the latter only a negative meaning: noumenon is 'a thing *insofar as it is not an object of our sensible intuition*' (Kant 1996: 317). The noumenon has positive meaning only as the object of a nonsensible, viz an intellectual, intuition.

Kant maintained that human understanding is discursive, limiting sensibility by calling things-in-themselves noumena; it also limits itself as it 'acknowledges not cognizing things-in-themselves through any categories' (Kant 1996: 320). Mou believed that it is possible and necessary to transcend this self-limitation or self-negation, and the Chinese philosophy shows how this is achieved through Confucian practice of achieving sagehood or the emancipation (*jie-tuo* 解脱) of Daoist authentic persons and Buddhas (Mou 1971: Chapters 18–21). Mou employed the concept of intellectual intuition giving direct access to noumena to explain Neo-Confucian moral knowing which realizes original substance and original mind. The personal testimony involved is intuitive and non-conceptual. Mou's claim that intellectual intuition is possible for human beings seems grounded more on hermeneutical persuasion than argumentative proof (cf. Cheng and Bunnin 2002: 333). It 'merely emphasizes that original mind and *ren*-substance, and even autonomous will, can actually be concrete manifestation' (Mou 1971: 257). Because the claim does not extend knowledge, Mou believed that he was 'following Kant', finishing rather than rejecting the imperfect Kantian system (1971; cf. Kant 1993: 139).

Mou did argue that Kant undermined his own enterprise by denying intellectual intuition, thereby reducing to mere empty words transcendent metaphysics – which investigates God, freedom and immortality – on which theology, morality, and religion depends respectively (Mou 1971: 449). Kant thought it advantageous for insight into these ideas of metaphysics and hence the highest purposes of our existence to depend 'merely on our speculative power of reason and on nothing else' (Kant 1996: 379 n.), limiting knowledge to make room for faith. For Mou, instead of speculative reason, moral metaphysics provides more concrete basis by recognizing intellectual intuition in moral practice, realizing in concrete manifestation what remain mere transcen-

dental ideas for Kant. This is not passive knowledge of the given, but something better, the creative principle, pure spontaneity of the cosmos. Through intellectual intuition, human beings transcend their finitude and gain access to infinite significance; therein lies the highest purpose of human existence. The absolute, universal, infinite, and creative original mind/*ren*-substance is God (Mou 1971: 258).[23] Moral metaphysics is also moral religion.

Human finitude explains the need for science, which moral knowing and intellectual intuition cannot produce; science belongs to the cognitive mind of discursive understanding and sensible intuition. In separating infinite God from finite man, Western thought renders science unavailable, unnecessary to God but indispensable to man. Chinese philosophy can acknowledge finite man's need for science. The infinite mind of sagehood renders science unnecessary but *qua* human, even sages need science. For the moral mind to solve particular problems of humans living (to enrich it) in the phenomenal world, for scientific knowledge to be possible, the metaphysical mind, moral reason, original knowing must self-consciously negate itself, in a kind of dialectical progress, to make room for discursive understanding, to move from non-grasping (*wu-zhi* 無執) to grasping (*zhi* 執) (Mou 1956: 13; 1961: 63; 1975: 125-9).[24] Mou borrowed the Buddhist idea of 'one mind opening two doors' – the enlightened mind opening the doors of suchness and of creation-destruction – to elucidate the human mind's finite-yet-infinite access to both phenomena (through sensible intuition) and noumena (through intellectual intuition).

Man's finitude also creates the problem of the highest good. According to Kant, the highest good for finite rational beings, the necessary object of wills determinable by the moral law, is happiness in exact proportion to morality, with virtue and happiness in each person combined as cause and effect respectively (Kant 1993: 117). However,

> every practical connection of causes and effects in the world, as a result of the determination of the will, is dependent not on the moral dispositions of the will but on knowledge of natural laws and the physical capacity of using them to its purposes; consequently, no necessary connection, sufficient to the highest good, between happiness and virtue in the world can be expected from the most meticulous observation of the moral law.
>
> (Kant 1993: 120)

The highest good is possible only by postulating immortality of the soul and 'a supreme cause of nature which has a causality corresponding to the moral disposition', that is, with intellectual intuition giving direct access to the totality of conditions, and therefore able to assign to each the truly just share of the highest good (Kant 1993: 129–32). Mou agreed that reason requires, for the possibility of the highest good, an infinite intelligence; but personalizing (*re-ge-hua* 人格化) this intelligence as Christianity does is irrational pathetic fallacy. Furthermore, since God creates noumena but not phenomena, postulating God provides no convincing assurance that the prevailing phenomenal incompatibility of virtue and happiness will be removed (Mou 1985: 234–48, 335–8). Mou's objection would not hold if the kingdom of God is

purely noumenal, but Kant understood the kingdom of God to be uniting the kingdom of ends (noumena) with the kingdom of nature (phenomena).

For Mou, Chinese philosophies, with their insights into human intellectual intuition, human beings' finite-yet-infinite being, offer more rational ways of uniting phenomena and noumena and achieving the highest good than Kant's God.[25] Infinite intelligence is *ren* in Confucianism, mysterious wisdom in Daoism, and *Prajñā* in Buddhism. They are achieved in a progression of teachings from partial to complete or perfect (*yuan-jiao* 圓教). Applying the Buddhist concept of differentiating and arranging Buddha's teachings (*pan-jiao* 判教) to Confucianism, Mou judged Wang Yangming's instruction in four phrases (*si-ju-jiao* 四句教) to be partial teaching (*bie-jiao* 別教). His student, Wang Longxi, who argued that 'If we say that in the substance of the mind there is no distinction between good and evil, then there must be no such distinction in the will, in knowledge, and in things' (Chan 1963: 687), rounded out the teaching by recognizing that 'substance, functions, the obvious, and the subtle turn on one minute point; mind, will, knowledge, and things are one'. However, this is only equivalent to Hua-yan's 'perfect teaching of the differentiating school'. For the equivalent of Tian-tai, 'perfect teaching of the unitary school', Mou pointed to Hu Wufeng's 'heaven's principle and human desires are same substance but different uses, same conduct but different conditions' (Mou 1985: 304–15). Uniting the noumena and phenomena does not require a third being but requires holistically apprehending their mutual implication and paradoxical oneness.

In Confucianism, infinite intelligence is manifest in human beings, and at its most complete in the perfect sage, who attains heaven's principle through autonomy (virtue), and through the function of creating and benefiting things, 'causes the existence of things to follow the mind' (happiness), thus uniting the kingdom of nature with the kingdom of ends (Mou 1985: 323). Infinite intelligence can manifest itself in human practice at any time, and does not have to await an unknowable afterlife or God. However, just as Kant maintained that God created nature as things-in-themselves, not phenomena, the things and nature *ren* creates also refer to the noumena. Following Kant so closely diminishes Mou's conclusion in that the highest good is once again beyond phenomena, and therefore beyond the reach of ordinary human beings; even Confucians have been skeptical sometimes of Mencius' claim that anyone can be a sage. For pessimists who believe sagehood is impossible to realize fully, Mou's solution is no more comforting than Kant's reliance on Christian dogma. It is also unsatisfactory from the perspective of providing the basis for a new outer king that must operate firmly in the phenomenal; the effectiveness of the metaphysical approach to the New Confucian goal depends on Mou's idea of the self-negation of original knowing which has attracted considerable criticisms (Fang 1997: 170; Fang and Li 1991: 280–3; Fu 1986: 29–32; Zheng 1992: 329; cf. Lin 1998: 22–5; Li 1991: 112–15; Jiang 1997: 63–139).

4 Third Generation and After?

Tu Wei-ming and Liu Shu-hsien have been identified as third-generation contemporary neo-Confucians. They have not added to Mou's impressive metaphysics, nor have they produced any philosophical system to match Tang's nine spiritual horizons. Their contributions have been mainly in promoting Confucianism as world philosophy.

Tu views Confucianism as an all-encompassing humanism which regards the secular as sacred and, through self-cultivation and good government, attempts to transform the world from within according to its cultural ideal of unity between heaven and humanity. He maintains that Confucian personality ideals – the authentic person (*junzi*), the worthy (*xianren*), or the sage – can be realized more fully in liberal democratic societies than either in traditional imperial dictatorships or in modern authoritarian regimes. Tu looks forward to a 'New Confucian Humanism [which], though rooted in the East, draws its nourishment from the West as well as from Asia' (Tu 1989: 39). He draws widely on the Western enlightenment in his elaboration of Confucianism, while at the same time expanding the meaning of enlightenment values. He argues against Asian exceptionalism that would harness Confucianism as a source of 'Asian values' to challenge and resist the human rights movement. Tu also recognizes the shortcomings of Western enlightenment mentality: it does not give enough weight to the idea of community; its values do not always cohere into an integrated guide for action, and could degenerate into acquisitive individualism, vicious competitiveness, pernicious relativism, or excessive litigiousness. Direct observation of East Asian modernization led Tu to argue that modernization is culturally differentiated: there are multiple modernities instead of a singular modernity defined by the West. Tu believes that, as Asian intellectuals have learned conscientiously from the West, it is time for European and American intellectuals 'to appreciate what Confucian humanism, among other rich spiritual resources in Asia, has to offer toward the cultivation of a global ethic' (1996: 19).

Liu Shu-hsien has also promoted a global ethic for the twenty-first century, in response to Hans Küng's call to develop a global consciousness (Liu 2001). Liu suggests that the Neo-Confucian concept of one principle, many manifestations (*li-yi-fe-shu* 理一分殊) offers a way to unity in diversity, a third way beyond absolutism and relativism. With a background in philosophy of religion, he appreciates Tang's and Mou's emphasis on the religious dimension of Confucianism. Besides his own English works explicating Chinese philosophy, Liu has also published works on Zhu Xi (1982) and other Neo-Confucian topics for Chinese readers. He has also edited several volumes on contemporary studies of Confucianism, especially since moving to the Academia Sinica in Taiwan.

Students of Tang and Mou have continued to propagate and defend their philosophies and a few others also have done extensive studies on them and other New Confucian thinkers (Cai 1982; 1987; 1996; Chen 1997; Han and Zhao 1994; Huo 1990–92; Jiang 1997; Lai 2001; Li 1982; Li 1991; 1996; Yan 1998; Yang 1998; Zhang 1994; Zheng 1992; 2000). Yet ironically, as Confucianism begins to gain positive

attention worldwide, the tide seems to be turning against, or at least leaving behind, contemporary Neo-Confucianism. Tang's and Mou's sometimes extreme criticism of Communism makes it difficult for mainland scholars to accept their philosophies completely even after Deng Xiaoping's 'opening up', while some scholars overseas are suspicious of the motive and agenda of research on Confucianism in the People's Republic of China (Fang 1997: 197–222; Zheng 1997: 306).[26] For many, Tu Wei-ming's visit to Beijing in 1985 marked the beginning of 'the return of New Confucianism to its homeland' (Makeham 2003: 85). A major research project on *Xin-Ru-Xue* was launched with government support in 1986. Within a few years, New Confucianism became a focal point in the studies of Chinese thought and culture. It laid the groundwork for the 'national studies craze' (*guo-xue-re*) of the 1990s. Besides those who merely researched Confucianism without any claim to being Confucian, some mainland scholars such as Luo Yijun (1989) and Jiang Qing (2003) began identifying themselves as New Confucians. However, most mainland scholars feel that contemporary Neo-Confucians' idealist approach and conservative cultural commitments undermine truly practical solutions to China's current problems (Fang 1997: 167–73; Zheng 1997: 311).

Many who may be considered New Confucian in the broad sense either have implicitly by their choice of which period of the tradition to emphasize, and which Western tradition to borrow from/compare with, in order to modernize Confucianism rejected Tang's and Mou's position (Tan 2004), or have explicitly attacked them. Fung Yiu-ming, an exponent of Western analytic philosophy, finds their metaphysics of 'transcendent immanence' self-contradictory. In his view, rather than using it to signify the distinctive characteristic of Chinese philosophy and culture, contemporary Confucians should abandon this 'myth' together with the ontology-cosmology of 'unity of heaven and humanity' if they wish to develop Confucianism for the new millennium (Fung 2003). Critics find contemporary Neo-Confucian solutions to real problems unconvincing because contemporary problems are assimilated into 'traditional thinking methods' (Zheng 1990: 333). Even sympathetic scholars, such as Lin Anwu, are critical of contemporary Neo-Confucian practical philosophy (Lin 1998: 40–2).[27] Lin acknowledged the important contributions of Tang and Mou, but is convinced that problems have changed, and a 'critical Confucianism' is needed more than a 'doctrine-defending Confucianism' (1998: 31). Lin has been talking about 'post-New-Confucianism' since 1994. The idea has appealed to some mainland scholars for whom (but not for Lin) the post-New-Confucian age means a rejection of contemporary Neo-Confucianism's moral idealism for a more inclusive attitude to China's cultural heritage (Makeham 2003: 42).

For contemporary Neo-Confucianism to survive and flourish as a distinctive philosophical movement, the connection between metaphysics and practice needs further clarification and strengthening. In this regard, one would do well to recall the contemporary Neo-Confucians' emphasis that their metaphysics is not Western metaphysics (traditionally understood). They are not interested in assertions of some radically transcendent world that devalues the physical and practical, the here-and-now, either as less real or less significant. What concerns them is that human beings will not fully

realize the value of this life, this world, without delving deep to reach its source, which transforms our finitude, and unites humanity with the infinite. It would be a death-knell to the movement to surrender the metaphysics, however seductive this option may be in the current intellectual climate of the English-speaking world and among those influenced by late twentieth-century Western philosophical currents.

Notes

1. This chapter will not study in detail Xu Fuguan with the other two disciples of Xiong Shili, because he is primarily an intellectual historian and he rejected the metaphysical emphasis central to this philosophy.

