Basic Principles of CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Volume 1

Jiaxiang Hu

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Introduction

To construct a contemporary form of Chinese philosophical principles is an important and challenging project. There are conceivably many people who consider the project pointless and unimportant. There might be even more people who question the feasibility of the task. The project is slighted because the task itself is considered to be of little value. And its feasibility is questioned because it is believed that conditions for such a project are not ripe, at least not in our contemporary time. These two views, along with their underlying skepticism, may not be baseless. Yet, we are entitled to repudiate them.[1]

1. The Necessity of the Construction of Chinese Philosophical Principles

In the academia today, some say that there is no such thing as philosophy in Chinese cultural heritage. All one can speak of, therefore, is "philosophy in China" but not "Chinese philosophy". Although they have listed a number of reasons to support this view, I am afraid I have to disagree with them.

Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx all considered religion and philosophy to be consanguineously related. The inchoative form of philosophy existed

[1] Since this branch of academic inquiry is still under construction, this foreword will concentrate on the construction and things concerned with it. The main contents of this book will be presented in the abstracts of each chapter, the summary of each section, and the afterword of the entire book.

in religions. Croce went further to regard religion as "a more or less imperfect philosophy that is in the forming" and philosophy as "a more or less purified and refined religion".[2] As cultural institutions in the domain of faiths, religion and philosophy, according to Max Muller, founder of modern study of religions, were both derived from "the faculty of faith" in the human mind. Muller believed that such "faculty of faith" epitomized the "Vernunft" — which is generally translated into Chinese as 理性 *lixing* ("reason", "rationality") — in Kant's philosophy. China has long been a nation with faith. Ancient thinkers all shared a holistic and ultimate concern with the cosmos and human life. Starting from the contention among the myriad schools of thoughts in pre-Qin (i.e. before 221 BC) times, through the exploration of the convergence between Heaven and Humankind in the Han dynasty (202 BC–220 AD), down to the Metaphysical School in the Wei–Jin period (220–420 AD), Buddhism in the Sui–Tang period (581–907 AD), and Neo-Confucianism in the Song (960–1279 AD) and Ming (1368–1644 AD) times, pre-modern thinkers never ceased to be interested in metaphysics.

Answers to the following fundamental questions are sought after in both religion and philosophy: What is the cosmos? And what is human being? Developing on the basis of these two inquiries are people's world view and their outlook on life. In this regard, forerunners in Chinese philosophy presented many original and unique answers. Their answers, moreover, are often interrelated. If we adopt the classification of Cassirer and other scholars to take the answers that concentrate on cosmos to be the philosophy of the cosmos and those concerning human beings to be the philosophy of humankind, then it can be said that Chinese philosophy is primarily a philosophy of humankind. The mode of Western philosophy of the cosmos is not of adequate standard to use to disprove the existence of Chinese philosophy, not to mention that cosmological discourse is not lacking in the *Laozi* 老子,[3] "Commentary on the *Book of Changes*" 易傳,

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[2] Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetics.The Essence of Aesthetics*. Translated [into Chinese] by Zhu Guangqian 朱光潛, *et al*. Beijing: Waiwen chubanshe, 1983, p. 271.

[3] *The Laozi* 老子 is translated by Wing-Tsit Chan under the title of *The Lao Tzu*. See Wingsit Chan, *A Source Book of Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, pp. 139–176.

and the *Zhengmeng* 正蒙 (*Correcting Youthful Ignorance*). In most cases, the explorations of individual early thinkers in China are admittedly not systematic enough. Yet, as a nation with a long history of civilization, we should pay due attention to their collective achievements.

Furthermore, in Chinese philosophy, the attention paid to humankind and its concern with human life is of great importance. It is said that Socrates highly spoke of the maxim "Know thyself" inscribed at the entrance of the Delphi Temple of ancient Greece. In his famous *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture*, Cassirer begins by declaring that "self-knowledge is the highest aim in philosophical inquiry".[4] This aim, he maintains, has proven to be an Archimedes point and an unshakable center of all zeitgeists. The various types of skepticism are nothing more than some duplicates of such firm and steadfast humanism. Self-knowledge is closely related to the concern with human life. Wittgenstein was skeptical about many propositions in traditional Western philosophy, criticizing them for having transgressed the domain of language. But he nevertheless admitted: "We feel that even if all possible scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all".[5] To find answers for human life is precisely a fundamental goal in philosophy.

Chinese philosophy is rich in discussions on human life. Such is its important contribution in intellectual history. Mr. Zhang Dainian 張岱年 (1909–2004) once pointed out, "Chinese philosophy is exceedingly abundant in thoughts regarding human life. The thoughts concern numerous issues and they do so on very deep levels".[6] From the perspective of the philosophy of human life, Mr. Zhang sketched the loci of development in Chinese philosophy with Confucius (551–479 BC) as a thesis, Mozi (468–376 BC) as his antithesis, and Mencius (385–304 BC) as their synthesis (e.g. Confucius advocated benevolence, Mozi

[4]Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*: *An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944, p. 15.

[5]Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*. Translated by C. K. Ogden. London: Routledge and Kegan Pall.Ltd., 1955.

[6]Zhang Dainian 張岱年, *Zhongguo Zhexue Dagang* 中國哲學大綱 [*Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*]. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1982, p. 166.

advocated righteousness, and Mencius emphasized both benevolence and righteousness); Confucianism and Mohism as a thesis, Daoism as their antithesis, and Xunzi 荀子 (313–238 BC) as the synthesis of the three of them; Mencius as a thesis, Xunzi as his antithesis, the Confucianism toward the end of the Warring Period (475–221 BC) as their synthesis; indigenous Chinese thoughts as a thesis, Buddhism from abroad as its antithesis, and the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties as their synthesis.[7] We may well add that the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming times was a thesis with the practical learning of the transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties as its antithesis and the Modern Confucianism as their synthesis (Feng Youlan and Mou Tsung-san went further to regard Chinese thoughts as a thesis, Western thoughts as the antithesis. Modern scholars of this theory are still in search of a synthesis for the two).

The philosophy of human life, of which morality is constitutive, explores how humankind can lead a valuable and meaningful life. Ever since early modern times, humankind has made rapid progress in natural science. But the same cannot be said of their knowledge about themselves. We have as much reason to pride on our tremendous progress in natural science as we do to be regretful for the relative underdevelopment in our moral studies. Chinese philosophy is primarily a philosophy of the *Daode* 道德("morality", "ethics"). The 道 Dao ("the Way"; aka the Tao) is the root of all things and creatures between heaven and earth. The share of the Way obtained by humankind is their 德 *de* ("virtue"). Therefore, *Daode* or morality constitutes a domain of freedom, in which humans' innate virtuous nature is manifested and put into action.[8] A philosophy of ethics is the metaphysics of ethics. With its emphasis on the revelation of the mechanism of and conditions for humankind's norm-generating capacity, the philosophy treats the heavenly-endowed *xingli* 性理 ("nature-texture") as its subject matter with a view to finding

[7] Ibid, p. 383. The philosophy of the Song and Ming dynasties is generally referred to as Neo-Confucianism (broad sense), which consists of Cheng–Zhu Rational Philosophy (narrow sense) and Lu–Wang philosophy of the soul.

[8] Translator's note: The Chinese word that the author used for "virtuous nature" is *dexing* 德性 which, literally meaning characteristic nature, refers to the natural inclination to virtue.

out how to make moral autonomy possible.[9] In this regard, forerunners of Chinese philosophy have put forward many valuable views that all call for contemporary scholars' effort to sort out their views and grasp them systematically.

Thus, from the perspective of the natural development in this discipline, to construct a contemporary form for Chinese philosophical principles should be an important task for today's academia.

First, fulfilling the task is a must in cultural inheritance. At a time of globalization, philosophies are losing their national boundaries. In ancient times the philosophy of each nation inevitably took its unique form. The influence that their special philosophical notions left on other cultural institutions was profound in logic, extensive in space, and long in time. It can be said that, without an understanding of Chinese philosophical thoughts, it would be hardly possible to accomplish an adequate understanding of the traditional Chinese culture. This culture has left an enormous cultural heritage — such as moral notions, aesthetic notions, and theories in traditional Chinese medicine, and so forth — that is worthy of our effort to take over, to further develop, and thereby to make it an intellectual property shared by all humankind. The effort entails an understanding of the underlying philosophical thoughts. Besides, from the standpoint of Chinese philosophy itself, clearly the construction of a synchronic system of principles may break new ground in the study of Chinese philosophy. In Hegel's and Russell's histories of philosophy, their observations and classifications are, of course, made from their theoretical perspectives. A new and synchronic system usually includes new dimensions and normal forms that are capable of reshaping the construction of the historical past, and thereby both expanding and deepening the study of history.

Regarding the construction of the principles, those who show the least tolerance for it regrettably seem to come from the circle of philosophical studies in contemporary Chinese academia. Accustomed to historical research, these scholars make a point of being faithful to canonical texts and adhere to the tradition of transmitting without

[9]Translator's note: For definition and explication of the notion of "texture", see Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 of Chapter 2.

creating and that of giving full play to one's intelligence only in interpretations. They often argue that we are not even clear enough about the parts, let alone in any position to construct a comprehensive system so as to understand the whole. These colleague scholars' rigorous style in research *is* commendable. Nevertheless, one needs to be reminded that, in historical study, there can be mutual enhancement rather than conflicts between the construction of principles and the task of collation and excavations. To maintain self-consistence in theorization, an attempt at principle construction requires a unified system. This, however, does not mean a repudiation of diversification. Without any individually unified and mutually independent systems, how can there be any diversification to speak of in scholarship? As regards works of principle construction, embedded in the requirement to cover all views is in fact a tendency of disallowing diversity, which is either dogmatic or overly idealistic. Of all the works of Chinese Buddhist sects, the *Platform Scripture* is the only one that has attained the status of a sutra. Would it be reasonable to require Huineng 慧能 (638–713 AD) to make clear all the views in the Tiantai Sect, Faxiang Sect (aka Consciousness-only Sect), Huayan Sect and so on, and thereby incorporate all these views in his lectures recorded in the *Platform Scripture*? Much as a constructor of principles needs to incorporate various views, the best he or she can do is still to convey one scholar's view.

