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中國哲學

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EDITOR

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PREFACE

The *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy* is a reference work addressed primarily to an audience of college and university students and scholars, but it is fully accessible to other interested readers. Seventy-six scholars from around the world have contributed 187 entries; ten of these contributors have also served as editorial consultants. The scope of the work encompasses major periods in the history of Chinese philosophy and systematic discussions of major thinkers from Confucius to Mou Zongsan. In addition, readers will find entries that explain central concepts and problems in Chinese philosophy, by writers who have made original contributions to its development. Readers who are especially interested in the history of Confucianism will find a fairly comprehensive treatment of principal figures from the classical period and the Han, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, as well as trends in the late twentieth century.

The contributors were asked to write their articles with general readers in mind, from a broadly philosophical standpoint and from both Chinese and western perspectives, with reference to as many actual examples as were appropriate and as length permitted. Because of their theoretical nature, a few entries may appeal most to upper-division undergraduate and graduate students in philosophy. In appropriate cases there are also entries emphasizing conceptual explanations and supporting arguments for philosophical theses that the contributors considered significant for contemporary Chinese philosophy and comparative Chinese and western philosophy. It should be noted that the entries included, and their length, reflect selective decisions. The final list of entries represents the consensus of the Board of Editorial

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Consultants and is an outcome of extensive communication. Typically, entries on important thinkers and philosophical topics range from 5,000 to 9,000 words in length.

Originally, the contributors were asked to use the Wade-Giles system for romanization of Chinese characters. In late 1999, after consultation with the board, I decided to use pinyin instead, and the contributors kindly sent updated versions of the articles incorporating pinyin. Professor Chong Kim Chong of the University of Singapore was most helpful in converting and editing some twenty entries. For the readers' convenience and information, the Wade-Giles versions of certain terms appear as alternative spellings in entry titles, occasionally in the text, and in the glossary.

Acknowledgments

The idea for this encyclopedia came from Christopher Collins, in the fall of 1992. Over the next three years—interrupted by a year when I was recovering from an illness—I developed a list of entries and writers, with the generous help of the Board of Editorial Consultants. Work on the final list of entries and the assignment of writers was completed over four years; this aspect of the work was also a product of extensive correspondence with the editorial consultants. I am very grateful to the board and to the contributors for their participation in this project.

After Garland, the original publisher, became part of Taylor and Francis, the encyclopedia eventually was assigned to Routledge. I am thankful for the help of several people at Garland: my first project editor, Christopher Collins; Vice President Leo Balk; and the project editors Marianne Lown and Paula Manzanero. At Routledge, I am especially grateful to Sylvia Miller, Publishing Director of the Reference group, for her valuable aid as I worked on the final version of the manuscripts; and most especially to Susan Gamer, Senior Project Editor, who helped organize the manuscript and saw it through the early stages of publication.

I am also grateful to my friend and former colleague Daniel Dahstrom, who has been a constructive critic of many papers I wrote in the 1980s and the early 1990s.

Nearer to home, I am grateful to Jude P. Dougherty, Dean Emeritus, and Kurt Pritzl, the present dean of the School of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America, for their constant encouragement and their support with secretarial assistance. Over a decade before her retirement from our university in 1998, Eunice Rice spent innumerable hours, above and beyond the call of duty, typing manuscripts and class

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materials, managing correspondence, and organizing files. I am deeply indebted to her for her care and expertise. I am also thankful to Gabrielle Fenlon, an office manager at our school, for help on various matters regarding the encyclopedia. And I owe much to my brother Benito and my brother-in-law Dr. Kon-taik Khaw, for their special care and concern.

Finally, with deep affection and a sense of profound obligation, I dedicate this work to my wife Shoke-Hwee Khaw and my daughter Athene. Without their loving care and concern and constant encouragement, this work would not have seen the light of day. In the first few years after I became committed to this project, on many occasions, because of ill health, I thought of abandoning it. My wife was mainly responsible for maintaining my good health, freeing me from having to deal with family matters, and making it possible for me to continue writing and working on the encyclopedia. In much the same spirit, my daughter was constantly supportive and a comfort to me during hours when I thought that I might not live long enough to finish the work.