2. Father Brière's account of Chinese Philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century classifies Xiong as a 'Neo-Buddhist eclectic' (Brière 1965: 48). Besides translations of some passages from Xiong's main works by Wing Tsit Chan (1963: 763–72) and Tu Wei-ming (de Bary and Lufrano 1999: 547–50), there are only a handful of short discussions of Xiong's philosophy in English, the better ones by third-generation New Confucians (Tu 1979; Liu 2003, 57–72; Cua 2003, 801–6). The secondary literature in Chinese is more extensive; besides articles in collections on New Confucianism and Modern Chinese Philosophy, a few Chinese scholars have done in-depth studies of Xiong's philosophy (Jing 1991; Guo 1993; Lin 1993; Zhang 2002).

3. Addressing the appropriateness of the title given that this work departed significantly from Buddhism, Xiong replied that the critique was continuous with his earlier exposition of Buddhism, and that with truth as his only object, he 'wandered between Buddhism and Confucianism, both Buddhist and Confucian, neither Buddhist nor Confucian, he was merely himself' (Xiong 1953: 130). Opinions differ on the extent Xiong's philosophy changed before and after 1949 (Chan 1963: 765; Liu 2003: 59; Guo 1993: 89–94). The limited length of this chapter does not allow us to get into the intricate and subtle differences between Xiong's early and late works, but few would quarrel with the view that the core of his metaphysics is to be found in the *New Consciousness-Only Theory*.

4. Xiong criticizes Western philosophies of life such as Bergson's for not 'breaking through phenomena' and as a result being able only to understand life at the level of 'habitual energy-matter', drowning in 'the sea of habits' (*xi-hai* 習海) (Xiong 1953: 125–6).

5. Citations from Chinese texts are the author's translations unless otherwise stated.

6. Xiong acknowledged that the Mahayana school of being arose to counter this bias towards 'emptiness', but unfortunately the results are unsatisfactory and, in the process, it also lost the most important part of śūnyata teaching (Xiong 1953: 130).

7. This is a common metaphor in Buddhist texts, but used for different purposes.

8. The concepts of *xi* and *pi* are from the *Yi-Jing*.

9. Xiong stated explicitly that 'mind', 'life', and 'spirit' are three different names for the same thing (Xiong 1953: 177).

10. Some see him as beginning with idealism and attempting unsuccessfully to move away from it (Guo 1993).

11. Xiong revised the doctrine of Consciousness-only to mean 'subordinating the object world to the mind, so that the mind is manifest when it is able to use the object world and be its master, not to be enslaved by the object world', only then would one be liberated from worldly defilements and attain true wisdom (Xiong 1953: 51).

12. In Buddhist terminology, '*liang*' is similar to 'knowledge' (Xiong 1953: 23). Given Xiong's metaphysics, epistemology would not be primarily about 'What is knowledge?' but about the methodology of realizing original substance.

13. This contrast is only relative; it does not mean that Tang's work is completely without rigor or that Mou is never inspiring and moving.

14. Tang turned down a similar request from Ouyang Jingwu to devote himself to Buddhism even though the position at the China Institute of Buddhism Ouyang offered him would have improved his then rather straitened circumstances (Tang 1988: 41).

15. This broader concept does encompass Kant's 'moral reason' and Tang used '*li-xing*' in the sense of 'reason', when he argued that our concept-formation capacity shows that we have universal reason (Tang 1958: 220). In contrast, Mou translates Kant's 'reason' as '*li-xing*' without making any qualification, even though he also changes the meaning of 'reason' through his use of '*li-xing*'.

16. Tang recognized that the development of the humanistic spirit in Chinese culture had its ups and downs, and found sub-humanistic thinking in Mohism, supra-humanistic thinking in the *Zhuangzi*, anti-humanisitic thinking in Legalism and Chinese Marxist–Leninism (Tang 1957: 17–30).

17. Mou's first book, a study of the *Zhou-Yi*, using Western philosophical tools to show that there is philosophical system (of Metaphysics and Ethics) in Chinese thought and to formalize that system (Mou 1935) was the result of his own study of the Chinese text and its commentaries, simultaneous with enthusiastic reading of Alfred North Whitehead, from whom he acquired an interest in cosmology. For Mou's account of Xiong's influence on him, see Mou 1989, Chapter 5; 1956: 12.

18. Mou described this 'rewrite' as following the philosophical direction and spirit of Kant's works rather than their contents. Later, Mou translated all three of Kant's *Critiques* (Mou 1982; 1983; 1992–93) and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (Mou 1987).

19. Mou later admitted that his criticisms of Kant at this stage expressed his limited understanding of Kant, as he did not then appreciate fully the ontological implications of understanding in Kant's system.

20. Mou was explicitly opposing the materialism of the Communists (Mou 1959: 63–4, see also other essays in the same volume). His anti-Communism began in the 1930s with opposing what he saw as the Communists' denial of truth in the logical and epistemological errors in their understanding of dialectic; Mou also saw their materialism as destructive of human nature.

21. Yet Mou firmly believed that Confucian moral idealism provides the basis for achieving democracy with socialism, and nation-state building with world harmony.

22. Mou equated *xin-ti* with both 'moral mind' and 'metaphysical mind', which also refers to the original mind; he explains *xing-ti* as 'moral ability' and 'moral spontaneity' considered as 'inward morality', and as *ti*, it is 'moral creative reality' (Mou 1968: 44). In Mou's comparison, *ti* is comparable with Kant's noumena or intelligible world.

23. This claim should not be taken at face value (cf. Mou 1975: 28), given that God's transcendence implies radical separation. There is considerable debate about the differences between the Western conception of transcendence and Neo-Confucian 'immanent-transcendence' (Hall and Ames 1998: 190; Fung 2003; cf. Li 2001: 118–36).

24. *Phenomena and Noumena* assimilates Kant's 'phenomena' to Buddhist 'grasping' (*zhi*) and attempts to complete Kant's epistemology and elucidate Chinese philosophy by synthesizing Kant's 'grasping' ontology, pertaining to the finite cognitive mind for expedient functioning (*quan-yong* 權用), with 'non-grasping' ontology, pertaining to infinite (original) mind for regulative functioning (*jing-yong* 經用).

25. Mou used Heinrich Heine's 'invented tale' that Kant wanted to abandon the anthropomorphic conception of God, but kept it to 'appease his servant's disquiet' as evidence that the conception is based more on sentiment than reason (Mou 1985: 248; Beck's introduction in Kant 1993: xix).

26. This is not to impugn the integrity of all scholars in the People's Republic of China. Marxism as a philosophy must be distinguished from the doctrine and practice of the Chinese Communist Party, and Tang and Mou were against both.

27. Makeham considered Lin, a prominent New Confucian in Taiwan, the chief rival to Liu Shu-hsien as 'pretenders to the *daotong* inheritance' (2003: 69).

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Chapter 18

CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF CHINESE AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY: A CONTEMPORARY TREND TOWARD WORLD PHILOSOPHY

Bo Mou

1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I intend to introduce and examine one recent significant trend in modern Chinese philosophy that has become a collective movement with its distinct features especially since the beginning of the twenty-first century. One might call it the trend or movement of 'constructive engagement of Chinese and Western philosophy toward world philosophy' ('the constructive-engagement movement' for short).[1] Before giving a preliminary characterization of the constructive-engagement movement, let me first clarify what 'Chinese philosophy' and 'Western philosophy' mean here, whose identities are especially relevant to the discussion in this chapter. Though the term 'China' largely means geographical China, what the phrase 'Chinese philosophy' expresses here is not a mere geographical concept; it refers to both a philosophical tradition and its related scholarship as a whole; it is limited neither to the relevant happenings within geographical China (so it does not merely mean philosophy done in geographic China) nor to what native Chinese philosophers have done. This is especially the case for modern Chinese philosophy, some of whose significant developments I discuss below. Geographical distance and location no longer constitute a serious hindrance, as many native Chinese scholars have studied abroad, and as more and more non-native Chinese scholars have become interested, and done serious

research, in Chinese philosophy. Although the major figures discussed in previous chapters have been native Chinese living in China, this is not always the case with more recent scholars who have made significant contributions to the development of Chinese philosophy.[2] Whether they are thus entitled to be called (or intend to call themselves) 'Chinese philosophers', it is certain that the literature on the history and development of Chinese philosophy cannot ignore their contributions simply because they are not native Chinese in China; otherwise such an account is doomed to be incomplete. That is, whether one's contribution to Chinese philosophy should be considered to be part of Chinese philosophy is related neither to one's geographical location (say, whether one currently lives within the geographic territory of China), nor to one's native Chinese-speaker identity (say, whether one's mother tongue is one of the dialects of the Chinese language), nor to one's nationality (say, whether one currently has the nationality of the People's Republic of China), nor even to one's Chinese cultural identity (say, whether one can understand and appreciate the sophistications and nuances involved in the four major Chinese literary works[3]). For the sake of the healthy development of Chinese philosophy as a significant contributor to world philosophy, the foregoing historical change in the identity of active practitioners of Chinese philosophy is a good sign and suggests its constructive prospect.

Similarly with the case of the term 'Chinese philosophy', the term 'Western philosophy' here is not used to identify one single movement of thought but a collection, or a complex array, of different movements and approaches that are historically related to the West. Also, it is not the case that various methodological approaches, substantial points of view, and insights historically suggested in Western philosophy must be, intrinsically or conceptually, exclusively connected with Western philosophy, though their various manifestations might be somehow related to Western culture (for instance, the Western phonetic languages), and though some of them might be historically initiated and/or dominant in certain stages of the history of the Western tradition. The same conceptual point clearly also holds for what are called '(contemporary) Western analytic philosophy' and 'Western Continental philosophy', two major movements in contemporary Western philosophy whose identities will be discussed below.

The phrase 'the movement of constructive engagement of Chinese and Western philosophy toward world philosophy' or 'the constructive-engagement movement in comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy' here refers to a *collective* movement or trend as a whole that has emerged especially since the earlier years of the twenty-first century in some systematic way to be explained below. This movement aims to make a joint contribution to the common philosophical enterprise via comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy. It emphasizes critical engagement (via reflective criticism and self-criticism) and being sensitive to the contemporary development and resources of philosophy. In so specifying it, I do not mean that other comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy are not valid[4] nor that there have been no previous efforts in that direction.

I will now give a brief preliminary characterization of several prominent and significant features of the movement (see Section 4 below for a full characterization).

1 The constructive-engagement movement has gone beyond previous individual efforts, and has been guided by a wider vision concerning how to look at the relation between various perspectives in comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy, which it renders essentially complementary. The movement is neither to 'reform' studies of Chinese philosophy exclusively by virtue of analytic approach nor to 'reformulate' studies of Chinese philosophy exclusively by the resources of Continental philosophy.

2 The movement has prepared itself with a holistic and systematic discussion and understanding of the relation between Western philosophical tradition and Chinese philosophy concerning philosophical methodology and the nature of philosophical inquiries; this has provided a necessary theoretical and methodological preparation for a comprehensive, systematic, constructive engagement, especially concerning classical Chinese philosophy and the analytic tradition in Western philosophy, which have traditionally been considered alien to each other.

3 This movement has become a collective enterprise involving systematic efforts instead of individual scholars' personal projects. The movement is now implemented through some academic organization with its explicit constructive-engagement agenda and its systematically organized academic activities and projects.

4 The active participants in the movement are neither limited to those whose primary training and studying background lay solely in traditional Chinese philosophy nor to those who are native Chinese philosophers; it also includes scholars from other traditions (for example, mainstream philosophy in English-speaking countries); the movement has thus become an international enterprise and constitutes one effective way to move toward world philosophy.

5 The movement is especially sensitive to various resources of the post-Kant stage of modern philosophy in the Western tradition, sometimes labeled 'contemporary philosophy' in its broad sense, especially those of twentieth-century contemporary philosophy, in both 'analytic' and 'Continental' traditions.

6 The constructive-engagement agenda and fruitful research results of the movement have created a higher standard for the *philosophical* scholarship of studying Chinese philosophy: philosophical (instead of merely historical) studies of Chinese philosophy need in-depth understanding and command of the developments of contemporary philosophy in various closely related central areas together with their conceptual and explanatory resources, instead of treating them as irrelevant or alien; such understanding is essential for the purpose of constructive engagement.

7 The movement is closely or even intrinsically related to the development of studies of analytic and 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy in a distinct way of mutual enhancement.

8 As far as its fundamental nature is concerned, the movement is part of world philosophy instead of being a mere local one associated with Chinese philosophy alone; it is part of comparative philosophy in general, doing philosophy in a global context instead of being concerned only with comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy. Some constructive methodological strategies and approaches that are effectively carried out and illustrated in the constructive-engagement

movement concerning Chinese and Western philosophy can serve as a methodological template for the constructive engagement between any seemingly competing approaches in philosophical inquiries as well as the constructive engagement between Chinese tradition and other non-Western philosophical traditions.

The reader will now have a rough idea of the identity of the 'constructive-engagement' movement. Whatever one's views on the value and eligibility of the above features, it is clear that the movement has its explicit strategic goal, distinct characteristics, an active agenda, and rich academic life. It is also important to note that identifying this movement as a whole with its distinct features implies neither denying any previous individual or collective efforts in that direction nor ignoring actual or possible disagreements among its participants on relevant issues.[5]

In Section 2 I will examine studies of contemporary Western philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy, focusing on its two major movements: contemporary analytic philosophy and 'Continental' philosophy. These studies as a whole have significantly contributed to research-personnel resources as well as literature resources for the constructive-engagement movement. In Section 3, I will discuss comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy in twentieth-century Chinese philosophy, and what challenges such studies have faced. In Section 4, I will discuss how the constructive-engagement movement endeavors to meet the challenges of twentieth-century comparative studies, its significance, and its prospect with regard to world philosophy.