Second, this is required by the communication between the East and West. Traditional Western philosophy emphasizes cognition. Its epistemology is rigorous and advanced. Traditional Chinese philosophy, in contrast, pays attention to setting up moral norms and it excels in providing guidance for social interactions. Using Kant's terminology, we can say that Western philosophy is advanced in the exploration of "theoretical reason", whereas traditional Chinese philosophy distinguishes itself in the exploration of "practical reason". The incorporation of the two traditions would be, therefore, a conceivable development required by a global culture. The full momentum to be gained in the incorporation should be based upon the incessant mutual approach between the basic principles of the two philosophies. Usually the philosophical dialog between the East and West has been hardly more than a number of analogues drawn between some individual viewpoints in Chinese philosophy and some

complete systems of thoughts in the West. The dialog is obviously asymmetrical. The asymmetry leaves some scholars of comparative philosophy with the impression that there is no philosophy in China. It is also worth noting that there was a certain period in the Chinese Mainland when textbooks of Chinese philosophy were compiled to fit the framework of Western philosophy, which led to not only a failure to show the characteristics of Chinese philosophy but also a misimpression that Chinese philosophy is backward. If the spirit of Chinese philosophy is lost even among contemporary Chinese scholars of philosophical studies, how can we expect this philosophy to be recognized by any outsiders?

Ultimately, there can be only one kind of philosophical principle, to which distinctions between Eastern or Western philosophies are irrelevant. But, regional difference and the uneven levels of human cosmological and anthropological cognition in different times have both translated into the differences between Eastern and Western philosophies. Indisputably, what prevails today are still the philosophical principles in the West. They draw on very little — if any — of the Eastern wisdom. Philosophical heritage in the world consists mainly of European, Indian, and Chinese philosophies. In China, the well preserved Indian Buddhism has undergone significant further development. Traditional Chinese philosophy can hence be as good a representative of the wisdom in the East as traditional European philosophy is in the West. If it is agreed that to know oneself is the highest aim in philosophical inquiries, then it is obvious that Chinese philosophy is in a good position to rival European philosophy. Only through the construction of a contemporary form of principles for Chinese philosophy would it be possible to accomplish a comprehensive understanding, mutual supplement, and incorporation of Chinese and Western philosophies. Mr. He Lin 賀麟 (1902–1992) rightly points out that a regional philosophy, be it Western, Chinese, or Indian, "constitutes just a branch of the entire Philosophy and represents an aspect of it. We should, therefore, regard the philosophy as a public property of humankind and, with an open and modest mind, embrace it, approach it, analyze it, incorporate it, promote the scholarship of it, and further develop it".[10] A world

[10]He Lin 賀麟, *Rujia Sixiang de Xin Kaizhan — He Lin Xinruxue Lun Jiyao* 儒家思想的新開展 — 賀麟新儒學論輯要 [*New Expansion of Confucianist Thoughts — Selected*

philosophy in the future will certainly grow out of a good conglomeration between Chinese and Western philosophies.

Third, it is entailed by the reconstruction of a moral system. The essence of Chinese philosophy, as I see it, lies more in its theorization of the 內聖 *neisheng* ("inner sageliness", i.e. to attain saintdom in the heart) than in that of the 外王 *waiwang* ("outer kingliness", i.e. to attain royalty in [political] career).[11] By that I mean the philosophy adequately helps people to know themselves. It provides effective guidance for an individual who is building up his or her integrity, enhancing his or her spiritual life, and promoting his or her self-fulfillment in the society. Its weak point lies right in the inadequate guidance it provides for those who attempt to investigate the objective world and thereby adapt it to their needs. In Chinese philosophy, the theorization of the 心性 *xinxing* (literally "heart-nature") forms the arterial part.[12] In terms of profundity and sophistication, our forerunners' study of the moral mind is no inferior to Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* or Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*. In the eyes of some Western scholars, what our forerunners explored may appear to be a domain that defies verbalization. But it is precisely the exploration in this domain that makes it possible to construct a value system for human life and a spiritual home in which people can settle down and get on with their pursuit. Mr. Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895–1990) once argued for replacing religion with philosophy. This view is notably applicable to the inherent spirit of traditional Chinese philosophy. In today's world, there has been a serious and ongoing value crisis. There are people who come to a sudden and dim awareness that "God is dead" and begin to feel like homeless wanderers. To them it seems that whatever one does and however one does it would be fine and permissible. This would lead to the collapse of an entire moral system. In Chinese philosophy, it is

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Works of He Lin on Neo-Confucianism]. Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 1995, pp. 27–28.

[11]Translator's note: For explication of the two terms, see Wing-tsit Chan. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, pp. 208–209.

[12]Translator's note: Heart-nature, if judged by the way the term is used in this book, can be understood as the nature of humankind's (moral) mind.

believed that there is a holy spirit in the human heart. The belief would be capable of laying a foundation for the reconstruction of a moral system in the present time.

There is a very wide-spread Chinese saying: "Everyman has the responsibility for the fate of the sub-celestial world".[13] This saying can be traced back to the entry of "Zhengshi" 正始 in the 13th Volume of Gu Yanwu's 顧炎武 (1613–1682 AD) *Daily Accumulation of Knowledge* 日知錄. The "responsibility" in the saying originally referred to a person's duty to stand up against the moral decadence of the entire society rather than the duty to defend one's country and resist foreign aggression. Gu Yanwu drew distinction between the fall of an empire and the fall of the sub-celestial world. In his opinion, the fall of an empire means nothing more than the change of a name for the throne, which means simply dynastic change. But the fall of the sub-celestial world, as described by Mencius, would be a case where, with the paths to benevolence and righteousness blocked, the entire society had become so corrupted that "beasts will be led on to devour men, and men will devour one another" (*Mencius*, 3B:9, in Chan, 1963, p. 72). The issue of how to defend one's country can be left to well-fed officials. But when it comes to saving the sub-celestial world from moral decadence, every ordinary person should shoulder his and her responsibility. In today's world, social productivity is developing rapidly, and material wealth is undergoing unprecedented growth. From the standpoint of ethics, however, the society is in the process of a moral decadence, in which there is no value system that serves as people's spiritual support, and people have hence lost their spiritual home. This is something more than human life can bear — something that has given rise to a materialistic world in which many pursuers of material success let their ends justify their means. The pursuers would sell their soul at any moment they like and do so without any sense of shame. They are neither interested in going to heaven nor afraid of going to hell. Facing a social decadence like this, no one should just look on with folded arms. People

[13]Translator's note: The Chinese term 天下 (*tianxia*), translated here as "sub-celestial" world, literally means "under Heaven" and hence the entire terrain under heaven. In premodern times, the term was often used to refer to China.

should go all out to rescue our morals and thereby realize what American humanistic psychologist Maslow calls the "resacralize" of human life. It is an urgent task for professionals in humanities and liberal arts today.

The task calls for the deepening and systematization of the study of traditional Chinese philosophy. Mr. Zhang Dainian made the calling as early as several decades ago. "Since Chinese philosophy lacks formal system", he said, "should our explication of the philosophy proceeds in any systematized form? Many people oppose to adding systematized forms to our exposition of Chinese philosophy. They argue that to do so would misrepresent Chinese philosophy. Some of them think that the best we can do is discuss such topics as 天 *Tian* (heaven), 道 *Dao* (the Way), 理 *Li* (texture; principle), 氣 *Qi* (vital energy), 性 *Xing* (nature; character; temperament), 命 *Ming* (destiny; fate), 仁 *Ren* (benevolence; humanity), and 義 *Yi* (righteousness) successively without organizing them into any system. In fact, today the most important task in our explication of Chinese philosophy is precisely to highlight the system in it. To make Chinese philosophy appear well systematized will by no means hurt its contents. … Rather, this task would be fulfilled 'based on what it [i.e. Chinese philosophy] has always been'. Instead of tearing its contents apart, we should sort out the contents according to their hidden structures. There have always been innate structures in Chinese philosophy; only it would take a discerning observer to find them out".[14] Mr. Zhang's remark is very pertinent. In the study of philosophy, those of our colleagues who share his view should take it upon themselves to promote the course of principle construction for Chinese philosophy.

Regarding the dispute over the existence of Chinese philosophy, one has reason to consider it unnecessary once the innate structure of traditional Chinese philosophy is identified with its vitality presented in the form of well-constructed basic principles. To look at it in a more constructive manner, our academia is — at a time of rapid development of China's economy — duty-bound to reverse the current trend of "import" in the areas of humanities and liberal arts, and thereby turn the traditional theory of inner sageliness into a spiritual wealth to be shared by humankind. This is no doubt an enterprise that will, on the one hand, do justice

[14]Zhang Dainian, *Zhongguo Zhexue Dagang*, pp. iv–v.

to the achievements of our ancestors and, on the other, leave us with no feeling of shame when standing before our descendants. It is an enterprise that calls for collective effort. The construction of a global culture calls for mutual supplementation among the cultures of all nations. To promote a nation's own traditional culture can be accomplished in a no less open-minded manner. It is not necessarily concomitant with cultural conservatism.

2. Feasibility of the Construction of Chinese Philosophical Principles

Is it feasible to construct basic principles of Chinese philosophy? Our answer is affirmative, because we are in the condition to do so, though there are still difficulties.

Searching in pre-modern texts, one may find that what our forerunners in philosophy left behind was a large quantity of scattered pearls and jades of philosophical and quasi-philosophical discourse, which demand much of our effort to select from them, sort them out, and put them in order. Not many pre-modern Chinese thinkers paid sufficient attention to systematic theorization. Presumably due to the influence of ancestral worship and national academic convention, they chose to act as "transmitter[s] and not … maker[s]." (Confucius, 2014, 7:1). Another factor in academia could be the mainstream prioritization of practical use over abstruse theorization. The two factors combined resulted in the immense number of books since the Han dynasty that are mostly exegetical in nature as contrasted by the scarcity of philosophical works with any original theoretical frameworks therein. For example, as a leading proponent of Neo-Confucianism in the Song dynasty, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200 AD) devoted most of his energy to writing and compiling annotations of earlier canonical texts. Another genre is ana or collection of quotations. There are both up and down sides of ana, as reflected, respectively, in its pithiness and wittiness on the one hand, and its isolation of the quoted words from their contexts on the other. Very often we find that when our pre-modern thinkers tend to present the notions or propositions in their discussion in extreme terms. They would say, for instance, "benevolence" was the sole target to reach for, or without "sincerity" there would be nothing to speak

of, or there was nothing in the sub-celestial world except "righteousness and benefit". Their assertions are hardly in consistence with one another in a synchronous logic system.