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A

Aesthetics

Kuang-ming Wu

In China, "beauty" is a sentiment more than views—that is, spontaneous views infusing actual performances or informing everyday attitudes. For the Chinese, beauty is a sentiment that pervades life and represents a reaching toward the noble, the true, and the right and an uplifting of all life's interactions. The ugly, the horrendous, the tragic, and the base are utilized to enhance what is beautiful and uplifting. There is no room to indulge in the absurd for its own sake—that would be considered pointless—and thus there is no Chinese Beckett.

The vitality of beauty breathes (*qi*) throughout the interlocking universe of *yin* and *yang*. The Chinese treasure harmony that is at the same time filled with tension; they treasure what might be described as dynamic integrative happiness. These values are not only praised but meditated on, and sacrifices are made for their sake. They are at the base of metaphysics, sentiments, attitudes, and performances in *yin-yang* coincidences of patterns: the five elements (*wuxing*) and the sixty-four hexagrams of the *Yijing*. They infuse all sorts of daily pursuits—

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politics, cuisine, martial arts, music, painting, calligraphy, religion, architecture, augury, and so on. Even cosmology and morality take on aesthetic undertones.

These characteristics, which are both pragmatic and universal, help us to understand the fascinating panorama of Chinese aesthetics. It starts at the the basic level of expression, writing units or ideographs—what Todo (1965, 19) called *manga*, "cartoons"—then goes on to expressive stories and notions, compressed exempla, and finally literature that is meant to enthrall, entertain, enlighten, and ennoble by representing, concentrating, and typifying memorable events that can be rendered as beautiful and then applied to and diffused through all of life.

In China, the true is the right and the beautiful. What reflects and is true to reality is right and uplifting. Heaven and earth, sky and fields, are considered to be alive and to contain forces—in the most generic sense—that move (*xing*) in the most general way and constitute an intriguing and sometimes bewildering array of perspectives, processes, and seasonal actualities. They intermix and interact, manifesting themselves as sociopolitical and harmonious. To be truly human is to join in their harmony, to join in the mutual workings of the *wuxing*: the five elementary forces, fire, water, wood, metal, and soil. They are an elaboration of the basic conviction that the negative force *yin* and the positive *yang* are forever in conflict with each other and forever give birth to each other. Their interactions form a sort of tapestry (*wen*) of the five elementary forces (or phases), which develop into sixty-four hexagrammatic modes. These modes consist of sixty-four systematic juxtapositions of the *yin* and the *yang*; each hexagram is typified by a paradigmatic situation encapsulated in a story characterized by a "pregnant phrase." Confucius is said to have used the *Book of Poetry* (*Shijing*) as an exemplar to explicate these (1.15, 17.8).

The Chinese are enthralled by the cosmic interweaving of forces, processes, phases, and activities, and from time immemorial they have engaged in ingenious, observant, concentrated representations of these diverse phenomena. Thus were born the ideographic symbols for writing, the Chinese characters. Xu Shen (30–124 B.C.E.), in the afterword to his *Shu-owen jiezi*, the first etymological dictionary in China, said that our writings began with the legendary sage Fu Xi tying knots in a cord to symbolize events and situations and serve as a mnemonic device. How did the tying or knotting occur? Actual tying or knotting was done by another sage, Cang Jie, who in effect painted a specific situation, by developing a paradigm and tying it up in the "knot" of an ideograph or character. This operation fuses two performances: painting or morphemic shaping (*hua*, *xiangxing*) and rhyming or phonemic coupling (*yin*, *yun*).

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Shaping characters by painting (*xiangxing*) with assigned sounds (*shengyun*) is a process of concrete delineation: for instance, drawing a ... spread legs, pronounced *da* and meaning "big"; or drawing ... erson, pronounced *li* and meaning "stand" or "establish." ... of ancient China symbolized an impalpable and therefore ... situation or referred to an event (*zhishi*) by, for example, ... angle for the character *si*, meaning "private." Then this ... ould be coupled with other homophones (*xiesheng*) to produce a range of meanings that would effect an understanding of the situation: thus, according to Xu Shen, *hu* (door) stands for *hu* (protection). Liu Shipei (1884–1919) was convinced that meaning arises out of the sound of a word (Todo, 21). Thus characters that are similar in sound, or similar in shape, cross-reference each other, and each elucidates the other: according to Liu Xie, for instance, *li* (rites, decorum) is to be *ti* (embodied). To put this another way, similarity in shape or sound indicates related meanings—a familial relationship. Deciphering meaning according to this principle is called *huiyi* (associative understanding); it is a recognition of a family resemblance among characters, in the form of notions expressed as painterly rhythms.