2 Studies of Contemporary Western Philosophy in Modern Chinese Philosophy

One of the central characteristic features of the constructive-engagement movement in modern Chinese philosophy lies in its being highly sensitive to the contemporary development of philosophy as well as ancient and modern approaches in other philosophical traditions, because its strategic goal is to contribute to the creative and constructive development of the common enterprise of philosophy and to interpret ancient thinkers' ideas and texts in philosophically interesting ways, rather than to merely give a historical description. In other words, a central concern of this movement is how contemporary studies of Chinese philosophy are relevant and can make a significant contribution to the development of philosophy. It is thus closely related to contemporary philosophy. For this purpose, one needs to know, learn with an open mind, critically evaluate, and engage constructively with contemporary developments in philosophy, with regard to methodological approaches, substantial views, and conceptual and explanatory resources. The source of the life spring of philosophical inquiry lies in constructive dialogue and critical engagement, via reflective criticism and self-criticism, among seemingly competing approaches in philosophy.

Many substantial developments were made in Western philosophy in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries through two major movements of thought: analytic and 'Continental' philosophy. Therefore, since the Opium War in the

1840s, Chinese philosophers have made serious efforts to study contemporary Western philosophy, through introducing, reflectively applying, and creatively developing the ideas and methods of Western analytic and 'Continental' philosophy. However, this does not mean that studies of Greek philosophy and Western philosophy from Descartes through Kant are irrelevant or unimportant in modern Chinese philosophy. 'Western analytic philosophy' is understood in its broad sense here: it means a mainstream Western philosophy in the analytic tradition from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle via Descartes, British empiricism, and Kant to the contemporary analytic movement. This broader understanding of the identity of Western philosophy in the analytic tradition especially makes sense when the Western analytic philosophy is in comparison with Chinese philosophy. In this way, though I focus on its contemporary development, I will also refer to the study of the pre-contemporary Western analytic tradition which forms part of contemporary analytic scholarship.

American pragmatism is sometimes considered as another major movement in contemporary Western philosophy, but I do not have a separate section on it for two reasons. First, some founding figures of American pragmatism – such as Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), William James (1842–1910), and John Dewey (1859–1952) – can be read in an analytic way or in a 'Continental' way according to various strands in their thought and the views of those who interpret them. Second, it is arguably correct that some of the major figures in the pragmatic tradition belong to one of the major traditions: Peirce, perhaps parts of Dewey, W.V.O. Quine (1908–2000), and Donald Davidson (1917–2003) belong to the analytic tradition, while parts of James and Richard Rorty (1931–2007) belong to the 'Continental' tradition. Thus, it seems reasonable in this short chapter to focus instead on the two major traditions which partially involve some major figures in the pragmatic tradition.

I will devote more space to discussing the analytic movement in modern Chinese for the following reasons:

1 Theoretically speaking, analytic philosophy and classical Chinese philosophy have been considered less relevant or even alien to each other; it is thus more interesting and challenging, even urgent, to explore how a constructive engagement between Chinese philosophy and Western analytic philosophy is possible. These two major philosophical traditions have made many distinct and significant contributions, yet some have considered them to be opposed to each other; and some in each tradition have regarded the philosophical practice in the other tradition as having merely marginal value.

2 Conceptually speaking, there are various incomplete or even incorrect accounts of the identity of analytic methodology which need clarification.

3 Historically or practically speaking, largely for the sake of the above theoretic reason, reflective efforts in exploring their relation and how they can constructively engage with each other have been significantly and emphatically made in the recent history of the constructive-engagement movement.

4 On the other hand, the ideas and methodology of 'Continental' philosophy

are usually considered to be more closely related to those of classical Chinese philosophy; they are rendered kindred in spirit in some prominent connections.

5 As explained earlier, the phrase 'Western analytic philosophy' is understood here in its broad sense: it consists of both its contemporary portion and its pre-contemporary portion, while 'Continental' philosophy is basically one contemporary movement of thought. However, I do not mean that the study of 'Continental' philosophy in Chinese philosophy is less significant, less relevant, or less substantial to the constructive-engagement movement.

2.1 Studies of analytic philosophy

In this section, I will first give a preliminary characterization of the identities of analytic philosophy and analytic methodology. I then give an examination of two dimensions of studies of contemporary Western analytic philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy.

Identity of analytic philosophy and analytic methodology

To characterize effectively and reasonably the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy and also to understand how it is possible for the analytic approach to contribute to studies of traditional Chinese philosophy, we need, first, to have a preliminary understanding of the identity of analytic philosophy and capture what methodologically underlies and unifies various strands and thoughts that are usually considered as parts of analytic philosophy, though the issue is controversial.

In many cases, a movement of thought in philosophy is largely characterized in terms of its distinguishing methodological approach as well as its substantial view (if any). It is the case especially for the analytic movement in philosophy. To characterize effectively and clearly the conception of analytic methodology, there needs to be a meta-methodological framework of the conceptual and explanatory resources to examine the structure and content of a given methodological approach. A three-dimensional meta-methodological framework as introduced in my introduction to this volume seems to fit the purpose (pp. 3–5). Briefly, a methodological approach as a whole can be looked at from three related dimensions: its methodological-perspective dimension that is intended to point to (or provide a path leading to) a certain aspect/layer/dimension of an object of study; its methodological-instrumental dimension which consists of various instrumental methods that are employed to implement (often implicitly) the methodological perspective; and its methodological-guiding-principle dimension which includes a variety of methodological guiding principles that are assumed by the agents who have taken the methodological perspective and instruments for the sake of regulating their understanding of the relation between their current and other methodological perspectives and instruments. A certain methodological perspective and its related methodological instruments can be compatible with different methodological guiding principles (adequate or inadequate); what constitutes the (descriptive) identity condition of a methodological approach lies in its characteristic methodological perspective (and its related instrumental methods)

instead of those different or even competing guiding principles that have been histori-cally associated with the agents who have taken such methodological perspective and instruments.

By 'analytic philosophy' I mean any philosophical inquiries that take an analytic methodology. By 'analytic methodology', understood broadly, I mean a methodological approach in regard to its perspective dimension and instrumental dimension that, historically speaking, has been presented and illustrated by a mainstream tradition in Western philosophy in a more or less systematic and manifest way but also more or less presented in some other major philosophical traditions, such as the Chinese tradition. In its manifest version in the Western tradition, as mentioned above, it refers to the methodological tradition from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle via Descartes, British empiricism, and Kant to the contemporary analytic movement.[6] In the Chinese tradition, it manifests itself in (strands of) many ancient thinkers' works as well as in many contemporary authors' works in their studies of Chinese philosophy, such as those of Gongsun Long and the Mohist. (If one considers analytic strands and elements, one can find them in almost all the ancient Chinese thinkers such as Zhuang Zi and Confucius.) Nevertheless, as far as Chinese philosophy is concerned, it is in modern Chinese philosophy where analytic philosophy manifests itself in the form of a movement of thought whose characteristic features will be explained below.

Conceptually speaking, the identity of analytic methodology or analytic methodo-logical approach consists in its perspective dimension and instrumental dimension. Though an agent who carries out an analytic methodological approach also often presupposes or subscribes to a certain methodological guiding principle (adequate or inadequate), the analytic methodological approach, historically and conceptually speaking, is not necessarily related to any *ad hoc* methodological guiding principles that have ever been subscribed to by those who have carried out analytic approach. Nevertheless, prescriptively speaking, the applications of analytic methodology should be guided and regulated by those adequate methodological guiding principles that are supposed to give adequate guidance to how to look at the due relation between the analytic methodological approach and other eligible methodological approaches.

By 'the perspective dimension of analytic methodology' or 'the analytic perspective' I primarily mean a type of being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective, which is intended to point to and capture the *being* aspect of an object of study (or the *being* aspect of its conceptual characterization as a meta-level object) which constitutes the 'metaphysical' foundation for a rational (inter-subjective) dialogue and is what makes (decompositional and regressive) *analysis* possible. The term 'being aspect' as a blanket term is used here as a collective noun that covers the constant, stable, regular, definite, universal, or unchanging aspect/dimension/layer/element of an object of study (or its conceptual characterization), in contrast to the 'becoming aspect' that is used as a collective noun to cover the transient, unstable, irregular, indefinite, particular, or changing aspect/dimension/layer of the object of study (if any). The being aspect of an object of thought is fundamentally captured by the two basic laws of logic, that is, the law of identity and the law of non-contradiction. In contrast to the becoming aspect of an object of study, the being aspect has its meta-metaphysical

status or semantic-ascent nature in the following sense: whether or not there really exists contradiction in nature or in the real world, the presentation of such contradiction in our language and in our thought should, or has to, be coherent observing the two laws of logic at least for the sake of mutual understanding and critical evaluation.[7] In the foregoing senses, it is this being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective that constitutes the 'metaphysical' foundation for a rational (inter-subjective) dialogue and thus mutual understanding and critical engagement. It is this metodological perspective that is presupposed by (decompositional and regressive) analysis. It is this methodological perspective whose adequate meta-philosophical understanding would provide a reasonable explanation of how a rational dialogue is possible and thus contribute to the explanation of how the constructive engagement via a rational dialogue, mutual understanding, and critical engagement is possible. It is this methodological perspective that fundamentally and methodologically unifies various analytic strands and treatments in analytic philosophy understood in a broad way.

The instrumental methods or resources of the analytic methodological approach refer primarily to the methods of conceptual analysis, logical analysis, and linguistic analysis together with their involved conceptual tools, which have been developed for the sake of logical argument, coherent explanation, or rigor assessment when an analytic approach has been taken. One unifying thing that fundamentally underlies all these, in my opinion, is the being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective.

What distinguishes analytic philosophy from other types of philosophy are neither what kinds of problems or issues are to be treated (it is certainly not distinctively defined by, say, Frege's or Russell's agenda) nor whether reasoning/justification or 'reasoned' resolution is to be sought.[8] Many of those problems and issues that analytic philosophy treats are fundamentally common issues in philosophy (see note 10 in the Introduction to this volume), though it is often the case that distinctive approaches from different traditions or within the same traditions address distinctive aspects, dimensions, or layers of these common issues or concerns. All philosophical inquiries, if they deserve to be thus called, seek 'reasoned' resolution of, or argumentation and justification for resolution of, the problems under examination based on the human being's rationality ('rationality' understood in a broad way). What distinguishes their different approaches lies in their distinctive perspectives and distinctive reasoning paths or argumentations; such distinctive reasoning paths and argumentations *per se* are sensitive, or closely related, to the nature and status of the aspects of an object of study that they set out to capture via their distinctive perspectives.

With the foregoing characterization and necessary clarification of the identity of the analytic methodological approach that features various analytic approaches or strands in different philosophical traditions, it is time to give a characterization of the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy in view of its connection and contribution to the constructive-engagement movement.

Stages and levels of the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy

One criterion for an independent and distinguishing identity of a movement of thought lies in its creative orientation, approach, or enterprise that would distin-

guish the involved portion of the movement from other movements of thought (including other similarly labeled movements of thought in other regions). Based on this criterion and for the reasons explained below, the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy is thus labeled; in view of this criterion, the constructive-engagement enterprise in the analytic movement of modern Chinese philosophy in regard to classical Chinese philosophy, as one of the primary contributing forces to the constructive-engagement movement with its creative agenda, will be highlighted in the following discussion.[9]

The development of the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy can be classified in three stages and characterized in terms of a multiple-level dynamic process:

	Reflective-introduction		Reflective-introduction
(1)	stage	/	dimension

	Reflective-application		Reflective-application
(2)	stage	/	dimension

	Creative-development	
(3)	stage / dimension	

Several notes are due. First, a stage indicator – 'reflective-introduction' in the 'introduction stage', 'reflective-application' in the 'reflective-application stage', or 'creative-development' in the 'creative-development stage' – gives one distinguishing feature of the stage under examination, which is either the primary focus of *pattern* (in the case of the reflective-introduction stage) or one of the primary focuses or dimensions of *pattern* (in the cases of the reflective-application stage and the creative-development stage) by means of which the current stage distinguishes itself from the previous one(s) and which constitutes a further development from the other dimension(s). Second, in the timeline, a former stage has been replaced by the immediately subsequent stage, and the reflective inquiry that is identified by the stage indicator of the former stage has not thus disappeared but has then become *one dimension* of the multiple-level body of reflective inquiry that is identified and highlighted in terms of the stage indicator of the subsequent stage. Third, what is primarily focused on when I give the foregoing characterization of the development stages of the analytic movement is not certain individual scholars' personal projects but some characteristics of the 'patterned' activities of a significant portion of the community of scholars who have carried out the analytic approach and who can effectively conduct (mutual) critical evaluation of each other's research results. Let me explain the three stages/dimensions.

(1) *The reflective-introduction stage / dimension.* The pioneering work at the reflective-introduction stage was done by scholars in the late Qing dynasty after the Opium War (1845). Most of those scholars were native Chinese, but some Western scholars or missionaries who then lived or traveled in China also contributed to this

process. There were two peak periods and their respective subsequent stretches. The first one was around the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and stretched to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in the mid 1960s. During this period, the works of almost all the major thinkers of the pre-twentieth-century Western analytic tradition were translated and introduced into the Chinese philosophical circle. They included representative works of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, George Berkeley, and Immanuel Kant.

During the first peak period, there were two remarkable events through which the Chinese philosophical circle had first-hand experience and understanding of the development of contemporary analytic philosophy. The first event was that Tscha Hung (Hong Qian 洪謙, 1909–92), a former member of the Vienna Circle and student of Friedrich Schlick, returned to China in the 1940s and published his collection on the philosophy of the Vienna Circle in Chinese (1945). The other event was that Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), one of the most important analytic philosophers of the twentieth century, visited China for eight months in 1920–1, giving a series of lectures introducing analytic philosophy. Through these two prominent figures' works and/or lectures, the Chinese philosophical circle encountered contemporary analytic philosophy at firsthand.