By nature, the creation and use of annotations and anas will easily result in randomness in judgment and aporia in reasoning. But the same problem, to various extents, exists in those works that feature relative systematic theorization. The problem is primarily caused by the lack of rigorously formulated definition of concepts. As an example, in the *Great Learning* 大學 (compiled between 5th and 2nd centuries BC), the term 格物 *gewu* (literally "to investigate things") is used without any further explication, which gave rise to a plethora of contending interpretations among scholars in later generations. Since the Han dynasty and, especially, since the Song and Ming dynasties, there have been over 70 annotations concerning the term. Its ill-defined intension and extension would, inevitably, occur at the expense of accuracy in judgment. Consequently there have been many views regarding exactly how the investigation of things would lead to the gaining of knowledge. Some say both the investigation of things and the gaining of knowledge were attempts to exhaust the Texture.[15] Others say it should be taken to mean as a process in which conscience manifests itself after an investigation of things removes the illusionary material appearance of things. Yet, others say it means knowledge can be gained only through manual labor. Besides, because pre-modern thinkers' attention was generally focused on issues in human life rather than on the cognition of the objective world, they were more interested in writing about their own enlightenment than in providing accounts of what they inferred through logical reasoning. As a result, they rarely considered the option of engaging themselves in inductions and inferences. Naturally their philosophical discourse would seem rather estranged in the eyes of modern readers, for they are readers who make a point of accurate understanding, and seek systematic and complete grasp of a philosophy.

Moreover, because pre-modern texts are not punctuated, sometimes difference in sentence parsing can lead to difference in meaning. As an

[15]Translator's note: Please see Section 2.2.2 of Chapter 2 for reasons why pre-modern Chinese philosophers conceptualized — and hence conventionally referred to — principles as "textures".

example, there is a sentence in the first chapter of the *Laozi* that reads "故常無欲以觀其妙常有欲以觀其徼". In the annotations by Heshang Gong 河上公 (1st century BC) and Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249 AD), the sentence is parsed as follows: "故常無欲, 以觀其妙, 常有欲, 以觀其徼" (Therefore let there never be desire so [we] may see their subtlety, /And let there always be desire so [we] may see their outcome). But, other premodern scholars, from Su Zhe 蘇轍 (1039–1112 AD) in the Song dynasty to Jiao Hong 焦竑 (1540–1620 AD) in the Ming dynasty, would punctuate the sentence thus: "故常無, 欲以觀其妙; 常有, 欲以觀其徼" (Therefore, let there always be non-being so [we] may see their subtlety, /And let there always be being so [we] may see their outcome).[16] In the former, the word *yu* 欲 is a noun that means *yu* 慾 (desire), whereas in the latter it is merely an adverb. These two ways of parsing reflect two different interpretations. What is more, difference in parsing may also give rise to conflicting and categorically incompatible thoughts that are ascribed to one and the same early philosopher. In *Analects* 8:9, there is a sentences "民可使由之不可使知之". Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107 AD), Zhu Xi, and many other scholars read the sentence as "民可使由之, 不可使知之" (The common people may be made to follow it but may not be made to understand it).[17] In spite of the great pains some scholars took to elaborate on it, none of their elaborations can dissipate such a suspicion that Confucius was slighting the common people. But, if the sentence is punctuated as "民可, 使由之; 不可, 使知之". (If the common people approve it, then let them be engaged in it. If they do not, then let them understand it), then what we see vividly is an open-minded Confucius with democratic ideas.

Therefore, when constructing basic principles for Chinese philosophy, we must now build on the achievements of earlier scholarship — especially the scholarship since the trend of textual criticism during the reigns of Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736–1795 AD) and Emperor Jiaqing (r. 1796–1820 AD) in the Qing dynasty — and make up for their weaknesses. Moreover, emphasis needs to be placed on an overall understanding and on the enhancement of the logical rigor in our analysis of the early philosophy. Only an overall understanding can reconcile the differences

[16]Translator's note: Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 139.

[17]Translator's note: Translation of *Analects* 8:9 is adopted mutatis mutandis from Wing-tsit Chan's translation. Cf. Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 33.

among various parts. Only a strengthened logical analysis can string together the random and scattered witty proverbs and sayings. The *Zhuangzi* 莊子, for example, has long been regarded as one of the "Three Abstruse Canons" in early China. The abstruseness does not refer to the profound and perplexing messages in the text alone but some of its hardly decipherable language as well. Known as the *Nanhua Scripture* 南華經 among some pre-modern scholars, the *Zhuangzi* is such a text that would usually take a scholar's lifetime to arrive at some partial understanding of it. But, with regard to its author's expositions of such notions as 心齋 *xinzhai* ("the Fasting of the Heart") and 坐忘 *zuowang* ("Sitting down and Forgetting Everything"), if we can identify a consistent locus followed by the author in his spiritual pilgrimage in search of such a realm of infinity that transcends sensibility and intellectuality, many problems in other parts of the text can be sorted out or even easily solved, because we are in a position to attain more accuracy in our understanding of the basic views in the text.

The construction of principle is, of course, meant to accomplish overall applicability rather than to rest content with the grasp of individual works. Notwithstanding the understanding one may accomplish on a certain number of canonical texts, it is still difficult to incorporate the messages conveyed in them. This is because, in addition to examining the age-long heritage of individual schools of thought, a project of principle construction needs to incorporate the different and sometimes even conflicting views that are rich in philosophical significance and expressed variously in Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist texts. Besides, a principle has to be a well synthesized system with neither imposed order thereon nor contradictory ideas therein. How difficult would it be to accomplish this! With that said, since philosophy, as the study of the metaphysical, is primarily concerned with such macro-level questions as what the cosmos is and what humankind is, it is not absolutely impossible to conduct a unified theorization centering on these two fundamental questions and thereby incorporate the views of various schools of thought.

It is gratifying that the influx of Western philosophy since the 20th century ushered China into an era of reform in the study of traditional Chinese philosophy. As a result, the construction of theoretical framework has been put on our agenda. There have been many foregoers who have

opened up new paths for us (In a broad sense, in such pre-modern works as *Records of Modern Philosophers' Thoughts* 近思錄 compiled by Zhu Xi *et al*. and *Meaning of Words in the Four Books* 北溪字義 by Chen Chun 陳淳 [1159–1223 AD], we already see some early pursuit of an overall understanding of traditional philosophy). With rigorous scholarship and from a modern perspective, these learned scholars have sorted out a number of basic issues and hence paved the ground for later generations of scholars to further the exploration.

Mr. Zhang Dainian realized very early that the most important task in the modern scholarship of Chinese philosophy was to show the innate system of the philosophy. His *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy* 中國哲學大綱 is an important achievement that marked his courageous trudge toward this goal. The project started in 1935. In 1937, the first draft was completed. The work sufficiently reflects a young philosopher's courage and insight. Featuring an account of the development of Chinese philosophy that is "arranged on the basis of specific philosophical topics", the work can be regarded as a history of philosophical topics that is meant to "show the entire order and system of Chinese philosophy".[18] With its contents logically organized, the book is divided into three sections — "Cosmology", "Philosophy of Human Life", and "Epistemology". Of them, the most important is the second section. In length, the section takes up over half of the book, where the exposition unfolds along such themes as the relation between Heaven and humankind, human nature, human ideals, and issues in human life. The exposition objectively presents Chinese philosophy as it is. When explicating categories and propositions, the author makes a point of presenting in-depth, accurate, and comprehensive accounts. With its extensive perspective, good and appropriate exemplifications, and sound judgments, the book has stood the test of time. Even in his discussion of the occult experiences recorded by philosophers of the soul, what Mr. Zhang provides is nonetheless a fair and objective introduction rather than a hasty denial. I think we have sufficient reason to regard *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy* as a cornerstone for the construction of Chinese philosophical principles.

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[18] See Zhang Dainian's "*Zixu* 自序 [Preface]" to the first edition (1937) of his *Zhongguo Zhexue Dagang* 中國哲學大綱 [*Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*].

During his exile in the early phase of the War against Japanese Aggression (1937–1945), Mr. Feng Youlan "could hardly control [his] heartfelt feeling when looking back on the noble styles of the ancients while facing the tremendous crisis in the present time". Therefore, he spent two months writing down his "thoughts that had accumulated over several years". Its outcome is his *New Rational Philosophy* 新理學, in which he sought to outperform those historians who were accustomed to "lecturing according to books". What he determined to do instead was to "continue, with [his] lecture", where the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties had left off. Subsequently he wrote *New Discussion on Realities:* 新事論 (subtitled *China's Road to Freedom*), *New Admonitions for the World* 新世訓 (subtitled *New Discourse on the Way of Life*), *New Treatise on the Nature of Man* 新原人, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy* 新原道, and *New Treatise on the Methodology of Metaphysics Methodology in New Rational Philosophy* 新知言, which, together with *New Rational Philosophy*, are collectively known as the "Wartime Six Books". What he forthrightly provides in the books is his own philosophy. His *New Rational Philosophy* can be considered as the earliest attempt to construct principles of Chinese philosophy based on the mode of Western philosophy. It begins with an introduction of the Heavenly Way, which includes the introductions of Texture, 氣 *Qi* (vital energy), and 太極 *Taiji* (the Great Ultimate). Proceeding from a discussion on heart-nature, the exposition focuses on the human way; and from there, the author moves on to discuss a number of basic topics in historical philosophy, logic, aesthetics, and philosophy or religion. The exposition is concise as well as comprehensive. In plain language and a flowing writing style, the author presents quite a few original views, as exemplified in his argument that there is a physical realm in objective reality; and embedded in the physical realm is a metaphysical realm. His argumentation draws distinction between science and philosophy in a fairly easy and brief language. But, due to the prevailing Neorealist methodology in the book and the primary framework of Western philosophy (especially Hegelian philosophy) imposed on the presentation, this book falls short of highlighting the methodological and structural characteristics of Chinese philosophy.