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That is, a character is already a compact story of a situation, "knotted" and made into a paradigm, a notion; a character is inherently a "story-notion." Characters serving compact exempla then became fixed or established with regard to their meaning. Often, a meaning is so pregnant, so complex, that expressing it requires a complex story. Thus a four-character phrase developed to explain it and to deal with similar situations in the future, by *zhuanzhu* (extending meaning) and *jiajie* (lending meaning). Let us consider an example. *Zhudou ranqi* (cooking beans, burning stalks) compresses or "knots" a sad story of the jealous Cao Pi, who ordered his brother, the poet Cao Zhi (192–232), to compose, on pain of death, a poem within seven steps. Cao Zhi at once created a poem that ended, "Beans in a pot crying, stalks under a pot burning, originally born of the same root; why is their common cooking so dire?" The pathos of a family feud is laid bare: the four-character phrase "cooking beans, burning stalks," which would ordinarily be so trite as to seem almost meaningless, reminds us of the story as nothing else could. In this way a "story-notion" graphically knots the cord of actuality and truthfully reflects the world, enabling us to deal with it.

Story-characters and story-notions weave a tapestry (*wen*) of literature, letting us describe situations faithfully. Chinese poets are in a sense painters: characters are the brush they wield. A great calligrapher and essayist, Su Shi (1036–1101), said of Wang Wei (699–759) that his "poems are paintings and his paintings, poems." The best essayists

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expressed themselves as compactly and powerfully as poets and painters; their essays are terse but full of imagery, musical, pulsating with the rhythm (*yun*) of actuality. Prose-poems (*fu*) seem to have developed spontaneously, originally to reflect actuality; later, however, they leaned toward the intoxicated lyricism of *pianwen* (parallel prose). Consciously shying away from that trend, the great essayists of the Tang and Song eras developed a lean discourse, *sanwen* (free prose), that joined hands with *baihua wen* (folk prose). Significantly, though, this terse prose style was still full of tacit imagery and rhyme, and it was called *guwen* (archaic prose). We can see, in this, that styles of writing and attitudes toward writing in China are closely aligned—if not imbued—with lyrical and figurative beauty, and that there is a consistent historical tendency to continue the best of a tradition. Aristotle claimed that prose was not "destitute of rhythm," and indeed poetic rhythm (*yun*) is ubiquitous in Chinese prose. Chinese literature is more spontaneously poetic and rhythmic than western literature in reflecting, and reflecting on, matters at hand. As Nienhauser said:

> The basic unit of prose is generally accepted to be a fourword (or four-graph) phrase or sentence. Although on the surface this parallels nicely the *paeon* which Western critics have claimed is the basic rhythm of classical Western prose …, actually it is a much more "natural" configuration (witness the usual length of an aphorism). Besides, because of the impact of parallelism on Chinese prose of all sorts, there is a tendency for primary rhythm (that based on syntactical and thought patterns) to be more in concert with secondary rhythm (that based on sound and prosody) than is the case in the West. A more regular rhythm and attention to oral presentation, therefore, was able to perform another important function by substituting for punctuation and paragraphing, which were unknown in traditional prose. (1986, 95)

Liu (1962, 3) and many others rejected the view of Chinese characters as ideographic, painterly, or packed with ideas, for two reasons: first, many characters are now purely phonetic (like the letters of an alphabet); second, it is very difficult to determine definitely which characters originally meant what. However, their objections can be answered as follows.

With regard to their first point: Almost no one is now aware that in the alphabet the letter A was originally an ox's head, inverted, or that B was a house, whereas most important Chinese characters do retain their ideographic connotations. To treat them as phonetic signs interrupts the flow of a sentence and makes it unwieldy, for they are, after all, more images than signs (Wu 1991, 163).

With regard to the second point: To "paint" or to "sound forth"

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actuality is part of creative art. Creativity can neither be checked nor be definitive, because creation involves groping and experimenting, with nothing to follow as a norm or a guide. The creation of a character—a compact story, an exemplum—is a creative art; to discern how it happened is also a creative art, which is no less exciting. Who could claim to have discovered the definitive "route" that, say, Picasso took in creating a specific painting? By the same token, etymology is beyond mechanical, critical measurement. We can also think of the legion of synonyms in Chinese writings; this is why Todo had to design *waku* (frames) of shapes and sounds for *tango-kazoku* (word families). We find an effulgence of "knotting"—identifying and expressing paradigms—and, as a consequence, richly varied connotations in characters. This wealth of synonyms puts roadblocks in the way of our etymological exploration.