The second peak period of introducing analytic philosophy was around the 1980s which has stretched until now. During this period, many Chinese philosophers have made serious efforts in translating and introducing the representative works of most of the major figures in contemporary analytic philosophy, including Gottlob Frege (1848–1925), Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951), Peter Strawson (1919–2006), W.V.O. Quine, Donald Davidson, John Searle (1932–), and Saul Kripke (1940–). There have also appeared many good introductory books on those figures' thoughts or on topics in the core areas of contemporary analytic philosophy, including the philosophy of language and mind, metaphysics, and epistemology.[10]

Also of significance during this second peak period has been the increasing number of well-respected analytic philosophers coming from abroad to give lectures or colloquium talks in China on recent research. One systematic joint effort in this connection is the annual Sino–British Summer School of Philosophy run, since 1988, in cooperation with the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the Royal Institute of Philosophy, UK (more recently several Australian and American philosophers have also taken part).

This reflective-introduction process actively continues and has several distin-guishing features. First, with the current progress of the analytic movement stepping into its creative-development stage, the reflective-introduction activity has become one important dimension of the whole analytic movement. Second, related to this feature, it is often the case that a translator is also an interpreter and constructive-engagement researcher simultaneously. Third, some of these reflective introductions have recently focused not merely on Western resources but also pay due attention to the analytic resources in traditional Chinese philosophy. Indeed, this last feature contrasts with the introduction practice of the first peak period during which Western resources in the analytic tradition were the exclusive focus. This was mainly for two

reasons. Many Chinese scholars at that time were exploring why China was so weak and had been invaded by strong Western powers and how the West's intellectual resources had contributed to its strength. Also, there had been a stereotypical under-standing of the nature and constitution of traditional Chinese philosophy and of the identity of analytic methodology, which meant that traditional Chinese philosophy lacked analytic strands and thought. Thus some scholars neglected analytic resources in their own tradition.

(2) *The reflective-application stage / dimension.* There are two levels of the reflective application of analytic methodological approach in modern Chinese philosophy. One level is to consciously and explicitly apply a variety of instrumental methods and conceptual resources which were developed in the past reflective practice of analytic philosophy. Indeed, today, many of them have already become well-accepted academic norms in doing and writing philosophy in various areas of philosophical inquiries in modern Chinese philosophy, including studies of traditional Chinese philosophy and its related comparative studies concerning Western philosophy. The other level is that of conscious or emphatic application of the analytic *perspective* together with the foregoing instrumental analytic methods, which is intended to point to and capture the stable, definite, regular, constant, universal, and unchanging aspect of an object of study (or of its conceptual characterization), including systematic character, coherent connection, logical relation, and implications or other inter-subjectively accessible aspects of involved ideas, especially in reflective interpretations of ancient thinkers' texts and their ideas.

Such reflective applications of analytic methods in modern Chinese philosophy have been made on various fronts of philosophical inquiries. This is also the case in studies of classical Chinese philosophy. As early as the first half of the twentieth century, such scholars as Hu Shih (胡適 1891–1962), Fung Yu-lan (馮友蘭 1895–1990), and Zhang Dainian (張岱年 1909–2004) consciously applied analytic methods, more or less, in their studies of classical Chinese philosophy.[11] Especially since the late twentieth century, many of the analytic instrumental methods have become part of the accepted academic norms in studies of classical Chinese philosophy. For example, in the editor's note to the prospective authors in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, the analytic instrumental methods are emphasized in this way: 'we wish to emphasize in this journal employment of critical and rigorous methodology of analysis, organi-zation and synthesis, for we believe that Chinese philosophy, including those parts which have been labeled mystical, can be intelligently examined, discussed, and communicated. We will thus aim at clear and cogent presentation of ideas, arguments, and conclusions'.[12] During the past three decades, with their background of philo-sophical training and knowledge of the contemporary development of philosophy, a number of scholars of classical Chinese philosophy have made significant efforts, through their own substantial works and via available resources, in practicing and/or enhancing the analytic approach in studies of Chinese philosophy.[13] These efforts constitute an extension of the analytic movement of modern Chinese philosophy in studies of classical Chinese philosophy in view of reflective applications of analytic methods.

It can be noted that the reflective application of analytic methods in interpreting ancient thinkers' ideas in classical Chinese philosophy is sometimes combined with projects in the constructive-engagement enterprise at the current creative development stage of the analytic movement with regard to the study of traditional Chinese philosophy. The reflective-application of analytic methods and the constructive-engagement treatment thus constitute two related aspects of the whole enterprise. On the one hand, the constructive-engagement projects often involve first carrying out an interpretative project for the sake of understanding and elaborating ancient thinkers' ideas and their sophisticated implications via applying contemporary analytic conceptual and instrumental resources; on the other hand, an interpretative project with its objectives in reflectively applying analytic resources is often guided by some more general purposes and agenda in the constructive-engagement enterprise.

(3) *The creative-development stage / dimension*. There are two kinds of creative research work in the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy. The first kind consists of creative research projects in the traditional core areas of contemporary analytic philosophy. There are two fronts to this research. One is composed of research projects in the core areas of contemporary analytic philosophy on its various front issues. Generally speaking, creative-development research projects in this connection have been carried out largely by native Chinese philosophers who have received their doctorates in philosophy abroad and whose dissertations focus on significant issues in these core areas (some of them are now teaching in the USA). Some of them have already published their original research papers, either arising out of their dissertation or from new research projects in this connection, in well-respected, peer-reviewed international journals in the field of analytic philosophy.[14] These publications can be taken as evidence of the quality of current creative research in this connection.[15]

The other front is composed of creative research projects on the thoughts of significant figures of contemporary analytic philosophy. As far as their current research agenda and focuses are concerned, many Chinese scholars in China who have worked in analytic philosophy focus more on significant figures in the analytic tradition (such as Schlick, Wittgenstein, Frege, Russell, Quine, and Davidson) than directly on the issues under current discussion in the international journals in analytic philosophy, for understandable reasons.[16]

The other kind of creative research work of the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy consists of research projects aimed at constructive engagement between substantial approaches in analytic and traditional Chinese philosophy to a series of philosophical issues and topics. Such creative research work is especially significant and philosophically interesting for reasons to be addressed. In Section 3 below, I discuss this front of research work and explain how the two kinds of creative research work on the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy are closely related.

2.2 Studies of 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy[17]

The phrase 'Continental philosophy' here means a post-Kantian movement of thought or tradition that was historically connected with, or started by, a group of French and German philosophers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The canonical figures of this tradition include Georg W.F. Hegel (1770–1831), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), Søren A. Kierkegaard (1813–55), Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844–1900), Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1907–61), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80), Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005), Jürgen Habermas (1929–), Michel Foucault (1926-84), Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), and Richard Rorty (1931–2007). Brian Leiter, an expert on Nietzsche's philosophy, characterizes Continental philosophy as 'sometimes distinguished by its style (more literary, less analytical, less reliance on formal logic), its concerns (more interested in actual political and cultural issues and, loosely speaking, the human situation and its 'meaning'), and some of its substantive commitments (more self-conscious about the relation of philosophy to its historical situation)'.[18] It can be noted that the geographical label is doubly misleading. For one thing, as in the case of the label 'Western philosophy', philosophical ideas and methods involved in this philosophical movement are not intrinsically or conceptually associated only with the European Continent. For another thing, those important analytic philosophers such as Frege, Carnap, Wittgenstein, and Tarski finished their substantial works in Europe, but they are not 'Continent' philosophers.

Many scholars feel that the style and many ideas of 'Continental' philosophy are generally kindred in spirit with those of traditional Chinese philosophy. This partially explains why many in the Chinese philosophical circle feel more at home when they read the works of 'Continental' philosophy than when they read the works of Western analytic philosophy. As Wang Guowei (王國維 1877–1927, a modern Chinese philosopher introduced in Chapter 15) saw it, 'Most philosophical doctrines can be characterized as "the lovely are not trustable while the trustable are not lovely"' (Wang 1983: 22). Wang rendered 'lovely' both traditional Chinese philosophy and 'Continental' philosophy, in contrast to the doctrines in the Western analytic tradition which Wang renders trustable but not lovely. As a matter of fact, he found Schopenhauer's philosophy as lovely as many accounts in classical Chinese philosophy. He was perhaps the first scholar to introduce Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's philosophies as 'pure' philosophy to the Chinese reader via his several journal articles in 1903. Since then, through several generations of modern Chinese philosophers' joint efforts in the past 100 years, almost all of the representative works of the above major figures of 'Continental' philosophy (especially Nietzsche, Sartre, Husserl, Heidegger, and Rorty) have been translated into Chinese. It is worth mentioning that Xiong Wei (熊偉 1911–94) played an important role in introducing Heidegger into China. In the 1930s he was a student of Heidegger at Freiburg University; when he went back to China in the 1940s he translated and introduced Heidegger's works to the Chinese philosophical circle.

Some of the works by these Western philosophers have multiple Chinese translations (some even published roughly simultaneously) and enjoy huge print runs, especially during peak times of 'the fever of [a certain figure or a certain doctrine]' among humanities intellectuals or, more widely, among young people (such as 'the fever of Sartre' around the mid-1980s and 'the fever of Nietzsche' around the late 1980s). That is one sign of how they are 'lovely' and popular among young people during these periods. There have also appeared many introductory books and papers on 'Continental' philosophy.

As in the case of translation of representative works of Western analytic philosophy, the above translations were made largely by professional philosophers working in the relevant areas. For those Chinese scholars, translation is one of the most effective ways of learning and pondering the ideas in the original works. Such translations have also provided accessible resources for in-depth research to the extensive membership of the Chinese philosophical community so that a much-needed circle of eligible critics has become available. In this way, the condition for in-depth studies of 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy has matured. In this context, similar to the case of Chinese studies of Western analytic philosophy, there are two fronts of the serious academic research dimension of studies of 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy. One front is that of studies of some of those major figures or doctrines in Continental philosophy without explicitly involving comparative engagement with Chinese philosophy; the other front is that of comparative studies of Chinese philosophy and Continental philosophy. Below, I introduce some sample works on the former front, while, in Section 3, I address the later front of the research as part of comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy.

Since the 1980s, there have appeared a significant number of Chinese research books and papers on the philosophies of Nietzsche, Sartre, Husserl, and Heidegger. Based on the opinions of some leading Chinese experts in 'Continental' philosophy with whom I have talked and on the views held by the authors of some recent literature on such studies, it is safe to say that, generally speaking, the quality of some books on Heidegger and Husserl is relatively or much higher than that on other figures' studies.[19] In contrast with the situation in studies of analytic philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy, generally speaking there are more scholars in China who are interested in, and carry out, studies of 'Continental' philosophy. One contributing element, as mentioned above, is that many ideas in 'Continental' philosophy seem more 'lovely' than those in analytic philosophy; many Chinese philosophers who favor or are more accustomed to 'lovely' poetic delivery of philosophy have thus felt more at home when reading 'Continental' philosophy (such as Heidegger's works). One good example is phenomenology. In this area of studies, there are more research-personnel resources and a well-organized academic network. The Chinese Society for Phenomenology has organized many academic activities in this area. Its well-run website has provided an effective forum for critical discussion and served as a rich database where much of the Chinese literature concerning phenomenology studies is available.[20]

* * *

Although there have been remarkable achievements in studies of analytic and 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy, both studies of analytic philosophy and of 'Continental' philosophy have room for improvement. First, for some global and local reasons, studies of analytic philosophy and of 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy have traditionally been two separate enterprises without effective dialogue and constructive engagement. This situation partially reflects a general divisive situation between analytic and 'Continental' philosophy in the international arena of philosophy and is partially reinforced by a general figure-concerned orientation in past studies, which will be addressed below. Second, studies of contemporary analytic philosophy and 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy are largely figure-concerned instead of being philosophical-issue-engagement concerned. This situation has its historical reasons. As mentioned above, many scholars are also translators of the representative works of those major figures in analytic and 'Continental' philosophy; many of them have been naturally motivated to focus on those figures whose representative works are not only available but also are at least 'literally' captured when being translated. In contrast, the philosophical-issue-engagement research demands a good command of up-to-date scholarship on the issue under examination, whose literature is either not easily available or demands attentive examination of some approaches that might be unfamiliar. The figure-concerned studies are indeed necessary but also need to be adequately balanced by the philosophical-issue-engagement studies; for eventually we do not study those major figures for their own sake or merely for the sake of historical interest but for the sake of figuring out how their ideas and approaches can contribute to our understanding and treatment of the issues and concerns of philosophical significance. Third, generally speaking, for both studies, a certain kind of peer-review process as an effective and indispensable means of quality control has yet to be extensively implemented and seriously enforced.[21]

When I address these connections, there is also another relevant consideration: the constructive-engagement movement under examination here can, and has already endeavored to, make its distinct contribution to some positive change in these connections, as will be explained in Section 4.

3 Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy: Toward Constructive Engagement

Comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophy as a kind of reflective practice in modern Chinese philosophy is not new. Since Chinese thinkers first encountered and introduced Western philosophy in the nineteenth century, such studies have already been carried out, as illustrated by the work of some of the prominent thinkers examined in Part V of this volume. But there are distinct orientations and methodological approaches in such comparative studies to serve different purposes; what distinguishes the constructive-engagement movement lies in those characteristic features, some of which are highlighted here and will be further addressed in the next section. Nevertheless, all the previous works in comparative studies in modern Chinese

philosophy have contributed to the development of the constructive-engagement movement. Below, I first identify and characterize three major orientations and distinct purposes in comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy; I then briefly introduce some remarkable achievements as sample illustrations in the philosophically oriented efforts in such comparative studies.