The latter half of the 20th century witnessed impressive academic achievements in China made by Neo-Confucian scholars in Hong Kong

and Taiwan. As an example, composed in a manner not unlike the *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, Mr. T'ang Chun-i's 唐君毅 (1909–1978) 6-volum *Origin of Chinese Philosophy* 中國哲學原論 also features a concept-oriented partition of its text and, with its objective being "discussing philosophy from the perspective of the history of philosophy", the book goes to great lengths to discuss such basic categories as the Way, the Great Ultimate, heart, nature, texture, and destiny. Chapters of the book include "Introduction", "A Treatise on the Nature of the Way", "A Treatise on the Nature of Nature", "A Treatise on the Nature of Education", and so on, in which the author compares and incorporates the views of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, the Logicians School, Legalism, and Moism. Its discussions of the carefully selected topics impress with exceptional profundity and meticulousness. Presumably Mr. Tang's intention was, instead of detecting the innate system of Chinese philosophy, to trace the developmental loci of some basic categories in Chinese philosophy. But this book is of remarkable value to our construction of basic principles. In his *Aptitude and Abstruse Reason* 才性與玄理, *Buddha-Nature and Prajna* 佛性與般若, and *Substance of Heart and Substance of Human Nature* 心體與性體, Mr. Mou Tsung-san 牟宗三 (1909–1995) also discusses philosophy from a historical perspective and conducts in-depth research on the thoughts of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Among the three books, *Substance of Heart and Substance of Human Nature* particularly features an analysis of the "metaphysics of moral" in the Three Systems and Six Masters during the Song dynasty. Its "Pandect" is simply a forthright expression of the author's original thoughts and views, which formulated a unique theoretical system. Mr. Mou draws on materials mostly from Kant's philosophy, which, as a critical philosophy with its primary focus on the study of humankind, tends to be closer to the spirit of Chinese philosophy than the Anglo-North American Neorealism. He pays attention to learning from the "attestation through inward experience" — as advocated by such Confucian scholars in the Song and Ming dynasties as Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073 AD), Zhang Zai 張載 (1020–1077 AD), Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085 AD), Hu Hong 胡宏 (1102–1161 AD), Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139–1193 AD), Wang Shouren 王守仁 (1472–1529 AD), Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578–1645 AD) — and takes issue with Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi and their followers

on their argument for "the path of taking advantage of the circumstances". (Since moral choices are made on the basis of autonomy, inward experiencing would be more feasible in reality than taking advantage of the circumstances) Mr. Mou took it upon himself to inhere and further develop the theory of "inner sageliness" in the Zisi-Mencius 思孟 School and Confucianism in the Song and Ming times. At the same time, he also sought to make up for the inadequacy of pre-modern philosophers' explication of the theory of "outer kingliness". The series of his works provide us with a rich source of intellectual wealth.[19]

Since the reform and opening-up policy, Chinese scholars have, once more, actively sought to construct basic principles for Chinese philosophy. Divided into such four sections as "Texture and Vital Energy", "Heart-Nature", "Knowledge and Practice", and "Heaven and Humankind", the *System of Categories in Neo-Confucianism* 理學範疇系統 by Mr. Meng Peiyuan 蒙培元 is primarily marked by a horizontal presentation — i.e. a presentation on a theoretical level — of the system of categories shared by philosophers of Song and Ming times. What a system of thought presents can be called a web of cognition in a given area of humanities. By the same token, categories can be considered as the knots of this web. In this sense, the importance of the study of categories is something that can be easily imagined. The Neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming times resulted from a convergence among Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Thus, traditional Chinese philosophy during this era displayed its most complete form. Modern construction of its principles must start and proceed from here. The book impresses with not only its author's expatiation on each category in philosophy, but also its further structural systematization relative to its model, namely *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*. With its exposition proceeding from Heaven (texture, vital energy), through humankind (heart-nature, knowledge and practice), to the combination of the two, the book presents a clearer blueprint of principle construction. Another scholar, Mr. Zhang Liwen 張立文, classifies the categories in Chinese philosophy into three

[19]Mr. Mou Tsung-san explores the "inner sageliness" and explicates the "outer kingliness", respectively, in his *Yuan shan lun* 圓善論 [*On the Summum Bonum*] and *Zhengdao yu zhidao* 政道與治道 [*The Way of Politics and the Way of Governance*].

kinds, namely "the imagery kind", "the substantial kind", and "the unsubstantial kind" in his *On the Logical Structure of Chinese Philosophy* 中國哲學邏輯結構論. In doing so, he tries to show both the vertical development from one category to another and the horizontal relationship among the categories. Through this attempt, he traces the evolution from the concrete to the abstract in our pre-modern philosophers' way of thinking. His unique viewpoint establishes his argument as an individual scholar's noteworthy opinion. Admittedly one can choose to look at this matter from various different angles. Yet, all his efforts to reveal the structural system of traditional Chinese philosophy deserve our respect, because the efforts suggest a right direction for the modernization of Chinese philosophy.

One can tell from these citations that the data collection, classification, and interpretation by our forerunners in academia have laid a solid foundation for our construction of Chinese philosophical principles. In recent years, there have been scholars in the Chinese Mainland who work on the history of Chinese philosophical categories. Their effort has yielded increasingly abundant research findings. In Japan, Taiwan and Mainland China, there are scholars who entitle their research works as "General Overview of Chinese Philosophy". They work hard in the works to describe the spirit of traditional Chinese philosophy. Although what they do is mainly to reconstruct the history of development for each topic, the courage and insights they demonstrate are admirable. Thanks to the conditions summarized in the foregoing, our objective of identifying the innate structure of Chinese philosophy and explicating its basic principles is no longer beyond our reach.

Generally speaking, the construction of principle in an academic area would require not just the erudition characteristic of a historian of intellectual history, but more of a thinker's competence, which includes an ambition to "set up [a model of] virtue and leave a cultural legacy in written form", an insight to identify issues of interest, the open-mindedness to "incorporate various views", and an overall capability of innovations.[20] Scholars of intellectual history tend to emphasize "lecturing according to

[20]The phrases of "setting up [model of] virtue and leaving a cultural legacy in written form" and "incorporating various views" are both taken from the "Preface" of Liu Xie's

books", doing what they can to differentiate early terms and concepts along with their intensions and extensions, amplifying the differences and inconsistencies among ancients' views, and thereby coming up with their delineation of evolution or development over time. Constructors of principles, in contrast, tend to emphasize "lecturing by themselves", insist upon a meticulous selection from the reality and cultural heritage for their examination and evaluation, avail themselves of the essence of their predecessors' views and incorporate them, so as to conduct a synchronous and systematic analysis. These two ways of "lecturing" are grounded on different objectives. Both are necessary for the development of scholarship. No one on the one side has any reason to reproach the other side for being either "pedantic" or "insubstantial".

An important condition for "lecturing by oneself" is the direct approach to a specific issue itself and its resultant temporary suspension of one's concentration on various relevant notions put forth by the ancients. Husserl's phenomenological method can be inspiring to us. Speaking of his own experience, Qing dynasty scholar Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716–1798 AD) once said: "with ancients in one's daily life, one's literary aptitude can be enhanced; without ancients [in mind] when composing [a poem], one's [own] spirit will show".[21] This is as true with literary creations as with academic innovations. In the construction of Chinese philosophical principles, to get in touch with an issue means to turn the inquiry inward and personally experience it. This is because Chinese philosophy is primarily a philosophy of humankind with an emphasis on the study of human mental activities, especially the potentials and mechanism of the human hearts for establishing moral norms. Just as Mr. T'ang Chun-i points out in the "Preface" to *A Treatise on the Nature of Nature* 原性篇, the study of Chinese philosophy must "also be conducted on the basis of our own heart of benevolence, righteousness, rite, and wisdom". To do so will help us to transcend the various semantic and conceptual inconsistencies and grasp the innate deep meaning and principle.

劉勰 (fl. 5th century AD) well-known work on the principles of literature, *Wenxin Diaolong* 文心雕龍 [*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*].

[21] Yuan Mei 袁枚, *Suiyuan Shihua* 隨園詩話 [*Notes on Poetry*], Vol. 10.

If we recognize the said inward turn of inquiry and personal experience as an effective approach to Chinese philosophy, we will have all the more reason to be optimistic about the construction of a contemporary form of Chinese philosophical principles. As human beings, we, of course, often think and feel alike. In different times and places, there are things that have changed, but there are also things that remain the same. So long as an individual can keep his or her intelligence and savvy from being obscured by the restless sensual desires and acquired notions, it would be possible for the person to detect the deep-level rhythm of the human heart and light up his or her own conscience. Mencius advocated "attaining sincerity by turning [the inspection] back to oneself". Zhuangzi 莊子 (369–286 BC) lectured on "the fasting of heart" and "Sitting down and Forgetting Everything". Chan Buddhism also required that one ensure one's freedom from the disturbances of various *yinyuan* 因緣 (*hetu-pratyaya* in Sanskrit, meaning causes and conditions), think of neither goodness nor evil, and thereby introspect one's "original and real self". Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism share the same views when it comes to the philosophy of the soul 心學, though their objectives may not be the same. During the Song and Ming times, as two branches bifurcated from the camp of Neo-Confucianism, the Cheng–Zhu Neo-Confucianism and Lu–Wang philosophy of the soul in fact agreed more than they differed.[22] For instance, Zhu Xi recognized the validity in the method of being "still and without movement, but, when acted on, … [penetrating] forthwith to all phenomena and events" (*Book of Changes*, 1993, p. 309). Lu Jiuyuan went further to require the activation of one's conscience through "minimizing one's desires" and "cleansing one's reckless thoughts".

There is a gatha in the *Platform Scripture* 壇經 that contemporary scholars should remember. It reads, "When our mind is under delusion, the Saddharma Pundariks Sutra 'turns around'. With an enlightened mind, we 'turn around' the stura instead" (Huineng, *The Sutra of Hui-neng*, 1996, p. 131, 133).[23]

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[22]Translator's note: "Cheng–Zhu" and "Lu–Wang" are short forms for, respectively, "Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Xi" and "Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yang Ming".

[23]Translator's note: *The Sutra of Hui-neng* is also known as *The Platform Sutra* or the *Altar Sutra* in English.