Still, to recognize creative effulgence is one thing; to let loose irresponsible imagination, as Ezra Pound or Ernest Fenollosa did, is quite another. Somewhere, there needs to be a framework of tradition and a guide to style. As regards etymological propriety, whether or not there is an agreed-on guide, two things are clear: scientific critical methods alone are inadequate to discern a "route" of semantic creativity; and the very elusiveness of creativity has its own definiteness, if not definitiveness. Usually, we can see at once see that a certain interpretation is on the right etymological track, just as we can see integrity in a painting or in calligraphy—a thrust, a coherent sense, a uniquely consistent, penetrating *qi*. We cannot define it, but we can see it when we meet it. When we see a certain origin for a word, we think, "Eureka!"—and we do not react this way when we see another origin.

For literary propriety at the level of the essay, we find many proposals, usually lumped together under the heading "literary criticism," although this actually involves, or should involve, methods of appreciative discernment more than judgmental criticism. The first such work in Chinese history is *Wenfu* (*Rhyme-Prose on Letters*), by Lu Ji (261–303), who rhapsodizes over the inspiring process of creating lively poetry and pulsating prose. Literature inspires the reader because an essay or a poem breathes with life—a life that integrates it, invigorates it, gives it its typical integrity. The breath (*qi*) of a piece of writing is joined by and blended with the reader's breath in a cosmic breath flooding (*haoran zhi qi*) the sky and the fields. This appreciative description of a lively essay later comes to be the norm whereby we judge the works of other writers, past and present.

How do true "living letters" come about? The writer, the artist, watches how things go (*dao*), selects a series of scenes, captures them in a series of knots, and then ties the knots together in a compact story

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or essay. Through these knots, the writing preserves the events and leads us to learn a typical thrust (*qi*)—a sense of how things go at the moment, conveying the dynamics of a situation (*haoran zhi qi*). All this, the work of art, requires discernment and inspiration. Lu Ji described the process with singular beauty.

Conveying a scene requires us to enhance the situation, and to exalt cosmic harmony. Writing is a musical sounding forth (*ming*) evoked by things that are not "pacific" or not in harmony (*buping*), as Han Yu said in *Song Meng Dongye shu* (*Letter to Meng Tung-yeh*). It is to sound forth the "wooden bell" (*Analects* 3.24), to capture one notable corner, to alert us to "revert" to another yet-to-happen "three" so as to obtain (*juyi fansan*) the yet-to-happen square of things, as Confucius also advised us (*Analects* 7.8).

Significantly, in the creation of good artworks, artistic creativity is joined to morality. This is why the classics (or canon) and other well-known literature are a moral exhortation to posterity as well as a literary tapestry. Even fiction depicting "small talk" (*minjian xiaoshuo*) in which people let down their hair, even grotesque stories (as in *Liaozhai zhiyi*), have a tacit moral agenda. *Shuihu zhuan, Xiyou ji, Jin ping mei,* and *Honglou meng*, as well as the literary humor and joking that pervades Daoist and many Confucian writings, are all historical, futuristic, ethical, sociopolitical, and ecological.

This cosmic, social, and ethical character of literature—the tapestry formed by a series of knots—is supported by a firm vision of the operation of heaven and earth as a coincidence of *yin* and *yang*, in the patterns of the five elementary forces and the sixty-four hexagrams, in the *Book of Changes* (*Yi jing*), a magnificent, artistically coherent work consisting of story situations rendered poetically, many of them patterned after the *Book of Poetry* (*Shi jing*; Nienhauser, 59). Composing an essay about a dire situation amounts to picturing it so as to fit it into one of the hexagrams, and envisioning how it leads to the next hexagram or situation. We might also paraphrase contemporary jargon and say that literary interpretation of the "text" of events is an extrapolation from those events and an interpolation of ourselves into them, creating situational or intertextual dynamics (*qi*) that push the events forward. It was natural for Confucius to confess that he came to understand the decree and bidding of heaven (*tianming*) at age fifty (2.3), when he studied the *Book of Changes* (*Yi jing*) in order to be free of error (7.17); and it was natural for Mencius to sigh, when he calculated a 500-year cycle of sagely rulers, that as yet he saw no sign that such a ruler was coming (7B.38). These writings and sayings sparkle; they are clothed in beauty, a beauty that pervades not only letters, essays, epitaphs, and poetry but even bureaucratic proposals. As Cao Pi (187–226) says in his *Essay on Literature* (*Lun wen*), they all