3.1 Three orientations and methodological approaches in comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy

Without pretending to exhaust all working orientations, I intend to highlight three major orientations and their distinct methodological approaches in comparative studies and give a brief examination of their connection and due relation. In my introduction to this book, I explained two methodological emphases of this volume as a whole (pp. 5–10); these two emphases are related respectively to two of the three major orientations in studies of Chinese and comparative philosophy to be examined here, that is, the reflective-interpretation-concerned orientation and the philosophical-issue-engagement orientation. I have thus already introduced some necessary conceptual resources and addressed the involved methodological issues of the two orientations. In this way, my examination of the three orientations is given here briefly in certain methodological connections.

The first orientation under examination aims to give a historical and descriptive account. That is, the primary concern and purpose of this type of comparative study is to accurately describe relevant historical facts and pursue what thinkers actually thought, what resources they used, and what *appears* to be similar and different. The orientation of this type of comparative study thus might be called 'historical orientation', and its methodological approach aims at accurate description of historical facts. The historical orientation requires its practitioners to cover a vast range of historical data to give such 'factual' description. Traditionally, this orientation together with its associated methodological approach is still considered by some scholars as *the exclusive orthodox one* in studies of Chinese and comparative philosophy. As far as studies of Chinese philosophy abroad are concerned, this orientation and its corresponding methodological approach are typically taken in Chinese studies or Sinology as the primary approach to Chinese and comparative philosophy.

When comparative projects are critically evaluated, there seem to be four sorts of often heard complaints or charges against four 'inappropriate things' or 'sins'. The alleged 'sins' are these: (1) oversimplification; (2) overuse of external resources; (3) exaggerated distinction; and (4) blurring assimilation. Some of these are sometimes taken for granted as 'inappropriate' in two senses: it is thought that any simplifying of the object of study or using external resources to characterize it is doomed to be excessive and thus deserves to be charged with 'over'simplification or 'over'use; also, it is sometimes (explicitly or implicitly) assumed that the four complaints may be made indiscriminately in evaluating any comparative project without regard to the purpose and methodological strategy of that study. Indeed one needs to be alert to the

above four 'sins' in comparative projects with a historical orientation. First, to describe something accurately, it is taken for granted that one should not simplify what is complicated; in other words, simplification is always oversimplification: any simplification is guilty of being negatively excessive; and simplification is thus identical with falsification. Second, as for overuse of external resources, any conceptual or explanatory resources which are used to interpret a thinker's ideas but which were not actually used by the thinker herself are rendered inadequate or excessive: use of external resources is always overuse of external resources.[22] Third, in this approach, exaggerated distinctness often results from oversimplification of one or both parties under comparative examination in the direction of ignoring part(s) in one tradition that have something in common with another tradition or account; in this way, insofar as the charge of oversimplification has been declared legitimate, the charge of exaggeration of the due distinction (if any) between the two would be appropriate. Fourth, in this approach, blurring assimilation often results from overuse of external resources to interpret one or both parties under comparative examination, especially when the external resources used to characterize one party come from the other party; to this extent, insofar as the charge of overuse of external resources has been declared legitimate, the charge of the resulting assimilation of blurring the distinction between the two would also be an adequate one.

There would be nothing wrong or inadequate with the historical orientation and its methodological approach *per se*, when the orientation/approach is adequately taken as one of a number of the alternative orientations/approaches, instead of the exclusive one, and when one can see its limitations in serving some other distinct purposes in comparative studies. What is at issue is this: Are there any orientations and approaches other than the historical orientation that would be adequate, and, more importantly, necessary in view of certain purposes in studies of Chinese and comparative philosophy? The question can be phrased in another way: How are other legitimate orientations and methodological approaches possible and necessary? As suggested in my explanation of the two methodological emphases of this volume in my introduction, I address two other orientations that are philosophically more interesting and relevant to the reflective-interpretation purpose and the philosophical-issue-engagement purpose than the historical orientation.

The second orientation in comparative studies is concerned with reflective interpretation[23] through elaborating a thinker's ideas under examination; the primary purpose of this orientation is to enhance our understanding of a thinker's ideas via some effective conceptual and explanatory resources, whether those resources were actually used by the thinker herself. It is clear that a purely historical approach does not fit here. To elaborate and understand the thinker does not amount to figuring out exactly how the thinker actually thought; instead, such interpretation and understanding might include the interpreter's elaboration of the implications of the thinker's point, which might not have been considered by the thinker herself, or the interpreter's representation of the thinker's point in clearer and more coherent terms or in a more philosophically interesting way, which the thinker herself might have not actually adopted. In both cases, given a thinker's ideas (in one tradition or account) under

interpretation, some effective conceptual and explanatory resources well developed in another tradition or account are consciously used to enhance our understanding of, and elaborate, the thinker's ideas; those resources used are thus tacitly and implicitly, but constructively, in comparison and contrast to those original resources by means of which the insight or vision was somehow delivered, insofar as such comparison of the two distinct sorts of resources is not expressly and directly conducted.

In this way, the alleged overuse of external resources is not necessarily an inappropriate treatment but might really enhance our understanding of a thinker's ideas or clarify some original unclear or confusing expression of her ideas. Consequently, the endeavor *per se* of using external resources in this orientation is not automatically inappropriate and thus is not doomed to be a sin, as it would be in the historical orientation. Note that, when those explanatory and conceptual resources are used, they are not intended to assign the same degree of articulated systematization and of mastering some conceptual and explanatory resources to an ancient thinker but to enhance our understanding of her ideas delivered in the text. For this explanatory purpose, it is not merely legitimate but beneficial to employ more explicit or clearer conceptual resources to elaborate some otherwise implicit and hidden thing (say, coherence and connectedness) in a thinker's ideas that was sometimes less clearly delivered or even ill-expressed for lack of those contemporary explanatory and conceptual resources that are unavailable to the ancient but to us.[24] It can also be noted that, when a thinker's line of thought and her ideas lack articulated systematicity in their language expressions, that does not amount to saying that the thinker's line of thought and her ideas *per se* go without (implicit and hidden) coherence and connectedness deep in a thinker's ideas. Consequently, we cannot base ourselves merely on this lack of articulated systematicity in language expression to judge that the thinker's text itself is not a philosophical work when the text was indeed intended to deliver her reflective ideas. At this point, with the previous and current methodological considerations, some further elaborations of the thinker's line of thought and her surrounding reflective ideas via adequate conceptual and explanatory resources available to us are genuinely needed, instead of being the mere issue of preference, for the sake of enhancing our understanding of the thinker's ideas including their due implications.

As indicated in discussing the historical orientation, 'blurring' assimilation might result from 'over'use of external resources when interpreting one or both parties under comparative examination, especially when the external resources used to characterize one party come from the other party. But, for the purpose of reflective interpretation, the resulting assimilation is not necessarily inappropriate but might illuminate the essential connection and common points between the assimilated ideas at the fundamental level so as to enhance our understanding of those ideas.

As I have already explained in my introduction to this volume, an interpreter in a comparative project with the reflective-interpretation-concerned orientation, instead of the historical orientation, is free, or indeed tends, to focus on a certain aspect, layer, or dimension of a thinker's ideas based on the purpose of the project, her reflective interest, and so on. Indeed, instead of a comprehensive coverage of all aspects or

dimensions of the object of study, focusing on one aspect or dimension is a kind of simplification. It should be clear that, if the purpose of a comparative project is to focus on interpreting or elaborating one aspect or dimension instead of pretending to give a comprehensive historical description, charging the practitioner of this project with *over*simplification or doing something excessive in simplifying the coverage into one aspect or dimension would be both unfair and miss the point.

Let us agree that a comparative project should be guided by some comprehensive understanding. But a comparative project taking a certain methodological perspective through focusing on one aspect of the object of study is not incompatible with a comprehensive understanding. At this point, what needs to be recognized is an important distinction between a methodological perspective as the current working perspective and the methodological guiding principle that an agent presupposes when taking the methodological perspective and that would be used by the agent to guide or regulate how the current perspective would be applied and evaluated in view of some other eligible perspective(s). One's reflective practice *per se* of taking a certain methodological perspective amounts to neither reflectively rejecting some other eligible methodological perspective(s) nor presupposing an inadequate methodological guiding principle which would render ineligible other eligible methodological perspectives (if any).

We have discussed three 'sins' (i.e., 'oversimplification,' 'overuse of external resources', and 'blurring assimilation') that might be charged against a comparative project with the interpretation-concerned orientation. How about the other one, the sin of 'exaggerated distinction'? This case is more complicated than it may appear. This 'sin', as discussed above, is connected with the 'sin' of oversimplification when the comparative project assumes the historical orientation. But when a comparative project takes the interpretation-concerned orientation and does 'simplify' the object of study by focusing on one aspect of the object of study, is it automatically guilty of the sin of 'exaggerated distinction'? The distinction between the methodological perspective and the methodological guiding principle, as explained in my introduction to this volume, is useful here again. What is at issue is whether the interpreter has assumed an adequate methodological guiding principle to guide and regulate how to look at the relation between the current methodological perspective used as a working perspective and other relevant methodological perspective(s) that would point to other aspects of the object of study. Consequently, when one evaluates a comparative project, what really matters is for one to look at what kind of methodological guiding principle is presupposed behind the working perspective; only when this is examined can the charge of 'exaggerated distinction' be adequately evaluated.

Now let us move onto the third orientation under examination, that is, the philosophical-issue-engagement orientation aiming at joint contribution to common philosophical issues. The primary purpose of this orientation in comparative studies is to see how, through reflective criticism and self-criticism, both sides under comparative examination could jointly and constructively contribute to a series of philosophical issues or topics, rather than focus on providing a historical or descriptive account of each or on interpreting some ideas historically developed in a certain tradition or

account. Typically, in comparatively addressing a common issue of philosophy, some substantial ideas historically developed in distinct philosophical traditions or accounts are explicitly and directly compared with the aim of showing how they could jointly and complementarily contribute to the common concern in some philosophically interesting ways. This comparative orientation together with its methodological strategy directly, explicitly, and constructively conducts philosophical engagement and is thus considered to be most philosophically interesting. I have given an analysis of the typical procedure of carrying out a comparative project primarily with the philosophical-issue-engagement orientation when explaining the second methodological emphasis of this volume in my introduction, Section 1.3.

It should be noted that, if a comparative project, which explicitly has one of the preceding orientations, is considered as a project-simplex in comparative studies, a comparative project in philosophical practice might be a complex that goes with a combination of two or more orientations. A comprehensive project concerned with a historical figure often consists of such a combination. Recognition of the characteristic features of the above three distinct comparative orientations and their respective methodological approaches would help us discriminatively treat different stages or parts of a comparative project-complex.

Traditionally, comparative projects with the foregoing third and second orientations (especially when resorting to contemporary development and resources of philosophy) have yet to receive sufficient emphasis. First, as far as comparative projects regarding Chinese and Western philosophy are concerned, a comparative project sometimes tends to be taken as a mere byproduct or extension of studies of classical Chinese philosophy which itself sometimes tends to be taken largely as merely historical studies of the history of (classical) Chinese philosophy. Second, on the other hand, the comparative approach as a methodological approach has not yet been considered primarily as an effective approach to doing philosophy *per se*. Third, for some, the above four 'sins' (especially, those of 'oversimplification', 'overuse of external resources', and 'blurring-assimilation') have been more or less considered (taken for granted) as obviously inappropriate 'sins' and have thus discouraged reflective efforts in the direction of the third orientation (or even the second orientation) which would often unavoidably but appropriately commit some of those 'sins' in many cases. Fourth, most importantly, Chinese and Western philosophy (especially Western philosophy in the analytic tradition) are sometimes taken as being essentially alien to one another; this kind of mentality would undermine or pre-empt any serious reflective efforts in the comparative projects with the third orientation and, in my opinion, negatively contribute to prejudice Western philosophers as well as some scholars of Chinese and comparative philosophy to assume that Chinese philosophy is not philosophy.

Now, as more and more philosophers in the fields of Chinese and comparative philosophy have a holistic understanding of Western philosophy (both its past and its contemporary development, both its appearance and its deep concerns, and both its distinct working perspectives and its guiding principles at a deep level) and become constructively engaged with Western philosophy on a series of fundamental common concerns and issues, it has become more widely agreed among the philosophers who

are familiar with both Chinese and Western philosophy that they are not essentially alien to one another: they have common concerns with a series of fundamental issues in philosophy and have taken their characteristic approaches to them. They thus could learn from each other and jointly contribute to the common philosophical enterprise through a constructive dialogue and engagement. Consequently, more and more philosophers in studies of Chinese and comparative philosophy feel a serious need to emphasize the comparative projects of the third and second orientations, though this emphasis certainly would not deny the legitimacy and due value of the first orientation as one effective approach but stress its constructive compatibility with the other orientations.

3.2 Efforts and achievements in philosophically oriented comparative studies toward constructive engagement

With the above examination of the three major orientations and their distinctive methodological approaches to serve different purposes, in the remaining part of this section I briefly examine some serious efforts and achievements in comparative studies with the above third and second orientations whose associated approaches might be called 'philosophically oriented' approaches in contrast to merely historically oriented approaches. These serious efforts have contributed to the development of the constructive-engagement movement, for it has emerged and developed as a collective movement out of these individual reflective efforts in comparative studies primarily with the third and second orientations, though the former has some general distinct characteristics, which are briefly mentioned in Section 1 and will be further explained in the Section 4. Historically speaking, such philosophically oriented efforts and achievements have been made basically on three research fronts or carried out by three distinct groups of research personnel, but they have joined their forces in the common enterprise of comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy, though still with their distinctive while complementary characteristics.