3. The Objective and Methodology in the Construction of Chinese Philosophical Principles

Now it is important to transcend the perspective of historians and advocate the quality of thinkers. What history shows is a vertical development. What the study of principles seeks to show is — in addition to that — more of cross-sectional relationships. With regard to incorporating philosophical heritage in China based on a synchronous logic, it is meant to identify and reveal the innate system of the philosophy, and thereby build a comprehensive philosophical framework. We hence need to revert to the origin and open up new paths. We need to have a macro-level understanding of the connection between Heaven and humankind, give importance to the analysis of humans' heart-nature, and thereby show the internal pilgrimage of transcending that proceeds in the human spirit. At the same time, we need to appreciate the active pursuit of self-realization in society and thereby contribute to the moral and civil education in our time.

The subject matter of this research can be most appropriately called *yuanli* 原理 (underlying principle). The *yuan* 原 means *the* origin and basics; the *li* 理 means both universally applicable rules and a complete logic system. The combination of the two means principle, a system of basic laws in a given academic discipline that is fundamental and extensively applicable. Research works of this kind are alternatively called *gailun* 概論 (introduction), though the word originally means a sketchy account, something like a *shuyao* 述要 (account of the essentials). The advantage of such terms as *gailun* and *shuyao* consists in their disclaiming of quantitative comprehensiveness, indicating merely a selection of essentials made in accordance with a subjective logic. The disadvantage is their vagueness in qualitative definition, which fails to specify whether the undertaking is an account of the history of an academic area or a presentation of the synchronous structure of its logic. The term *yuanli* (principle), needless to say, is not perfect, either; for it leaves an impression of comprehensiveness. As a matter of fact, the best that any theory does is to show a certain aspect of a subject matter. What we have now are only dictionaries that seek comprehensiveness, not any works about principles.

Since our objective is to identify and show the innate system of the notions in traditional Chinese philosophy, it would still be an inquiry of

the principles regardless how we name the undertaking. Hence, it cannot possibly cover everything. All it does is inevitably to present an account of the essentials from a certain viewpoint. Another difficulty is how to make the selection. We should hark to the local as well as the global and pay attention to the past as well as the future.

Based on the local and looking back on history, we should avail ourselves of the essence of traditional philosophy. It should be noted that the truly valuable and arguably the most endurable part of Chinese philosophy is its theorization of inner sageliness, which occupies a salient position in Chinese intellectual history. Admittedly, in the Spring–Autumn Period (770–476 BC), Confucius and Laozi (fl. 570–470 BC), as founders of Confucianism and Daoism, respectively, sought both inner sageliness and outer kingliness. In the latter half of the Warring States Period (475–221 BC), however, Mencius and Zhuangzi both contributed to further develop the thought of inner sageliness.[24] The thought of "outer kingliness" in Confucianism was transferred to Legalism through Xunzi's elaboration thereof, which laid a theoretical foundation for the tyrannical rule of the Qin dynasty (221–207 BC). Huang–Lao Daoism, as a branch of Daoism with an inclination to the thought of "outer kingliness", joined the mainstream ideology through Legalism and Han dynasty Confucianism. There were inevitably opportunistic considerations and gloominess in this school. During the Wei–Jin Period (220–420 AD), Confucian thought incorporated a branch of Lao–Zhuang study with an inclination to the thought of "inner sageliness". Such interweaving between Confucianism and Daoism brought another peak period in the history of Chinese philosophy. After that, the popularity of Zhuangzi's Daoism not only continued but also, to a considerable extent, accelerated the Sinicizing of Buddhism in China. Without attracting much attention during the Wei–Jin Period, Mencius's thought had, since the mid-Tang period (766–840 AD), greatly distinguished itself on the forum of philosophies in China. The reason can be partially found in the popularity of Chan Buddhism,

[24] Mencius says that a superior man [i.e. man of virtue] has three pleasures, "but to rule the sub-celestial world as a king is not one of them" (*Mencius*, 7A:20). Evidently, what he regards as important is inner sageliness. In the *Great Learning*, managing a feudal state and bring order to the sub-celestial world are forthrightly regarded as the least important.

because Chan Buddhism, as it happened, was a sect of the heart theory. The convergence of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism had characterized a basic trend in Chinese intellectual history since the mid-Tang time. It can be said that their point of convergence was the fusion of Mencius, Zhuangzi, and Chan Buddhism. From the perspective of theoretical rationales, the only thing in which the philosophy of Song and Ming times excelled was none other than the theory of inner sageliness. It was a philosophy to be inhered and further developed by scholars of philosophy in contemporary China. To honor the tradition of inner sageliness will be good to help people to form an optimistic and positive outlook on the world and human life, so people will love nature, cherish life, and make something extraordinary out of their ordinary life. On this basis, we, of course, have no objection to things oriented toward the thought of outer kingliness.

Facing the world and looking forward to the future, we need to further develop the part of Chinese philosophy that is already advanced in development and with unique characteristics. In an age when cultural resources can be conveniently shared globally, we should modestly learn from foreign cultures to make up for our shortcomings. We should, in good faith, foster the strengths and circumvent the weaknesses of our traditional culture. Modern Neo-Confucianists attempt to open up a way of outer kingliness on the basis of the traditional theory of inner sageliness. In doing so, they vest "outer kingliness" with the connotations of science and democracy, which is worthy of our appreciation. Indubitably the spirit of democracy can be developed from traditional Chinese philosophy itself because it is as easy for every individual today to realize that he or she constitutes a capitalized "I" as it was for Mencius, Zhuangzi, and Chan Buddhists. But, much to our regret, democracy could not be institutionalized in a patriarchal society. One has good reasons to doubt the feasibility to develop the spirit of science out of the thought of inner sageliness. Science and ethics are fundamentally different cultural institutions. From the viewpoint of the human heart, their ways of establishing norms are very different. They are, therefore, not mutually containable.[25] Western

[25] Moral activities feature a manifestation of conscience from the within to the without. They require an adaptation of the objective (reality) to the subjective (ideal). That is why

epistemology is best known in the world for its logical rigor. This can and should be modeled after by people from other areas. Our forerunners in philosophy stressed human relations, heart-nature, and spiritual realms that could be attained in human life. Such is a distinct characteristic that entitles Chinese philosophy to a place of honor in world culture. Then what is the point of amplifying and displaying what our forerunners neglected? If we, from a contemporary perspective, substantially revise and expand it so as to turn it into a system of principles, then what we incorporate will be Chinese and Western philosophies rather than merely Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Obviously this would be a project larger in scale, for which we can only pin our hope on the future.

The key to understanding the thought of inner sageliness lies in the knowledge to be gained about the entire structure of the human heart. This is because the knowledge will help to sort out the philosophical discourses of our early philosophers about humankind, which will make it possible to clearly map and structure the relevant categories and propositions so as to interweave them into a complete system. Regrettably, the experimental psychology of the present time is still unable to uncover the structure of human psych. What we can do now is to explore it by drawing on both early philosophical discourses and the method of turning the inquiry inward.

In the West, there was such trichotomy of cognition, emotion, and will in ancient Greece. Plato, Democritus, and some philosophers in the

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the theory of inner sageliness insists upon "prioritized establishment of the most important". Scientific activities respect facts and require an adaptation of the subject (notions) to the object (reality). Based on direct observations with one's senses, rationalized knowledge is gradually formulated. So it is a process of thinking that follows a path from the without to the within and thereby reaches a higher level of generalization. To explain it in plain and more vivid language, what a human being is to the world is twofold, namely a slave as well as a master. As far as the domain of culture is concerned, scientific research is more of the former whereas moral activities the latter. Mr. Mou Tsung-san once posited an "automatic caving of conscience", which implies a tension from the opposition between the tendency of mastering and that of being submissive. But the term "caving" falls short of prioritizing ethics over everything. Of course, insofar as the construction of a complete integrity is concerned, to uphold the spirit of moral can be unified with scientific attitude and the use of scientific methodology. Although the two differ in emphasis, they both include the two-way movement of the human heart.

Pythagoras School all argued for such triadic division of the human soul. But Aristotle opposed such a division, arguing that a soul performed such basic functions as cognition and intention. The two views had stayed in opposition throughout medieval time, Renaissance, and the Enlightenment Movement. As an example, Christion Wolff adopted Aristotelian view whereas his student Baumgarten subscribed to Plato's.

Our pre-modern philosophers had similar awareness. Confucius called "wisdom, benevolence, and courage" "three universal virtues".[26] This is a transverse classification. Mencius suggested minimizing one's desire, pointed out that wisdom was marked by forced reasoning, and required that one should be introspective and sincere. What he said has much to do with the three levels of heart-nature. The *Zhuangzi* exhibits even more conscious awareness of these three levels, sometimes referring to them as "ear, hear, and *Qi*" and sometimes "body, consciousness, realness". The *Qian* 乾 (Creativity), *Kun* 坤 (Docility), *yin*, and *yang* in the *Book of Changes* are closely related to the two basic functions of the human psych. In scholarship, however, the earliest work that is most explicit about such a relationship is arguably Ji Kang's 嵇康 (fl. 224–262 AD) "On Brightness and Resolution" 明膽論. Later, Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819 AD) regarded *zhi* 志 (free will; ideal; purpose; aspiration; Vernunft) and *ming* 明 (brightness in intelligence, brilliance) as *Tianjue* 天爵 (that which is Heavenly conferred; heavenly honors). Thus he, from the perspective of the relationship between Heaven and humankind, presented an in-depth account of the origin of the two dimensions of the human heart and the activities of the heart that proceeded along the two dimensions.

Kant is certainly an exceedingly important contributor to the scholarship on the structure of the human heart. His critical philosophy suggests a massive, three-level (i.e. sensibility, intellectuality, and Vernunft), and two-series (i.e. theoretical and practical) structure of the human heart. It is explicitly pointed out in the "Introduction" of *Critique of Practical Reason* that "we shall commence with the *principles* and proceed to the *concepts*, and only then, if possible, to the senses; whereas in the case of

[26]Translator's note: See Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 105.

the speculative reason we began with the senses, and had to end with the principles".[27] After Kant's time, the divergence of the views has remained regrettably unresolved. Hegel adopted Kantian trichotomy to a limited extent. Croce based his philosophy of the mind on cognition and practice, which is evidently a case of bi-sectional division. In psychology, many scholars use such triadic division as sensibility, emotion, and will, but little is done to clarify the relationship among the three. Yet there are also scholars, Pan Shu 潘菽 (1897–1988) for one, who not only insist a bisectional division but also criticize triadic division for not being scientific because emotion and will can both be subsumed under mentality.