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belong to literature. Moreover, cosmology is as ethical and literary as literature is moral and metaphysical. The thrust (*qi*) of Chinese literature is ethical, social, political, historical, and prophetic, spreading from the paragons of the past to the performances of the future, inspiring us to join in its cosmic, hexagrammatic progress.

Once we recognize the universal hortatory beauty of Chinese literature, we can understand how it is invariably a symbol for other arts in all activities of life. Literature (*wen*) is rhythmic sounds and paradigmatic shapes crisscrossed (*jiaocuo*) and interwoven into a texture of letters that will mirror nature—the *yin-yang* tapestry (*wen*) of the five elements or phases of the dynamic sixty-four hexagrams, themselves the interwoven texts, three times over, of *yin* and *yang*. Literary expression is perhaps the tersest but at the same time the most articulate of our tying of knots as a mnemonic for, and a reflection of, the universe and its history. In his *Wenxin diaolong* (*Literary Mind-Heart Etching Dragon*), the first comprehensive and systematic treatise on literature in China, Liu Xie (465–522) spared no words to emphasize this point: literature mirrors cosmic dynamics, and that is its cosmological foundation and its raison d'être. Good essays are poetic; good poetry is a true expression of life; and a good life is the paragon for our existence. Literature, then, is the ideal of life, joining paragons of the past and the beauty of the cosmos in a scene or an event. By faithfully, empathically mirroring the world, literature paints and chants the norm and the ideal of our life.

It is no accident that all Chinese writers use musical and poetic intonations and tend toward painterly calligraphy. To write is to recite, to poeticize, to paint, to be a calligrapher; and writing alludes to other forms that mirror actuality—to the tapestry of shapes we call paintings, to the rhythmic texture of music, to the blending of materials, through water and fire, that we call the art of cooking. Furthermore, governing people through the mouthpieces of heaven is an art of music making that must fall into the rhythms of the music of the heavens, as the *Liji* (*Book of Rites*) insists; and an art of nourishing the community, as the *Daodejing* (60) remarks. The art of rulership, then, patterns itself after other arts that mirror the dynamics of things, the *qi* of the *dao* of heaven and earth. We might also say that these arts, which involve aesthetic and pragmatic performance, must themselves incarnate or be a microcosm of nature; otherwise, they lead to perdition (Wu 1990). The dancing art of the "timely knife" is graphically presented by the Daoist Zhuangzi (ch. 3): the knife of nutrition, dancing with an ox that thereby loosens itself (*jieniu*), also dances with the knifelike art of rulership in the politically mutilated "commander of the right," and with the art of timely death in Lao Dan, the senior Daoist. Finally, martial art clearly patterns itself on all this; it is as alive, and as deathly, as the rhythm of

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nature. All this embodies the “Lordly Principle of Nourishing Life” (*Yangsheng zhu*)—the title Zhuangzi gave his chapter.

This brings us to the Daoist contribution, without which Chinese aesthetics is not complete. The world includes scenes that are beyond description—inchoate buddings (*ji*, *duan*) of nature and the sheer “thereness” of things; attempts to describe these will miss, or destroy, their fresh concreteness. How, then, do we capture them? By showing. “Don’t say it; show it,” the beloved urges the lover. How? By using words not as direct referents or pointers but as echoes in a valley (*Daodejing* 28, 41, 66; *Zhuangzi* 11.64), as shadows flickering over the real thing, even as a penumbra, if the real is the umbra (*Zhuangzi* 2.92–94; Wu, 172–173, 215–216, 222–225, etc.). All exempla or stories and gnomic sayings have an adumbrative flavor, touch, and tone. In the world of praxis, such as love (lingering memories of a scene, love of a person, nostalgia for a paragon, yearning for morality, a ruler’s parental concern for the people), to say something is to spoil it. Also, to do something is to spoil it, according to the Daoists. Nongovernment—an unknown “small state, few people,” in the words of Laozi (80)—is the best government; leaving things as they are expresses the most concentrated solicitude. Practice nondoing, *wei wuwei* (*Daodejing* 3), and things will come to be there, in all their “thereness.” Zhuangzi says (12.80–83) that this is the age and the world of the ultimate virtue, *zhide zhi shi*:

> Age of ultimate virtue: No honoring the wise, no employing the capable; [rulers] as tree branches above, people as wild deer below; decent and right and not knowing wherewith to make righteousness, mutually loving and not knowing wherewith to make benevolence, solid and not knowing wherewith to make loyalty, fitting and not knowing wherewith to make fidelity, moving insectlike and mutually employing, not knowing wherewith to make gifts. Thus going and making traces, happenings and no records.

Here, everyone is a friend. Zhuangzi sighed, “Get the rabbit and forget the trap; get the intention and forget the talk. How do I get at all a man of talk-forgotten and with him talk?” (26.49), and he told a story (6.45–66):

> Messieurs Oblation, Carriage, Plow, Coming, these four talked, saying, “Those who take nothing as their heads, birth as their backs, death as their bottoms, who know how dying, birthing, existing, perishing are one body, we befriend them.” Four men looked at one another, smiled. Nothing opposed their minds-and-hearts; they became friends…. Mr. Mulberry-Door, Elder Return, Mr. Lute-Stretch, these three were friends, saying, “Who can be with one another in not being

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> so, doing with one another in not doing so? Who can mount skies, wander through mists, bounce in No-Bound, mutually forgetting, nowhere exhausting?” The three looked at one another, smiled. Nothing opposed their minds-and-hearts; they became friends.

The beauty and spontaneity of a passage like this suggest the friendliness and the effectiveness of Chinese ecological aesthetics. Here nothing can be said; it must be done in nondoing—following Elder Return.

See also Calligraphy; Laozi; Philosophy of Art; Philosophy of Change; *Qi*; *Yin* and *Yang*; Zhuangzi.

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Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey

Whalen LAI

Buddhism occupies a central place in the history of Chinese thought, as the system that attracted some of the best minds in the millennium between the Han and the Song (second to twelfth centuries). However, integrating Buddhist thought into Chinese philosophy poses some problems, because Buddhists worked from a different set of texts and spoke what seems to be a different language. Christianity began as a hellenized biblical faith whose theology combined *theos* and *logos* from the start; by contrast, long before Buddhism found its way into China there was an extensive history of reflection by Indians on the Buddhist *dharma*—so that Chinese Buddhists had to think through an inherited tradition before they could embark on their own Sinitic reading. As a result, much of the convoluted scholastic detail in Buddhism remains alien to most Chinese. The fact that the neo-Confucian Zhuxi (1130–1200) openly advised his students against

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debating with Buddhists (lest they be seduced into the Buddhists' mind-boggling dialectics and thus defeated) also means that there was a calculated break between the two traditions. To this day, Chinese Buddhism remains isolated and is often left to Buddhologists. Also, because of the way the field has developed, Chinese Buddhism is often treated as an interim in a pan-Asian development beginning in India and ending in Japan. Integrating Chinese Buddhist thought into the history of Chinese philosophy did not begin until Fung Yu-lan. It is a formidable challenge to attempt integration while fully recognizing the emerging findings of Buddhologists.

Certain paradigms describing the overall cultural interaction are still in use. People still speak of initial Indianization and subsequent Sinicization; of Buddhist conquest and Chinese transformation; of Indians as proverbially otherworldly and Chinese as, by inclination, down-to-earth. Under scrutiny, such generalizations often seem simplistic; but at some macrocosmic level they remain useful heuristic devices, and for certain ends they can even lend overall clarity. The same can be said of several periodization schemes. They all depict a rise, growth, and decline of Buddhism—that is, looking at it from the outside. For adherents of the faith, and for others who still perceive its vitality, the story is one of seeding, flowering, and continual tension or consolidation. The present overview will minimize historic and political details in order to suggest larger sociocultural implications. It will focus on the major developments and their contributions to a history of Chinese ideas and ideals.