The three groups of research forces are these: (1) those who have originally (as far as their research careers are concerned) and continually participated in contemporary studies of classical Chinese philosophy; (2) those who have originally and continually participated in studies of 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy; (3) those who have originally and continually participated in studies of analytic philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy. Collectively speaking, (1) is a traditional force while (2) and (3) are relatively new forces. It can be noted that the actual borders between the three groups of research forces are not clear-cut, especially in some individual cases: a particular author might belong to different groups at different times or even simultaneously. For example, Fung Yu-lan can be classified into both (1) and (3), though more in (1) and less in (3); in contrast, He Lin (賀麟 1902–92) can fall into both (2) and (1), though more in (2) and less in (1); in another contrast, Jin Yuelin (金岳霖 1895–1984) can fall into both (3) and (1), though more in (3) and less in (1). Such vague borderline cases or blurring identities are not harmful; rather, they indicate a healthy convergence of joint forces, especially in the case of

comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy. They have helped to break up related traditional barriers between the three areas of studies, that is, that of analytic philosophy, that of 'Continental' philosophy, and that of classical Chinese philosophy, which have been considered remarkably different or even alien to each other (especially the first one to the last two) and whose studying forces are historically divided and differently located.

In contrast to the treatment in previous chapters, my treatment in this connection is to list some figures' representative works as sample illustrations, instead of giving detailed evaluations of their works, for four reasons. First, the major works of most of the figures mentioned below have been produced in the past three decades or so; worthy academic works (especially philosophical ones) are expected to stand their own historical tests in regard to their intrinsic value and historical status (if any); clearly this needs time and a due historical distance. Therefore, it would be wise for me not to issue such evaluations of them at this point and leave such work to future generations of philosophers with their due historical distances and in their better critical positions. Second, as indicated at the outset, what is emphasized in this chapter is the constructive-engagement movement as a collective whole rather than individuals' achievements. Third, such extensive evaluations are understandably beyond my capacity. Fourth, limitation of space is another consideration. There is one more note. Such a brief introduction is pretended to be neither exhaustive nor exclusive but to serve the purpose of illustration as well as to provide relevant information for the reader.

In contemporary studies of classical Chinese philosophy, comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy conducted by Wang Guowei, Hu Shih, and Zhang Dongsun in the Chinese enlightenment movement of the late nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century have been discussed in Chapter 15; comparative studies conducted by major figures in contemporary Neo-Confucian philosophy such as Xiong Shili, Tang Junyi, and Mou Zongsan have been examined in Chapter 17. Besides these, in contemporary studies of classical Chinese philosophy, there are a significant number of comparative works of philosophical interest and weight that have been published. A list of examples can be given here, though it is not pretended to be complete. Robert Allinson's comparative examination of the *yin-yang* and Hegelian models of interaction (2003); Roger Ames's and David Hall's comparative work on the issue of self, truth, and transcendence (1998); Steve Angle's work on Confucian and Western views on human rights (2002); Chung-ying Cheng's (成中英) study on the *Yi-Jing* philosophy through his hermeneutic approach (2003); Kim-chong Chong (莊錦章) (2007), Antonio Cua (柯雄文) (2005), Philip J. Ivanhoe (2002), Kwong-loi Shun (信廣來) (1997), and Edward Slingerland (2003)'s effective application of relevant conceptual/explanatory resources of contemporary philosophy to their studies of early Chinese virtue ethics; Yiu-ming Fung's (馮耀明) interpretation of Gongsun Long's thought from the perspective of analytic philosophy (1999); A.C. Graham's (1919–91) comparative studies on the correlative way of thinking and rationality (1992); Chad Hansen's comparative study on the relation between language and thought (1983; 1992); Chenyang Li's (李晨陽) study on the relation between

Confucianism and modern democracy (1999); Shu-hsien Liu's (劉述先) work on global ethics (2001); Robert C. Neville's comparative study on Boston Confucianism (2000); David Nivison's comparative work on the issues of weakness of will and of moral motivation-action (1996); Brian Van Norden (2002) and Jiyuan Yu's (余紀元) (1998) work on Confucian and Western (Aristotelian) virtue ethics; David Wong's (黃百銳) comparative study on moral relativity (1985); Kuang-Ming Wu on Chinese body thinking from a hermeneutic point of view (1996). The works (see "Bibliography") by those scholars who carry out comparative studies of Chinese-Western philosophy in two recent projects as given in Mou (2006) and (2008) are also examples of this kind.

Some experts in 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy have pointedly carried out their researches in view of comparative engagement with classical Chinese philosophy. One serious earlier effort is He Lin's comparative study on Hegelian philosophy and on the thoughts of Lu Jiyuan and Wang Yangming (1942). Also, Xiong Wei applied Heidegger's later thinking on language to deal with the issue of ineffability of the ultimate reality raised by Daoism and Chan Buddhism.[25] More recently, on this front, examples of the remarkable research results include: Youzheng Li's (李幼蒸) work on Chinese ethics from the hermeneutico-semiotic point of view (1997); Qingjie Wang's (王慶節) work on Heidegger and a hermeneutical interpretation of Confucianism and Daoism (2004); Wang Shuren's (王樹人) work on the Chinese image-thinking perspective and the representative Western perspective (2005); Ye Xiushan's (葉秀山) work on how Chinese and Western philosophies can be integrated (2002); Zhang Qingxiong's (張慶熊) work on Xiong Shili's Neo-Consciousness-only philosophy and Husserl's phenomenology (1995); Zhang Shiying's (張世英) work on Hegel, Heidegger, and traditional Chinese philosophy (1995); Zhang Xianglong's (張祥龍) work on Heidegger and Chinese *Dao* of Heaven (1996).

As far as the creative research work in studies of analytic philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy is concerned, as indicated above there are two kinds: one consists of creative research projects in the traditional core areas of contemporary analytic philosophy; the other of creative research projects in constructive engagement between the analytic approach and traditional Chinese philosophy. The latter is unique in the analytic movement in China, which distinguishes itself from the analytic movements in other traditions. Such creative research agenda can contribute to the development of analytic philosophy *per se* on two fronts. First, it can deepen our understanding of the nature, characteristics, scope, and limit of analytic methodology through its meta-philosophical and meta-methodological inquiries into philosophical methodology via comparative examination of analytic methodology and certain representative methodological approaches in Chinese philosophical tradition. Second, it can bring new, distinctive perspectives, insights, and visions to treating some issues and concerns in the core areas of analytic philosophy.

Concretely speaking, one earlier comparative-engagement effort is the debate between Tscha Hung's logical positivist view and Fung Yu-lan's neo-realist view on the status and role of metaphysics during the 1940s. Another significant earlier work is Jin Yuelin's monograph *Lun-Dao* (1940), which is comparative in nature to the extent

that he incorporates into one philosophical system the conceptual and explanatory resources from both Chinese and Western traditions and makes his original points on the structure and nature of the world.

In recent years, two significant collective projects that explicitly pursue constructive engagement between significant figures in analytic philosophy and Chinese philosophy are the projects 'Davidson's philosophy and Chinese philosophy' and 'Searle's philosophy and Chinese philosophy';[26] both have already resulted in substantial research products.[27] The two constructive-engagement projects have several distinguishing characteristics:

1 They together constitute the first of their kind to investigate in-depth how a major figure in Western (contemporary) mainstream analytic philosophy and some thoughts and strands in Chinese philosophy could jointly contribute to the common philosophical enterprise in philosophically interesting ways.

2 The two projects explore fundamental issues and concerns in philosophy from distinct comparative approaches that resort to conceptual and explanatory resources from both the analytic and Chinese traditions instead of merely from one tradition.

3 Through such case studies of constructive engagement, these two projects have shown how Chinese philosophy and Western mainstream analytic tradition are not essentially alien to one another: they have many common concerns with a series of fundamental issues and could jointly contribute to the common philosophical enterprise.

4 Through (2) and (3) above, the two projects have shown how constructive engagement in comparative studies is possible and how such comparative methodology of constructive engagement is important or even indispensable in general philosophical inquiry.

5 The two projects, through (1) and (2) above, can play a positive or even strong exemplary role for further constructive engagement of this kind in regard to both philosophical methodological approach and the substantial treatment of fundamental issues and concerns in philosophy.

It can be noted that, although these two projects focus on the comparative engagement between Western *analytic* philosophy and Chinese philosophy, they are guided by general methodological guiding principles that reflect central features of the constructive-engagement movement to be further explored in Section 4.

All these earlier and more recent efforts in the philosophically oriented comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy have contributed to the emergence and development of the constructive-engagement movement. On the other hand, the constructive-engagement movement as a collective enterprise has its own general, distinct characteristics, which have been embodied through the above efforts and especially implemented by recent efforts in a systematic way. In the next section we will have a further look at these distinct characteristics of the constructive-engagement movement in modern Chinese philosophy toward world philosophy.

4 Distinct Features of the Constructive-Engagement Movement Toward World Philosophy

The development of the constructive-engagement movement in the early twenty-first century as a collective enterprise and with its systematic character, is related to, but also distinguished from, traditional studies of Chinese and comparative Chinese–Western philosophy. As indicated above, the comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophy is not new. Reflective application of analytic methods (especially instrumental methods) or distinctive methods in 'Continental' philosophy in studies of Chinese philosophy is not new either. What distinguishes the present constructive-engagement movement from previous comparative projects lies in its general distinct features in the following eleven connections, some of which were briefly sketched in Section 1 of this chapter.

(1) Generally speaking, the constructive-engagement movement as a whole has moved beyond previous individual efforts, each of which typically features a specific perspective in comparative studies, and has been guided by a wider vision concerning how to look at the relation between various eligible but seemingly competing perspectives in comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy: it renders essentially complementary those eligible perspectives that do capture some aspects or layers of objects of study, instead of indiscriminately rendering one single finite perspective exclusively eligible. In this connection, its strategic aim is neither to 'reform' studies of Chinese philosophy exclusively by virtue of the analytic approach nor to 'reformulate' studies of Chinese philosophy exclusively by the resources of Continental philosophy. However, this means neither that *any* specific project that is part of the movement has to be comprehensive in its manifest current coverage nor that it has to take a comprehensive perspective complex as its current working perspective; what makes a difference lies in the above methodological principle that guides the project with a due vision concerning how to look at the relation between the current subject/concern and other subjects/concerns and between the current working perspective and other eligible perspectives.

(2) As far as the methodological dimension of the movement is concerned, a systematic, in-depth meta-philosophical discussion of the relation between Western (especially analytic) and Chinese philosophical traditions concerning philosophical methodology and the nature of philosophical inquiries has provided a necessary theoretical and meta-philosophical preparation for a comprehensive, systematic constructive-engagement enterprise. For example, as analytic philosophy and classical Chinese philosophy have been considered by many to be less relevant or even alien to each other, a systematic and in-depth meta-philosophical discussion of how their constructive engagement is possible – especially in view of their respective methodologies – has provided an indispensable methodological preparation for subsequent in-depth investigations on how they can make a joint contribution to our understanding and treatment of a series of concrete issues. One such systematic methodological preparation is presented in the anthology, *Two Roads to Wisdom? Chinese and Analytic Philosophical Traditions* (Mou 2001b). When a movement of thought in philosophy has its systematic meta-philosophical reflection on its own nature, direction, and

methodology, this reflective endeavor would be viewed as one mark of its maturity and one necessary condition of its long-term healthy development.

(3) As far as its subject coverage is concerned, the constructive-engagement movement is comprehensive,and includes the examination of a series of fundamental issues in such important areas as metaphysics, the philosophy of language and mind, and epistemology, instead of focusing merely on issues in ethics and social and political philosophy. In the past, there has been one quite widespread stereotypical under-standing of the nature and scope of traditional Chinese philosophy that renders it philosophically valuable only in regard to its thoughts on moral and social–political issues. Though also emphasizing the necessity of Western and Chinese philosophers learning from each other, some see such mutual beneficial engagement as valuable and valid only in regard to such limited areas as ethics and social and political philosophy. But this view has turned out to be incorrect, as individual scholars' explorations in the past decades and recent collective-engagement projects in such important areas as metaphysics, the philosophy of language, and the philosophy of mind, together with their fruitful substantial research results, have convincingly shown it.

(4) As regards its engagement mode, the constructive-engagement movement emphasizes direct and critical but constructive dialogue between the engaging parties (whenever situations allow) for the sake of effectively carrying out reflective criticism and self-criticism and making joint contributions to the common enterprise of philosophy; indeed, this is one of the meanings of the phrase 'constructive engagement' that captures one crucial character of philosophical inquiries, that is, critical engagement for the sake of making joint contributions to the understanding and treatment of philosophical issues. This style of constructive engagement, seen in a series of recent projects, has significantly motivated participation in the projects. For example, the recent constructive-engagement projects of Davidson's and Searle's philosophy with Chinese philosophy have effectively and successfully adopted such a critical-engagement approach.