How to mediate between, or even unify, the two ways of division is an important theoretical issue. If we replace "will" — among "sensibility, emotion, and will" — with the category of "*zhi*" in Chinese philosophy, the confusion is likely to be cleared. This is because sensibility, intellectuality, and *zhixing* 志性[28] are obviously different in depth. If sensibility consists of direct viewing of surface-level phenomena and experience of emotion, and if intellectuality is manifested in abstract cognition and value assessment, then *zhixing* or the third level of psych can also be divided into such two parts as free will and self-archetype. With some working from without and some from within, the coordination among them gives form to such two major series as cognition (which requires harmony and order) and practicality (which requires self-realization). Thus, in China, the age-long opposition between the trichotomy and dichotomy of human psych as well as abroad is resolved.

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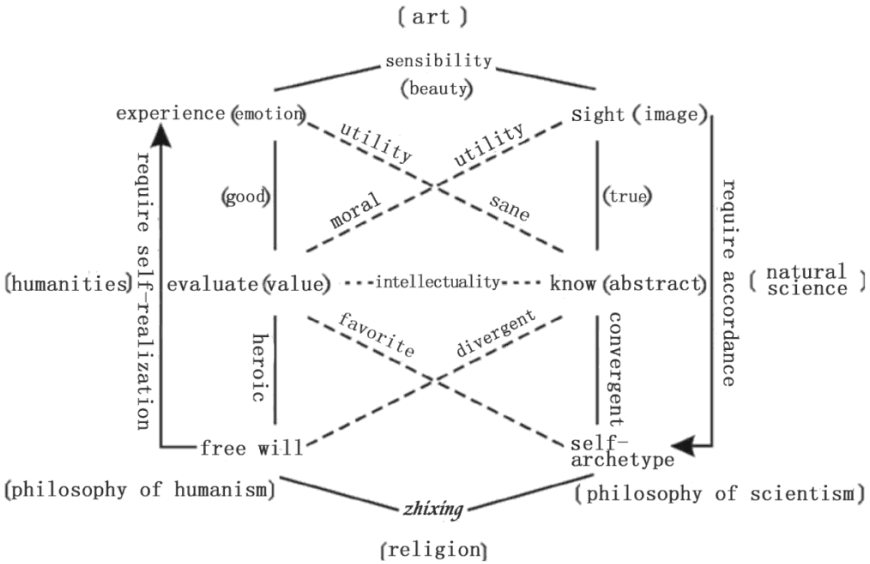
[27]Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*. Translated by Thomas K. Abbott. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909, p. 175. In the Chinese version, Kant's word "Vernunft" — which is "speculative reason" in Abbott's English translation — is inaptly translated as 理性 *lixing* ("reason").

[28]Translator's note: In this book, *Zhixing* ("the nature of *Zhi*") is known as the "third level of the human heart". The 性 *xing* in this particular disyllabic word denotes "(human) nature", "disposition". Please read Section 4.2.1 of Chapter 4 for author's detailed explication of *Zhi*, which the author conceptualizes as "a combination of ideal and free will". Elsewhere (e.g. Note 30), the author comments on what he judges to be a significant similarity between *Zhi* in traditional Chinese philosophy and "Vernunft" in Kant's framework.

The structure of human psych and the spiritual culture it creates is briefly shown in the diagram below.[29]



This diagram illustrates a heart structure implied in Kant's theory in his three major works of critical philosophy. It is, in addition, in agreement with modern brain science, basically compatible with Buddhist

[29]Please see the third chapter of my *Xinling Jiegou yu Wenhua Jiexi* 心靈結構與文化解析 [*Structure of the Heart and Cultural Analysis*] (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1998) or my article in the 6th issue of *Philosophical Principle* in 1995. In fact, psych unfolds like a sector. The contents on the level of sensibility are indefinitely diversified. Those on the level of intellectuality are relatively simple and unsophisticated. The level of *zhixing*, moreover, concentrates on one point. All this casts light on the distinction between *yi* 一 (one; singularity; monistic) and *duo* 多 (many; plurality; pluralistic), the opposition between conversion and diversion, the directional difference between cognition and assessment, and so forth. Generally speaking, a desire on sensibility level features individuality; a notion on intellectuality features collectivity; and pursuits on *zhixing* level can be universal to humankind. The relationship among the three is one among individual, particular, and general cases. Speaking of the heart, its inclination to require harmony and unification embodies regularity; and that to require self-realization embodies teleology. These two series are also closely related to the so-called spirit of Phoebus and the spirit of Bacchus.

theory of "eight consciousnesses", and largely in accordance with the relevant description in psycho analysis (aka depth psychology). It is hence convenient to use it to explain the cultural world. To save space, we only use the table below to show their relations.[30]

Physiological Structure of the Brain	Levels of the Heart	Eight Consciousness in Buddhism	Psycho Analysis	Cultural World
Neocortex	Intellectuality	The 6th consciousness	Consciousness	Science
Mammals' brain	Sensibility	The first five consciousnesses	Individual unconsciousness	Art
Reptiles' brain	*Zhixing*[31]	The 7th consciousness | The 8th consciousness	Collective unconsciousness	Religion

[30]This table is made on the basis of the biological structure of the human brain that evolved over time. The diagram above it is sketched based on the process of human spiritual activities. The relationship between them is one between the exterior and the interior, which seemingly indicates their difference. But there is no conflict between them. We will discuss pre-modern Chinese philosophers' awareness of the heart structure in Section 3.3 of Chapter 3. Besides, in Indian Buddhism, the Sarvastivada School classifies the function of the "heart" into such three parts as store consciousness, thoughtfulness, and discriminatory cognition, which can be interpreted as the three layers of the human heart that are stratified from the interior to the exterior.

[31]"*Zhixing*" is roughly equivalent to "Vernunft" in Kant's philosophy. Please see Notes 15 and 16 of Chapter 3. I understand it to be such an inborn inclination hidden in the depth of the human heart that seeks to explore the convergence between heaven and humans, reach for higher or even the highest form of unification (between cognition and realization), transcend all [spatially and temporally] limited things in reality, and attain an ideal realm in human life (in the aspect of aspiration-practice). Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619–1692 AD) once took human "*zhi*" to be the seventh consciousness (*Records of Thinking and Inquiring*, Outer Chapter). Ye Xie 葉燮 (1627–1703 AD) considered the "*zhi*" in the sentence "poetry expresses a poet's *zhi*" to be what is known as the seed in Buddhism (*On the Treatise of Poetry*, Outer Chapter). The term "*zhi*" in Chinese means not only "convergent" and "concentrative" (as the phrase 志心諦聽 *zhixin diting*, "to concentrate one's heart and listen attentively") but also "to generate and develop" (as in the phrase 壯志凌雲 *zhuangzhi lingyun*, "to be with soaring aspiration"). It is basically equivalent to the eighth consciousness in Buddhism.

The diagram and table reliably illustrate the hidden system of philosophical notions and notably locate the categories of heart-nature, which include emotion, nature, righteousness, benefit, rite, texture, mind of humankind, mind of the Way (i.e. what embodies the Way in the human heart), the knowledge which a person acquires through perception, the conscience which a person intuits. But this does not indicate any exclusion of a description of pre-modern cosmology. It is to be noted that what is known as cosmology is at best a given perspective that humankind acquires in a given historical period. In the process where heaven begets humankind and humankind emulates heaven, heart-nature plays a key role.

In order to reach the shore of our hope and aspirations, we still need concrete guidelines and methods in addition to such a fundamental path.

First, based on the principle of seeking common ground, incorporating differences, and discarding the dross, we must pay equal attention to Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Their common ground is particularly reflected in their striving for a spiritual transcendence, by which I mean their common search for the enlightening of the *zhixing* level of the heart. Mr. Mou Tsung-san rightly observes that Chinese philosophical thoughts, "be they Daoism, Confucianism, and the later joiner Buddhism, all excel in the transcending of intellectuality, with which they are all preoccupied".[32] As for the notions of knowing heaven through knowing nature in Confucianism, listening to vital energy to experience the Way in Daoism, and opening the door of true thusness in Buddhism, notwithstanding the different terms by which they are known and the different objectives to which they are oriented, they are all meant to enable people to settle down and get on with their pursuits. From the perspective of social development and progress, however, the pessimistic tendencies in Buddhism and passive reclusion in Daoism may not be appropriate now. We can discard these parts. Confucianism, admittedly, makes a point of actively promoting the general well-being in this world, but the rite they

[32]Mou Tsung-san. "Zhongguo wenhua de tezhi 中華文化的特質, [Characteristics of Chinese Culture]", in *Daode Lixiang Zhuyi de Chongjian — Mou Tsung-san Xinruxue Lunzhu Jiyao* 道德理想主義的重建 — 牟宗三新儒學論著輯要 [*Reconstruction of Moral Idealism: Selected Quotations of Mou Tsung-san on Neo-Confucianism*], ed. Mou Tsung-san, Beijing: China Radio and Television Press, 1992, p. 49.

advocated — as exemplified by the three cardinal guides — has also lost its *raison-d'être* today.

Second, we positively value both the practice of "interpreting canonical classics" and the spirit of "letting canonical classics interpret my thought" in the aspects of, respectively, learning and self-cultivation on the one hand, and courage and insights on the other. We incorporate the extremes from the standpoint of the mean.[33] To develop pre-modern cultural heritage, we should, on the one hand, attentively study ancient texts and read them empathetically in search of its intended message and the spirit contained in the texts. On the other hand, we should directly approach the issue itself with a view to personally experience the enlightenment. Pre-modern thinkers had some success in this. In the early 5th century, when the 6-volume *Nirvana Sutra* was first translated, Zhu Daosheng 竺道生 (355–434 AD) grasped the essential message in it and announced all sentient beings' possession of Buddha's nature. Because this was not something explicitly said in the sutra, there were Buddhist scholars who denounced his theory to be heresy. Over 10 years later, however, the newly translated 40-volume *Maha-Parinirvana Sutra* attested the orthodoxy of Zhu Daosheng's theory. He was thus hailed as a "saint of nirvana". As Shiqian 師虔 — the third-generation Cave Master in Buddhism — pointed out, "since there is always a place for the spiritual sprout to break out, there can be no mentorship to speak of when it comes to great enlightenment" (*Collection of Five Books of the Channist Heritage*, Vol. 13). In our construction of philosophical principles, we should proceed primarily by "letting canonical classics interpret my thought". Our construction should nonetheless be built upon the practice of "interpreting canonical classics".