A Cultural History

Buddhism came into China sometime in the first century C.E. At first, it remained within the pariah communities of foreign traders and made few inroads into the larger Han Chinese society. Around 150 C.E., translators such as An Shigao began to leave a literary trace of this tradition. Judging from the reception by the Han of the Hinayana works and from the early commentaries, it appears that Buddhism was being perceived and digested through the medium of religious Daoism (Taoism). Buddha was seen as a foreign immortal who had achieved some form of Daoist nondeath. The Buddhists' mindfulness of the breath was regarded as an extension of Daoist breathing exercises. The Buddhist law of karmic retribution impressed many and is said to have struck fear into the ruling elite; but it was also thought that to break free of the horror of multiple rebirths, a person had only to refine his vital force until his spirit realized nirvanic immortality.

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Emptiness and Nonbeing

The collapse of the Han dynasty in 220 C.E. weakened the Han Confucian state ideology. The message of Buddhism then became timely and attractive. As there was a revival of Daoism during the Wei-Jin era (third century), there arose a philosophical appreciation of the Mahayana doctrine of emptiness. Since Laozi (ch. 40) had asserted that being comes from nonbeing, the neo-Daoist Wang Bi now made nonbeing the substance of being. And since the *Prajnaparamita* (*Transcendental Wisdom*) *Sutras* also declared that all forms are empty, it was widely held by the Chinese Buddhists that Laozi and Buddha had taught the same need to return to the roots of nonbeing, or emptiness.

Zhuangzi had praised the freedom of going along with nature (*jiran*, "self-being"). Now the Mahayana sutras seemed to speak of the same freedom as the ability of a bodhisattva to see or to abide with things just as they are. The term for this, *tathata*, or "thusness," was accordingly translated as *ru,* suggesting naturalness. With that, the Mahayana idea of a nonabiding nirvana (nirvana being anywhere) came to be associated with roving freely with the *dao*. The freedom exemplified by the householder bodhisattva Vimalakirti was especially appealing. A wealthy layman in the mercantile city of Vaisali, Vimalakirti lived in samsara as if it were nirvana. Since the neo-Daoist gentleman claimed to be dwelling in the forest even while holding political office, the urbane monks of renown then also claimed to be transcending the world even as they circulated among the wealthy and the powerful.

From such confluences of Buddhist and Daoist ideas came the *keyi* ("concept matching") Buddhism of the fourth century. Although Dao'an (312–388) objected to this dilution of *dharma* and urged his fellow monks to undertake a more diligent study of the analytical subtleties of *abhidharma* (Hinayana scholastics), he himself was not entirely free of Daoist assumptions. Only after the learned translator Kumarajiva arrived in Chang'an in 401 would that situation be substantially changed. Only then did the treatises of Nagarjuna (c.150), architect of the philosophy of the "middle path" or emptiness, become available in translation. Only then was the special status of the *Lotus Sutra* made known. Subsequently Sengzhao (374–414) became the first Chinese to master that Madhyamika philosophy, although—because he believed in the centrality of emptiness—he did not grasp the full import of the *Lotus Sutra*'s teaching about the "singular reality" of the eternal Buddha.

The Beginning of a Tenet-Classification Scheme

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Another major doctrine, an extension of Buddha's omnipresence, concerns the universal "Buddha-nature." But this teaching was not known to Kumarajiva. It came in only after his death, when the Mahayana *Nirvana Sutra* was translated by Dharmaksema in northern Liangzhou. This, together with the later translation of the *Queen Srimala Sutra* in the south, proclaimed that the Buddha-nature or *tathagatagarbha* (embryo or seed of the Buddha) was Buddha's final, positive teaching. Instead of the Hinayanist no-self or no-soul (*anatman*), Mahayana finally revealed the "self" or "great soul" that is the Buddha-nature. Ultimate reality was not just empty (*sunya*) of self-nature but, in a more important sense, also not-empty (*asunya*) of the infinitely positive attributes of Buddha. With this, the stage was set for postulating a progression in Buddha's teaching following this basic teleological format.

1. Hinayana teaching of the "four noble truths": samsaric realities are many and impermanent.
2. Mahayana initial teaching of universal emptiness.
3. *Lotus Sutra*'s further teaching of the "one vehicle" (that is, reality) of Buddha.
4. *Nirvana Sutra*'s final doctrine of permanence.