(5) As for its collective and systematic character, the constructive-engagement movement is not some individual scholars' personal project but has already developed into a collective enterprise. This shows the degree of its maturity and the extensive consensus on the need of its constructive-engagement strategy. This helps to generate its related eligible community that can provide decent critical examination of the works in the constructive-engagement scholarship. In particular, the movement is now effectively implemented through organizational forces. One contributing organization in this connection is an academic association, the International Society for Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy (ISCWP), established in 2003. The ISCWP has systematically planned and organized a series of academic activities and projects explicitly for the sake of the constructive-engagement purpose and agenda. The above conception of constructive engagement of Chinese and Western philosophy has been explicitly and formally documented in the constitution of the ISCWP as follows:

> With the preceding general purposes, the Society emphasizes (but is not limited to) the constructive engagement between Chinese philosophy and

> Western mainstream philosophy (analytic tradition as well as continental tradition in the West in their broad senses); the Society stresses the sensitivity of such comparative studies to contemporary development and resources of philosophy and their mutual advancement; and, through the characteristic path of comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy, the Society strives to contribute to philosophy as common human wealth as well as to respective studies of Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy. The Society also emphasizes building up a channel and outlet for the academic exchange and communication between the homeland of Chinese philosophy and the Western world in philosophy.[28]

The above citation concisely reflects a number of the key features of this movement and serves as the guide for the association's agenda and organizational activities.[29]

(6) The participants in the movement include not only those who major in traditional Chinese philosophy and those who are native Chinese philosophers, but also include scholars from other philosophical communities of the world (for example, those in mainstream philosophy in English-speaking countries). The movement has thus already become an international enterprise and provides one effective channel for international cooperation, dialogue, and constructive engagement toward world philosophy. For example, in recent years, two prominent analytic philosophers, Donald Davidson and John Searle, have been active participants in the movement, as indicated above. Other well-respected scholars in the analytic tradition that have been drawn to this enterprise include Michael Krausz (2006), Ernie Lepore (2006), A.P. Martinich (2006a; 2006b), Adam Morton (2001), Avrum Stroll (2008), and Samuel C. Wheeler (2006). Though studies of Chinese philosophy are not among their specification areas, they have made contributions to studying Chinese philosophy either through their valuable works on meta-philosophical and/or methodological issues involved in the constructive engagement of Chinese and Western philosophy or directly through exploring common issues in such studies.

(7) As far as its research outcomes are concerned, the movement has already produced substantial research results on a series of concrete issues, neither stopping at armchair speculation nor remaining at the level of purely meta-philosophical discussion of how such constructive engagement is possible, though the latter discussion is necessary and has provided indispensable theoretic and methodological preparation for its healthy development, as emphasized in the above characterization of the second feature. Such in-depth detailed analysis of how distinct approaches in Chinese and Western philosophy to some concrete issues can constructively engage with each other have been given not merely in those of the individual works listed in the last section that have contributed to the development of the constructive-engagement movement, but also in some remarkable research results from recent collective efforts. Two anthology volumes for the two collective research projects in the movement are already in print: *Davidson's Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement* (Mou 2006a) and *Searle's Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement* (Mou 2008a).

(8) As regards its relation to contemporary philosophy, the movement is especially sensitive to various resources of the post-Kant stage of philosophy, sometimes labeled 'contemporary philosophy' in its broad sense, especially those of twentieth-century philosophy, in both analytic and 'Continental' traditions. The reason is this. One primary purpose of the constructive-engagement strategy in studying Chinese philosophy is to inquire into how to make contributions to the common issues and concerns in the common enterprise of philosophy; for this purpose, the movement as a whole has paid much attention to, and has been concerned especially with, two things: first, distinct approaches to those common issues and concerns that have been suggested from other traditions (especially those in contemporary analytic philosophy and Western 'Continental' philosophy), and, second, new developments of philosophy as explored in various areas of contemporary philosophy. The first concern renders the movement comparative in character, while the second renders the movement sensitive to up-to-date developments of philosophy and conceptual-explanatory resources in contemporary philosophy; both concerns render the movement especially active in comparative engagement with various distinct approaches from other traditions in contemporary philosophy and in incorporating various conceptual-explanatory resources developed in contemporary philosophy.[30]

(9) As for the standards of philosophical scholarship, the constructive-engagement agenda and fruitful research results of the movement have raised the standard for the *philosophical* scholarship of studying Chinese philosophy to this extent: *philosophical* (instead of merely historical) studies of Chinese philosophy need in-depth under-standing and command (not merely introductory-level knowledge) of the developments of contemporary philosophy in various closely related central areas together with their conceptual and explanatory resources, instead of rendering them irrelevant or alien. It has been realized that such understanding and treatment is not a mere preference but a must for the constructive-engagement purpose. In other words, when studying Chinese philosophy for the sake of constructive engagement, one cannot be satisfied merely with an introductory level of understanding, or stop at an outdated level of understanding, of relevant subjects and their related conceptual-explanatory resources in contemporary philosophy; rather, one needs to have an up-to-date, in-depth understanding, including the careful reading of the relevant literature in contemporary philosophy and being sensitive to its new developments on relevant fronts.

(10) As far as its relation with other contemporary movements of thought in modern Chinese is concerned, the movement is closely or even intrinsically related to the development of studies of analytic and 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy in a unique way of mutual enhancement. It can be noted that the enterprise of constructive engagement between analytic and traditional Chinese philosophy would bear positively or even significantly on some other engagement fronts between analytic philosophy and other philosophical movements in world philosophy. One such front is that between analytic and 'Continental' philosophy. It is arguably right that the reflective practice of modern Chinese philosophy has some characteristic edges to contribute to this enterprise, though the conflict between the analytic and 'Continental' traditions has traditionally been considered to be an

'internal' one within the Western tradition. For one thing, generally speaking, many modern/contemporary Chinese philosophers were exposed to a variety of philosophical traditions when they received their basic philosophical education. Second, many ideas and approaches in classical Chinese and in Continental philosophy have been considered to be on a similar methodological track or are kindred in spirit, thus the reflective practice in carrying out constructive engagement between analytic philosophy and classical Chinese philosophy will provide some positive experience, helpful insights, and effective approaches to the constructive engagement between analytic and 'Continental' philosophy. In this sense, it is especially philosophically interesting and reflectively constructive to look at the relation between analytic philosophy and 'Continental' philosophy through the third eye of Chinese philosophy via such constructive-engagement efforts. At the end of Section 2 I identified three connections in which studies of analytic and 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy have room to improve and indicated that the constructive-engagement movement can, and has already tried to, make its distinct contribution to positive change in the three connections. The discussion in this paragraph explains how the constructive-engagement movement can help bridge the divisive gap between (studies of) analytic and 'Continental' philosophy. Furthermore, the philosophical-issue-engagement agenda of the movement together with its aforementioned wide vision can provide effective opportunities to bring together the two studying forces of analytic philosophy and of 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy through their jointly participating in some projects on common issues.[31] Indeed, in so doing, the movement has also provided one effective channel for peer review and critical discussion of Chinese philosophers' recent works in these areas. This helps to improve the current situation in regard to peer review and critical evaluation in studies of analytic and 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy.

(11) As far as its fundamental nature and direction are concerned, the movement is part of world philosophy instead of a mere local one associated with Chinese philosophy alone; it is part of comparative philosophy in general within a global context. Methodologically speaking, and in view of its fundamental philosophical concern, the constructive-engagement movement in modern Chinese philosophy is not limited to its constructive engagement with Western philosophy but also engages with other philosophical traditions as well as between various movements within Chinese philosophy. To this extent, the constructive engagement between Chinese and Western philosophy can serve as a methodological template for the constructive engagement between any two (or more than two) seemingly competing approaches in philosophical inquiries toward world philosophies, say, between Chinese tradition and other non-Western philosophical traditions such as Indian and African. Indeed, this is one distinctive feature and direction of the constructive-engagement movement, as it is characterized in terms of 'a trend toward world philosophy' in the title of this chapter, especially in view of its methodology and its fundamental concern. First, its methodological strategy is general in nature in this sense: it is expected to be applicable to the comparative engagements between seemingly

competing approaches (either from distinct traditions or within an array of different views of the same tradition) in philosophical inquiries as well as between Chinese tradition and other non-Western philosophical traditions. Second, one fundamental concern of the constructive-engagement movement is to inquire how, via reflective criticism and self-criticism, distinct modes of thinking, methodological approaches, visions, insights, substantial points of view, or conceptual/explanatory resources from various philosophical traditions and/or different styles/orientations of doing philosophy, can learn from each other and make a joint contribution to the common philosophical enterprise and/or series of common concerns and issues of philosophical significance.[32]

As for the prospects for the constructive-engagement movement, I believe that it is one promising and representative direction of studies of Chinese philosophy toward world philosophy, though I by no means claim that this is the exclusive direction or approach. The past reflective practice of the constructive-engagement movement as a whole has shown its constructive, open-minded character and attitude toward all those elements or parts of diverse and distinct approaches that can enhance our under-standing and treatment of various objects of study under philosophical examination; for the movement strives for their constructive engagement of distinct approaches for the sake of their joint contribution to the common philosophical enterprise. As explained above, this is one objective of the constructive-engagement movement toward world philosophy.

NOTES

1. How to label the movement is relatively unimportant. The point is that the movement is not merely an armchair strategy on paper; it is already a substantial, collective reflective practice that has resulted in substantial scholarship. The movement is characterized in terms of 'constructive engagement' here because, first, the phrase captures crucial features of the movement; second, the label has been historically associated with some prominent events and projects in the movement to be mentioned below. Also note that the term 'movement' here is used in its neutral, non-political sense in English, though its usual Chinese counterpart '運動' is sometimes used with a political association.

2. One could argue that what such scholars have done for Chinese philosophy in, say, the West are merely studies *of* Chinese philosophy rather than Chinese philosophy *per se*; but the best of these will eventually become worthy assets and solid parts of Chinese philosophy *per se* as scholarship.

3. That is, *San-Guo-Yan-Yi* 《三國演義》 [*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*], an epic historical novel by Luo Guanzhong (1330–1400); *Xi-You-Ji* 《西遊記》 [*Journey to the West*], a humorous sixteenth-century novel; *Shui-Hu-Zhuan* 《水滸傳》 [*Outlaws of the Marsh*], a historical novel whose popular seventeenth-century version is by Jin Shengtan; *Hong-Lou-Meng* 《紅樓夢》 [*Dream of the Red Chamber*], by Cao Xueqin (1715–63), which is the greatest and best-loved Chinese work of fiction.

4. Indeed, reflective efforts in the three movements covered by the preceding three chapters in this volume can all be broadly characterized in terms of the comparative examination of Chinese and Western philosophy.

5. As suggested by the heading of Section 3, 'Comparative studies … toward constructive engagement', previous efforts and achievements in relevant directions have contributed significantly to the emergence of the constructive-engagement-oriented comparative studies into such a collective movement.

6. As far as the coverage of analytic tradition in Western philosophy is concerned, I agree with Donald Davidson who understands 'analytic tradition' or 'analytic method' in a broad sense traced back to Socrates' *elenchus* method (cf., Davidson 2001); also see Glock (2008). The remaining question is what kind of methodological perspective fundamentally underlies, and makes possible, all these crucial features of the *elenchus* method (rational dialogue for seeking critical engagement, mutual understanding, and thus reflective progress, etc.); as I will discuss below, it is a kind of being-aspect-concerned perspective in a metaphysically minimally loaded sense. Notice that some scholars tend to identify the analytic philosophy in a narrow sense, i.e., the contemporary analytic movement; their focuses are more on distinctions between a variety of analytic methods within the analytic tradition understood in the above broad sense. For this kind of treatment, for example, see Corrado (1975) and Clarke (1997).

7. Nicholas Rescher makes this point in Rescher (1994: 40–1).

8. Jonathan Cohen characterizes analytic philosophy in terms of whether 'a reasoned resolution' of problems in philosophy is to be sought (see Cohen 1986: 49).

9. It can be noted that, in accordance with the previous identity of (modern) Chinese philosophy, what is called 'analytic movement of modern Chinese philosophy' or '(studies of) analytic philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy' is different from what is called 'analytic philosophy in China'. The former involves a cross-geographical-territory concept that is applied also to what has been done by Chinese analytic philosophers abroad; in contrast, the latter involves a geographical-territory-restricted concept that is applied merely to what has been done within the territory of geographic China. In a recent book on analytic philosophy in China (Hu Jun 2002), the author does not consider the quality works published in well-respected international journals by Chinese analytic philosophers who currently study or work abroad; but he is honest in what he intends to do as suggested in the book title *Analytic Philosophy in China* [分析哲學在中國 *Feng-Xi-Zhe-Xue-Zai-Zhong-Guo*]. Indeed, the author has his reasons for adopting such a coverage strategy, some of which are understandable in the current situation in China; and this strategy has its convenience and advantages. On the other hand, it also goes with some disadvantages. One is that this geographical-territory-restricted coverage has to ignore or dismiss some significant dynamic development of the analytic movement of modern Chinese philosophy as a whole and some intrinsic connection and coordinated efforts among different portions or forces of the Chinese analytic movement (as illustrated in some significant efforts in the constructive-engagement movement to be examined below), given the foregoing understanding of the identity of (modern) Chinese philosophy.

10. Among others, Tu Jiliang has made an extraordinary contribution to introducing contemporary analytic philosophy to the Chinese philosophical circle through his own translations, introductory works (for instance, Tu 1987), and editorial works.

11. See Hu Shih (1919); Fung Yu-lan (1931; 1934); Zhang Dainian (1937).

12. The passage is cited from a recent issue of the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*; a similar passage also appeared in earlier issues.

13. The relatively senior scholars with such an analytic orientation in their studies include, but are not limited to, Chung-ying Cheng, Kim-chong Chong, Antonio Cua, Angus Charles Graham, Chad Hansen, Yiu-ming Fung, Philip Ivanhoe, Lao Sze-kwang, David Nivison, Kwong-loi Shun, and David Wong.

14. It is known that original research in contemporary analytic philosophy is primarily given as papers in well-respected, peer-reviewed international journals; some works that need more space for systematic accounts are given in the form of monographs under peer review published by academically respected publishers, which are distinguished from introductory books, textbooks, or books produced without peer-review procedure.