Third, we should conduct stratification analysis and structural locating, pay particular attention to the distinction as well as connection among notions and propositions, and thereby construct an organic system. It is said that on the gate of Plato's Athenian garden there was a board with the inscription "Nobody who is unfamiliar with algebra should enter". Presumably Kant followed a certain logic (i.e. thinking model) in his mind

[33]Translator's note: *The Doctrine of the Mean*: "He [i.e. Shun, a legendary early sage ruler] took hold of their two extremes, took the mean between them". (Chan, 1963, trans, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 99).

when composing his three works of critical philosophy. Methodological systems in present times accord all the more attention to the overall relationships and the identification of various levels, which, of course, make it hard to find the right places for concepts that fall into overlapping categories. For instance, a comparison between benevolence and sincerity on the one hand, and loyalty and reciprocity on the other will incline people's preference toward the former pair because although the latter pair is of use in our evaluation of personalities and social relations on a random basis, it does not necessarily play a key role in the basic theoretical system today (e.g. when it is used to embody certain economic principles).

Construction of principles endows traditional Chinese philosophy with a modern form, which indicates an academic innovation. We hope that the constructors and their critics would both adhere to the spirit of striving for the truth and seeking truth from facts. Early Qing scholar Yan Yuan 顏元 (1635–1704 AD) was right when he said: "What matters in argumentation is just whether an argument is right, not whether it is in agreement or disagreement with others' views. A right argument should never be changed even if it were held by only one or two persons. As for a wrong argument, one should never echo it even if it were shared by tens of millions of people".[34] Innovation can also be known as a thoroughgoing change, which requires both a thorough understanding of the past and adaptability to the present time. Change, after all, leads as much to durability as thoroughness does to eternity.

Let us do our utmost, to blaze a trail through brambles and thorns, and push forward the cause opened up by Mr. Zhang Dainian and other forerunners!

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[34] See Chapter of "Xue wen pian 學問篇 [Knowledge]" in Yan Yuan's 顏元 *Yan Xing Lu* 言行錄 [*Records of Words and Deeds*].

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Part One
On Evolution of the Cosmos

The present part provides an account of what we generally call the theory of cosmos evolution, by which we mean the Chinese philosophical conceptualization of the root of the cosmos and its evolution. The theory falls into the domain of faith, where there are many notions whose validity is neither verifiable nor falsifiable. The notions form an indispensable basis for moral legislation. There is generally known to be an account regarding the origin of the cosmos in the Genesis of the Bible. In early China, the ideological circle in the Zhou dynasty (11 century–256 BC) exhibited a tendency of enlightenment. Few thinkers would speak of god. The tendency evolved an atheistic cosmology, which, for more than 2,000 years, has adequately sustained Chinese moral persuasions with no recourse to a personified god. Judging from the perspective of today's rapid development of science, this historical phenomenon looks extraordinary. We will set out from an account of the ancients' conceptualization of the root of the cosmos, followed by a description of their notion of the evolution of the cosmos. Then the discussion will zero in on humankind. Chinese philosophy is characterized by its pursuit to establish the Way (道 Dao in Chinese, aka the Tao) of humankind on the basis of the Way of heaven.

Proceeding from this perspective, Chapter 1 explicates the logical basis for the existence of the Way of heaven or Heavenly Way. Chapter 2 provides a description of the manner in which the Heavenly Way evolves. Chapter 3 attempts at a revelation of the self-consciousness of the spirit of the Heavenly Way. The chapters, formulating a complete circle in logic, are expected to lay a foundation for the argumentation in the Part Two of the book.

Chapter 1

Fundamental Root of the Cosmos

An investigation on the root of something is one that looks into a fundamental entity in an archaic mode of existence. The entity can be referred to broadly as noumenon. In the nomenclature of Zhuangzi's school of thought, this is known as the "fundamental root" 本根 (*Zhuangzi*, Chapter 22). In ancient Greece, there were four views with regard to the root of the universe, which are collectively referred to as the "four causes". The first view posited a material root of the universe in the forms of, for example, water, air, and fire. The second view emphasized the efficient cause, as exemplified in a belief that fraternal love and quarrel were two mutually supplementary forces. The third took interest in the formal cause, namely idea or *eidos*. The fourth sought to identify the final cause (*telos*), which was absolute goodness.[1] Similar awareness can also be found among Chinese ancients. Some of them considered the Way, others considered 太極 *Taiji* ("the Great Ultimate"), as both were an entity in an archaic mode of existence before heaven and earth took shape and an overall basis for heaven, earth, and all creatures in between after their emergence. Strictly speaking, origin and noumenon are different concepts. The former, highlighting a temporal aspect, is opposed to the current state, whereas the latter, with its emphasis on a spatial aspect, is opposed to phenomenon. Since this chapter discusses primarily the genesis of the cosmos with due attention paid to the universal law for

[1]Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. Translated [into Chinese] by Miao Litian 苗力田 (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe, 2003): 7.

all things and beings, it is comparatively appropriate to choose "fundamental root" over all other terms.[2]

1.1. The Way (Dao, or Tao)

Relatively speaking, pre-modern philosophers usually took the Way rather than anything else to be the fundamental root. Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism all acknowledge the existence of the Way. The term Great Ultimate is different in that it is usually and primarily used in Confucianism and Daoism. Insofar as the sense of an origin is concerned, the "Commentary on the *Book of Changes*" 易傳 presents a more tenable theory than other classics about the relation between the Way and the Great Ultimate. But later generations of Confucian scholars did not come up with a fruitful study on the Way as pre-Qin Daoist thinkers had done. Therefore, we will begin with a discussion on the Way.

1.1.1. *Definition of the Way*

The term "Way" literally means a path that people have treaded out or opened up. An ancient dictionary known as the *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字 (Xu Shen, 1963, original 2nd century AD) glosses "Way" as "the road that one walks along" 道, 所行道也. In the ancient poem "Cock Pheasant" 雄雉 in the *Book of Poetry* 詩經 (11th century BC–476 BC), there is a line that reads, "With the sun and moon gazed upon, my thought drags long. Vastly distant is the way, when is he back as he may?" In our daily life, the ways that people walk along share the following basic characteristics: First, a way is for all human beings to follow. Induced from the phenomenon is the universality of the Way. Second, it extends infinitely. Although there may be an end to a specific way, the sum of all ways can be infinitive, hence the infinity of the Way induced thereof. Third, ways are interconnected. They lead everywhere and connect various parts on earth together. From this phenomenon, the

[2]The more concrete a conjecture about cosmos evolution, the more historical limitations it is prone to. In Western intellectual history, Aristotelian cosmology has left such a negative impact that eventually culminated in the bitter lesson of heliocentric theory that prevailed in religion. Therefore, we will largely ignore the concrete conjectures of this kind.

interrelatedness and interconnectivity of the Way can be induced. The phenomenon can particularly be observed among waterways. Taking shape in natural courses, accumulating rainwater everywhere, and joining various branches into mainstreams, waterways flow day and night into the sea, which is suggestive of the dynamics and necessity of the Way. Moreover, there are orbits of celestial bodies that lead to one's reasonable extrapolation of the existence of some invisible ways to be followed in periodic cycles. In early China, it was a common practice among the ancients to observe phenomena in the sky, investigate patterns of the earth, "draw analogies from things afar" 遠取諸物, and "seek enlightenment in things as near as in their own person" 近取諸身.[3] Therefore, the said common characteristics of ways may have inspired early pursuers of learning, hence their choice to use the term "Way" to refer to the universal interconnectivity and necessity that runs through all things and all phenomena.

The "Way" as a concept with philosophical implications was commonly used before the *Laozi*. The terms often mentioned in the *Shang Shu* 尚書 (*The Book of History*) are heaven and virtue,[4] but occurrences of *wangdao* 王道 ("kingly way") are already present in the chapter of "Great Plan" 洪範 and found to be vested with political-philosophical implications. The speeches of historical figures recorded in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Commentary of Zuo*, 4th century BC) are abundant in the occurrences of the term "Heavenly Way". An example can be found in the remark by Zichan 子產, a statesman in the state of Zheng, that "the Way of Heaven is remote but that of human beings is near". In early Confucian classics, the "following of the Way" 適道 stressed in the *Analects*, the "actualization" of the Way 行道 in the *Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸, and the "being in accordance with" the Way 由道 in the *Mencius* all suggest a sense of the Way as a regularity and objective law to abide by. By that time, the *Laozi* had probably not entered circulation. But what we know

[3]Translator's note: The phrases in quote are adopted from the "Xici zhuan xia 繫辭傳下 [Great Commentaries of the *Book of Changes*, Part II]" (see *Book of Changes*, trans, Legge, 1993, p. 319). The commentaries are conventionally ascribed to Confucius.

[4]Translators' note: The *Shang Shu* 尚書 (*The Book of History*) is a collection of texts of early antiquity whose initial compilation is conventionally dated to the 4th century BC.

for certain is that it was Laozi who first elevated the Way to such a status as a fundamental philosophical category, where the Way was regarded as not only the universal law for the changes and developments of all things and beings, but also the origin of the cosmos.

There are 73 occurrences of the term "Way" in the *Laozi*. Their rich connotations can be classified into three levels.

First, the Way is the very beginning of the cosmos and all things. It is said in Chapter 25 that "there was something undifferentiated and yet complete, which was born before heaven and earth. Soundless and formless, it depends on nothing and does not change. It operates everywhere and is free from danger. It may be considered the mother of the universe. I do not know its name; I call it the Way. If forced to give it a name, I shall call it Great" (Laozi, 1963, p. 152). The three equally important words to characterize the Way are "something", "mother", and "Great". What happened "before heaven and earth" should have been its existence in an archaic and abysmal mode. To say "it was born" was due to the difficulty in finding a better expression to convey the idea at that time. What it really means is "to exist" rather than "to be born", because there is no way to pursue what begot the Way. From the perspective of what humans can perceive with our perceptional faculty, it was in a state of tranquility which was soundless and formless. But it was at the same time a real existence. To say "it depends on nothing" is because there is nothing that pre-conditions its existence, which means that it is categorically ontic. And to say it "does not change" is because there is constancy and regularity in its change. Its incessant operation follows a recurrent cycle. There would be no external force that influences or stops such an operation. Therefore, it was able to generate heaven and earth, which collectively refer to the universe we live in. Then how do we call it? The term "Way" would aptly capture its characteristic of operating everywhere, and the term "Great" would adequately characterize its absolute independence. But there lacks a single term that can cover all its aspects. So Laozi honestly admits that he was only "forced to give it a name".

Second, the Way is the universal law of all things and beings between heaven and earth. After heaven and earth took shape, there were things and beings generated in between. The myriad things and

beings in fact share the same root, namely the Way, which, in this sense, is called the Heavenly Way. After being generated by the Way, fostered by Virtue,[5] given form by objective matter, and completed in natural course (Laozi, Chapter 52), the environment of human existence was formed with the Way naturally existing therein. Relying on it, a sage "may know the world without going out of doors" and "may see the Way of Heaven without looking through the windows" (Laozi, 1963, p. 162), for it is "the storehouse of all things" and "good man's treasure" (Laozi, 1963, p. 168). The Way functions as the universal law underlying the changes and developments of all things. It can be considered their constant and regular mode of operation, which contains what is known in Western philosophy as the three basic laws of dialectics. For instance, "reversion is the action of Tao [i.e. the Way]. Weakness is the function of Tao" (Laozi, 1963, p. 160). This concerns the law of unity of opposites. "A tree as big as a man's embrace grows from a tiny shoot. A tower of nine storeys begins with a heap of earth. The journey of a thousand *li* starts from where one stands" (Laozi, 1963, pp. 169–170).[6] This concerns the law of mutual change of quality and quantity. And "there was a beginning of the universe which may be called the Mother of the Universe. He who has found the mother (Tao [i.e. the Way]) and thereby understands her sons (things) and having understood the sons, still keeps to its mother[.]" (Laozi, 1963, p. 164). This concerns the law of position and negation. Presumably due to Laozi's personal disposition, the Heavenly Way in his eyes is normally marked by the low, soft, and weak position it assumes. But through the transformation of contradictions, it can eventually control and overcome the hard and strong.

Third, the Way is the basic norm for human life. The share of the Way obtained by humankind is called *de* (德, virtue).[7] To act in accordance

[5]Translator's note: For the notion of "virtue" used in this book, please see the following paragraph and Section 1.1.3.

[6]Translator's note: Chan's footnote: "A *li* is about one-third of a mile". (Chan, *A Source Book of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 170, Note 118).

[7]Translator's note: Mr. Hu Jiaxiang, author of the Chinese version of this book, asked me to further note here that the word 德 in literary Chinese could also be semantically suggestive of "ascending" and that its radical "彳" denoted "going forward".

From Laozi's viewpoint, all things between heaven and earth were generated from Existence. Existence, in its turn, was generated from Vacuity. Taking form between Vacuity and Existence was a threshold that marked the evolutionary transformation from the Way to all things between Heaven and Earth. On the basis of our observation on all things in the world, a thing has to be brought into existence by something else. Mother gives birth to daughter. She herself was borne by the child's maternal grandmother. And the grandmother was borne by the child's great grandmother and so on. It seems that one can always trace a genealogy to identify an individual's ancestry. It goes without saying that the ancestry must have existed. But, since the existence of heaven and earth pre-conditioned the emergence of humankind and all other creatures, where did heaven and earth come from? Heaven and earth are real existences. That which brought them into being is certainly not the things between them, nor can it possibly have been human beings. It is not something that we can see and hear. So it has to be called Vacuity.

From the perspective of cosmogenesis, perhaps it would be more appropriate to characterize the contradiction as non-Existence *vis-à-vis* non-Vacuity. This is because the assertion of it being Vacuity takes no heed of its creation of heaven, earth, and all things in between. There is, after all, a mother of all things. With that said, if we say it is Existence, we do not see its shape, nor hear its sound. There is nothing within human faculty of perception that enables us to grasp it. Combining these two aspects and putting it in plain language, we may say it is a shapeless shape and unsubstantial image. Therefore, we should neither insist on its being Existence nor adhere to the idea of its being Vacuity. "The thing that is called Tao [i.e. the Way]", as Laozi characterizes it in Chapter 21, "is eluding and vague. Vague and eluding, there is in it the form [i.e. Image]. Eluding and vague, in it are things. Deep and obscure, in it there is essence. The essence is very real; in it are evidences" (Laozi, 1963, p. 150). Being eluding, vague, deep, and obscure, such is how it is like in a state between Existence and Vacuity.

The contradiction between Existence and Vacuity in the Way manifests itself not only in the cosmogenesis but also in things' development and changes. Any specific thing or creature would have to undergo a process of emerging into existence and the ensuing development. Take any

philosophy and mental philosophy, which, as extensions of the contents of logic to different times and different areas of inquiries, can simply be regarded as "applied logic". Hegel considered absolute idea to be the most real entity. It has evolved the natural world and, in doing so, negated itself. Things and beings in nature have thus obscured the absolute idea and almost reduced it to Vacuity. However, growing out of the natural world, there have been advanced creatures — namely human beings — that feature a spiritual world. Their coming into existence occurred as a negation to the natural world's material form of negation to the absolute idea. Thanks to this negation of negation, the absolute idea is able to unfold and become manifest. With spirit coming to know itself, a circular motion of the absolute mind is complete. Hegelian philosophy bears significant resemblance to the thought in the *Laozi*. But, because its absolute mind is conceptualized as the most real Existence, the world view and outlook on life derived from it features an active and positive attitude. Strictly in this regard, therefore, Hegelian philosophy tends to be akin to the philosophy in the *Book of Changes*.

One important characteristic of Hegel's philosophy is that its ontology is at the same time its methodology. The philosophy in the *Laozi* also shows this feature. Its author thinks that Existence is born from Vacuity, but he also believes in the mutual generation between Existence and Vacuity. This tells us that when examining the beginning and the development of anything, we must pay particular attention to the following two aspects: We should, on the one hand, look into the aspect of there always being Vacuity in order to observe the subtle and incipient form of any change. On the other hand, we should look into the aspect of there always being Existence to find out the ultimate end which the development of a change heads to. The word "subtle" used by Laozi means extremely tiny. All things start from a subtle and tiny beginning before they eventually grow full-blown. The word "outcome" suggests an end and destination. It denotes a destination of tranquility where all things will eventually end up. What all this means is that since Existence comes out of Vacuity, one should observe the tendency of existence in Vacuity. And because Existence will eventually end up in Vacuity, one should observe the tendency of Vacuity in existence. To do so is precisely to plumb the depths of the eluding and vague (i.e. the subtlety), and the

deep and the obscure (i.e. the outcome). This is not unlike the manner in which people in the modern time conceive the Black Hole. They think of it as being both deep and dark. It is, in other words, thought to be "deep and profound". "Deeper and more profound, such is the door of all subtleties!" (Laozi, 1963, p. 139). This says of both the insights into the external cosmos and the deep-felt inner experience of someone who experiences the Way.

Existence and Vacuity exhibit the opposition between affirmation and negation. The dynamic and mutually reversing tendencies provide impetus to the motions of the Way, which largely explains Laozi's observation that "reversion is the action of the Way". As for such phenomena that the high is built upon the low, the noble relies on the base, and the weak precedes the strong,[11] they all speak of the dialectic transformation of things resulting from the mutual generation between Existence and Vacuity. Laozi characterizes the Way as "Great", but it is not a still entity that remains singular; instead, it permeates everywhere. This is called "functioning everywhere". When such functioning reaches its extreme, it is called "far-reaching". The moment it reaches its extreme, it will develop in the reverse direction. This is called "returning to the original point" (Laozi, 1963, p. 152). Hence, the prime time of its development marks the beginning of its waning. It is thus considered to be back to its origin.

In short, as a concept that people formulated in their lives, the category of "the Way" was centralized in Laozi's philosophy. It was an absolute existence before the genesis of heaven and earth and it underlies the *raison d'être* of all things and beings. Since there came to be heaven and earth, it has functioned as the universal law of the noumena of all things. In addition, it should be taken as *the* fundamental norm for human social life. Its basic internal contradiction is that of Existence vs. Vacuity. The genesis and changes of all things and beings invariably result from the mutual promotion and restraint between Existence and Vacuity, in which those who seek to experience the Way can and should observe the abstruse and subtle operation of the Way.

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[11] Translator's note: "The weak precedes the strong", as can be exemplified in the fact that incipiency precedes maturity.


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the slogan? Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879–1942) advocated the replacement of old culture with "Mr. De" (i.e. democracy) and "Mr. Sci" (i.e. science). His criticism of the old culture indeed struck home. But did he, in so doing, fall short of — as Dai Zhen's 戴震 (1724–1777 AD) criticism of Xunzi goes — "taking all from the without but nothing from the within"? The theory of Inner Sageliness requires the retaining of the Subjectivity and flies the banner of ideal. The theory of Outer Kingliness, by contrast, requires that a person face or even obey the reality. So how can the contradiction between them be resolved? There has been the opposition between apriorism and empiricism in the study of ethics of all times and all places. How would the analysis of righteousness and rite on the level of intellectuality inspire us in this regard? Given the *raisons d'être* of apriorism and empiricism, are we able to weigh up one against the other, distinguish between the basis and the end, and gain a unified grasp of them? Humankind's relation to the environment of their existence is twofold. On the one hand, they seek to be its dominator. On the other hand, they have to be obedient to it. Can we find any evidence of such a twofold relation after analyzing the elements of heart-nature at the level of intellectuality? As regards moral and scientific practices, is the distinction we draw between them in terms of freedom and obedience an absolute distinction or a relative one?

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