15. As far as original research papers published in the past two decades are concerned, some examples are given as follows: Xiang Chen's paper on the philosophy of science published in *Journal for General Philosophy of Science*, Chenyang Li's paper on metaphysics published in the *Review of Metaphysics*, Chuang Liu's paper on the philosophy of science published in *Erkenntnis*, Bo Mou's papers on the philosophy of language and metaphysics published in *Synthese*, Peimin Ni's paper on metaphysics published in *Nous*, Guangwei Ouyang's paper on social-political philosophy published in *Legal Theory*, Xinli Wang's paper on the philosophy of science published in *Diálogos*, Ming Xu's paper on philosophical logic published in *Synthese*. To strengthen the academic connection and exchange between Chinese philosophers studying abroad on the current front of contemporary analytic

philosophy and Chinese philosophers at home in China, and to introduce the former's recent research results to their colleagues in China for their criticism, some of these papers on analytic philosophy have been translated into Chinese by their authors and published in Mou (2002a). Although some of the above authors no longer work on issues in contemporary analytic philosophy, their solid training in methodology and substantial knowledge in analytic philosophy bear favorably and substantially on their subsequent works on some other fronts and subjects of philosophy (including studies of classical Chinese philosophy).

16. Examples of the fine scholarship on this front include these: Tscha Hung's work on Schlick's philosophy (1945), Wan-Chuan Fang's work on Davidson's view on events (1985), and Linhe Han's work on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (2000).

17. This section is based on my discussion of relevant issues with Youzheng Li and Xianglong Zhang, two leading Chinese scholars of 'Continental' philosophy, and in reference to recent relevant literature (especially, Xianglong Zhang *et al.* 2002, and Huang Jiande 2007). I do not pretend to be an expert on any of the major figures in 'Continental' philosophy. Nevertheless, sometimes it can be healthy to have an 'outsider' from the same philosophical community observe and comment on some general characteristics of such studies, especially in view of its status and relation with other parts in the common philosophical enterprise.

18. Cited from www.philosophical gourmet.com/analytic.asp.

19. In Heidegger studies, Zhang Xianglong (1996), Jin Xiping (1995), and Chen Jiaying (1995) are representative. In Husserl studies, Ni Liangkang (1995) and Ye Xiushan (1988) are influential. Li Youzheng advocates a unified understanding of phenomenology and hermeneutics through the framework of semiotics and gives his thoughtful analysis of the subject in Li (1993 [2007]).

20. See http://cnphenomenology.com.

21. As far as studies of 'Continental' philosophy are concerned, this critical-review issue is not special to the situation of studies of 'Continental' philosophy in China. Let me start with a citation from a philosopher's recent critical comments on the situation of studies of 'Continental' philosophy at the home of 'Continental' philosophy, i.e., the European Continent: 'Many philosophers in many European countries, especially within non-"analytic" circles, are very happy to publish only in their native languages in journals published by their local friends and colleagues, without the kind of peer reviewing that goes on in major "analytic" philosophy journals … if you simply rely on your network of friends to get your work published, this is unlikely to improve the quality of your work. And if you publish only in, say, Italian, no one around the world is going to read you anyway (even if your work is good) … With this ranking, the ESF is saying, "if you guys want to keep counting an article in *Rivista fi Filosophia* [a philosophy journal in Italy] as much as an article in *Philosophical Review*, knock yourself out, but stop pretending to be intellectually honest".' The passage is cited from Gualtiero Piccinini's blog article 'European Journal Rankings' in the Internet philosophy blog 'Brains' (http://philosophyofbrains.com) on June 23, 2007, responding to the European Science Foundation's 2007 report of ranking academic journals in various disciplines (www.esf.org). I am not sure to what extent this critical comment is applicable to the situation of studies of 'Continental' philosophy in modern Chinese philosophy; but the issue addressed here can be viewed in a constructive way; though the tone of the cited critical comments is a bit harsh, it seems to hit the point home. Now we all know that the current practice of peer review, even in the international arena of analytic philosophy, has its problematic aspects (e.g., review time is too long, a reviewing peer has her or his own 'subjective' position), and we also know that an author from a non-English-speaking country needs to make extra efforts in language to work out a submission to respected peer-reviewed international journals (almost all of them are currently English-language journals). Nevertheless, a certain kind of peer-review process is necessary to ensure quality.

22. By 'external resources' I mean those resources that were not actually used by the ancient thinker under discussion when the resources are identified from the historical point of view or with the historical orientation. Nevertheless, as I explain later, using the very term 'external' in some situations would simply miss the point in regard to the purpose of the third orientation to be discussed.

23. Here I use the term 'interpretation' in a narrow or straightforward sense as specified here (in terms of elaborating and understanding) rather than in a broad or implicit sense in which all the three orientations discussed here could be somehow identified as being 'interpretation-concerned'.

24. It is another matter when a thinker intentionally uses some seemingly paradoxical remarks to make some points. However, such occasions imply neither that the ideas delivered by these remarks *per se* are actually incoherent nor that the points in question could not be delivered effectively in clearer terms without paradoxical appearance.

25. Cf., Xianglong Zhang (2006). Also see Xiong Wei (1997).

26. Two related international conferences as critical-engagement forums for the two projects, organized by the International Society for Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy (ISCWP), were recently held in China: one was the conference 'Davidson's Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement', co-sponsored by the Institute of Philosophy and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, held in Beijing in 2004; the other was 'Searle's Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement', co-sponsored by the Division of Humanities and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, held in Hong Kong in 2005.

27. See Mou (2006a; 2008a).

28. The full text of the ISCWP constitution is available from the ISCWP website: http://sangle.web.wesleyan.edu/iscwp/.

29. There are other sister academic associations some of whose activities and projects, as a matter of fact, have contributed to the emergence and development of the constructive-engagement movement in various ways, whether or not the foregoing constructive-engagement purpose, emphasis and strategy have been explicitly specified and documented in their constitutions or charters. Such academic associations include the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy (SACP), the International Society for Chinese Philosophy (ISCP), and the Association of Chinese Philosophers in America (ACPA); many members of these academic associations share the same reflective interest in comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy.

30. For example, to jointly implement the two related concerns in this connection, the ISCWP as one contributing force to the movement has established a workshop-roundtable series, i.e., ISCWP's *Beijing Roundtable on Contemporary Philosophy*, which directly and explicitly address the two concerns in a joint way. The *Beijing Roundtable on Contemporary Philosophy* has successfully held workshops in the summer of 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 and well fulfilled the constructive-engagement purpose in this regard.

31. This strategy has in fact already been implemented through some of the ISCWP's recent projects (e.g., via its annual workshops: see n. 29) in which Chinese philosophers working in analytic and 'Continental' philosophy sat side by side exploring common issues and learned from each other via critical engagement.

32. For example, a recent project in this regard is a conference project organized by the ISCWP with the theme 'philosophy of language: constructive engagement of distinctive approaches'; this project has brought together distinct approaches from different traditions to various common issues in the philosophy of language and explored how they can make a joint contribution to our understanding and treatment of those issues via constructive engagement.

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Appendix 1
COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF PHILOSOPHERS

Chinese philosophy	*Western philosophy*
2200 BCE	
Xia dynasty (2070–1600 BCE)	
2000 BCE	
Shang dynasty (1600–1046 BCE)	
Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE)	
800 BCE	
Spring and Autumn period (722–481 BCE)	Thales (640–546 BCE)
Confucius (551–479 BCE)	*Founding of Rome* (508 BCE)
	Heraclitus (535–475 BCE)
500 BCE	
Warring States period (480–222 BCE)	Parmenides (515–450 BCE)
Mo Zi (470–391 BCE)	Anaxagoras (500–428 BCE)
Yang Zhu (5th cen. BCE?)	Empedocles (ca 495–435 BCE)
Lao Zi (before 4th cen. BCE?)	Protagoras (485–415 BCE)
	Zeno of Elea (ca 470 BCE)
400 BCE	Socrates (470–399 BCE)
Zhuang Zi (375–300 BCE)	Democritus (460–370 BCE)
Mencius (371–289 BCE)	Plato (427–347 BCE)
Hui Shi (350–260 BCE)	
Gongsun Long (320–250 BCE)	
	Aristotle (384–322 BCE)
	Pyrrho (360–270 BCE)
300 BCE	
Xun Zi (298–238 BCE)	
Han Fei (280–233 BCE)	
Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE)	
Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)	

200 BCE
Dong Zhongshu (179–104 BCE)
Huai-Nan-Zi Text (?)

100 BCE

CE
Wang Chong (27–97?)   Jesus Christ (ca 6 BCE–30)

100 CE

200 CE
The period of Three Kingdoms (220–80):   Sextus Empiricus (2nd/3rd cen.)
Wei (220–65) / *Shu-Han* (221–63)/   Plotinus (204–70)
   Wu (222–80)
He Yan (ca 207–49)
Xun Can (ca 212–40)
Xi Kang (223–62)
Wang Bi (226–49)
Jin dynasty (265–420)
Ouyang Jian (late 3rd cen.)

300 CE
Guo Xiang (d. 312)   Augustine (354–430)
Dao An (312–85)
Hui Yuan (336–416)

400 CE
The Northern and Southern dynasties   *Fall of Roman Empire* (476)
   (420–589)   Boethius (ca 480–ca 526)
Seng Zhao (384–414)
Bodhidharma (fl. 460–534)

500 CE
Sui dynasty (581–618)
Zhi Yi (538–97)
Ji Zang (549–623)
Du Shun (557–640)

600 CE
Xuan Zuang (596–664)
Fa Zang (643–712)
Tang dynasty (618–907)
Shen Xiu (ca 605–706)
Hui Neng (638–713)

700 CE

900 CE
The five dynasties (907–60)
Song dynasty (960–1279)

1000 CE
Shao Yong (1011–77)   Anselm (1033–1109)
Zhou Dunyi (1017–73)
Cheng Hao (1032–85)
Zhang Zai (1020–77)
Cheng Yi (1033–1107)

1100 CE
Zhu Xi (1130–1200)
Lu Jiuyuan (1139–93)

1200 CE
Yuan dynasty (1206–1368)   *Renaissance begins in Italy* (1215)
                                           Thomas Aquinas (1224–74)

1300 CE
Ming dynasty (1368–1644)   William of Ockham (1285–1347)

1400 CE
Wang Yangming (1472–1529)

1500 CE   Copernicus (1473–1543)
                                           Francis Bacon (1561–1626)

1600 CE   Galileo Galilei (1564–1642)
Qing dynasty (1616–1911)   Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)
Huang Zongxi (1610–95)   René Descartes (1596–1650)
Wang Fuzhi (1619–92)   Baruch Spinoza (1632–77)
                                           John Locke (1632–1704)
                                           Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716)

1700 CE
Dai Zhen (1723–77)

George Berkeley (1685–1753)
David Hume (1711–76)
Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)
French Revolution (1789–91)

1800 CE
Opium Wars (1839–42)
Tai-Ping Revolution (1851–64)
Yan Fu (1854–1921)
Liang Qichao (1873–1929)
Wang Guowei (1877–1927)

Georg Hegel (1770–1831)
Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860)
John Stuart Mill (1806–73)
Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55)
Karl Marx (1818–83)
Friedrich Engels (1820–95)
American Civil War (1861–5)
William James (1842–1910)
Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche
   (1844–1900)
Gottlob Frege (1848–1925)
Aexius Meinong (1853–1920)
Edmund Husserl (1859–1938)

1900 CE
The Boxer Movement (1900)
Republic of China (1912–)
May Fourth Movement (1919)
Xiong Shili (1885–1968)
Zhang Dongsun (1886–1973)
Hu Shih (1891–1962)
Mao Zedong (1893–1976)
Liang Shuming (1893–1988)
People's Republic of China (1949–)
Jin Yuelin (1895–1984)
Fung Yu-lan (1895–1990)
Fang Dongmei (1899–1977)
"Cultural Revolution" Movement
   (1966–77)
He Lin (1902–92)
Xu Fuguan (1903–1982)
Hong Qian (1909–92)
Tang Junyi (1909–78)
Mou Zongsan (1909–95)
Zhang Dainian (1909–2004)

World War I (1914–1917)
Russian Revolution (1917)
John Dewey (1859–1952)
Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947)
Bertrand Russell (1872–1970)
Moritz Schlick (1882–1936)
Martin Heidegger (1889–1976)
Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951)
World War II (1939–45)
Gilbert Ryle (1900–76)
Hans Georg Gadamer (1900–2002)
Alfred Tarski (1902–83)
Karl Popper (1902–94
Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80)
W.V. Quine (1908–2000)
Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005)
Donald Davidson (1917–2003)
John Rawls (1921–2002)
Richard Rorty (1931–2007)

Appendix 2
NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION

Because of its official status in China, its relative accuracy in transcribing actual pronunciation in Chinese common speech, and consequent worldwide use, we employ the *pinyin* romanization system in this volume for transliterating Chinese names or terms. However, we have left transliterations of Chinese names and terms as originally published (typically in the Wade-Giles system) in the following cases: (i) the titles of cited publications; (ii) the names whose Latinizations have become conventional ('Confucius' and 'Mencius'); and (iii) the names of the writers who have had their authored English publications under their regular non-*pinyin* romanized names (such as 'Fung Yu-lan'). The titles of cited Chinese books and essays are given in their *pinyin* transcriptions with their paraphrases given in parentheses. The following rule of thumb has been used in dealing with the order of the surname (family) name and given name in romanized Chinese names: (i) for the name of a historical figure in Chinese history, the surname appears first, and the given name second (such as 'Zhu Xi'); and (ii) for contemporary figures, we follow their own practice when writing in English (typically, those whose works have been published in English tend to have their given name appear first with the surname second). In the *pinyin* versions of Chinese publication titles and those proper phrases that contain two or more than two Chinese characters, hyphens may be used to indicate separate characters.

Transcription conversion table

Wade-Giles	Pinyin
ai	ei
ch	zh
ch'	ch
	q
hs	x
ien	ian
-ih	-i
j	r
k	g
k'	k
p	b
p'	p
szu	si
t	d
t'	t
ts, tz	z
ts', tz'	c
tzu	zi
ung	ong
yu	*you*

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