There are variations to this scheme. Sometimes the *Vimalakirti Sutra* is placed between stages 2 and 3, mediating the "empty" and the "one vehicle," because Vimalakirti taught with his noble silence the truth of the nondual: that samsara and nirvana as well as any and all distinctions are "not two." Whatever the variance, the basic teleology of this tenet-classification scheme is to move from the impermanent, multiple realities of the mundane, through their universal emptying and the nondual, to seeing some transcendental, permanent principle.

Gradual and Sudden Enlightenment

Although Daosheng (c. 360–430) had an inkling of this progression in the teachings, credit usually went to his contemporary Huiguan for producing the seminal scheme. Daosheng, the last of the great neo-Daoistic Buddhists, had some notion of the doctrine of universal Buddha-nature even before the final chapters of the *Nirvana Sutra* arrived in the south. On the basis of the *Lotus Sutra*, he had already argued that if the truth is one, then enlightened realization of this truth of the "one vehicle" must also be sudden and total. He was opposed by Huiguan (and Sengzhao), who successfully defended gradual enlightenment. That Huiguan won the debate is not unjust. Tibetan

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Buddhism also adhered to that general consensus, which can be traced back to Indian Buddhism. Daosheng was ahead of his time. (Chan, or Zen, Buddhism later endorsed sudden enlightenment.) But then the southern Buddhists were also putting aside his type of neo-Daoist intuitionism and were showing a new patience in working through the intricacies of Indian Buddhist thought step by step. The Lushan circle under Huiyuan (344–416) had previously taken Dao'an's advice and began studying Abhidharma with Sanghadeva, so much so that Kumarajiva saw them as sliding back into the analytical realism of Sarvastivada—a Hinayana atomist school which insisted that everything conceivable must be real in itself. The realist legacy survived Kumarajiva's critique, and the southern Buddhists would spend the next century interpreting Nagarjuna through a lesser figure: Harivarman, author of the *Chengshilun* (*Satyasiddhi*, *Treatise on Establishing the Real*), which the Chinese mistook as somehow overcoming the nihilism of the mundane by confirming as real the truth of a transmundane nirvana. (More on this later.)

Should Monks Bow before Kings?

Meanwhile, from 316 on, the north had been overrun by barbarians. War and chaos were hardly the ideal environment for philosophical speculation, but they were a perfect setting for seeking out quietude and rebuilding a community life that could withstand them. Fotudeng, the founder of the northern Sangha, did not sit down and translate even a single text, but he was instrumental in converting the Chinese population en masse. The Chinese literally took refuge with this holy man, whose aura of sanctity held the bloody killers at bay. He could protect his flock and mediate effectively on its behalf before the barbarian rulers, who, being Buddhists, honored Deng as the "great reverent" and pillar of the state. This was based on a Buddhocratic ideal that kings who supported *dharma* would be protected by it and by the powers of the "four heavenly guardians." Moral precepts, ascetic living, and social reconstruction became the forte of the northern monk leaders, whose Sangha flourished under strong state patronage.

In this regard, the difference between north and south is seen in the careers of Faguo and Huiyuan. The north did not record any debates on the immortality of the soul; the south had many. Although Buddha had renounced the Hindu notion of a soul (*atman*), Chinese Buddhists long presumed that if there was to be rebirth, there must be a soul to be reborn, and if a person could attain nirvana, his soul must be what entered nirvana. They knew that the religious Daoists also taught a doctrine of an immortal soul, but they would have held that the Daoist

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soul sought a materialistic longevity whereas the Buddhist "soul" aspired to a transcendental, spiritual nirvana. Although this was an imperfect understanding, Huiyuan used it to justify the Buddhist calling. The quest for spiritual transcendence is what impels the monk to leave the world. And because the monk lives beyond the mundane, he is also beyond the jurisdiction of the "son of heaven" who ruled over everything within the mundane sphere. Thus would Huiyuan defend the monk's autonomy (spiritual self-rule) and the Sangha's right not to bow to the king. If anything, even the ruler should be grateful to the monk for working for the welfare of the world. With strong support from the magnate families, the southern Sangha successfully defied the state that wanted to subordinate it.

The Sangha in the north was well aware of the monastic rule that prohibited paying homage to kings. But then the relationship between king and Buddha—the two wheels of *dharma*—was much more intricate there. A custom had been established since the Kushan Empire in northwest India in the first century C.E. of paying homage to both king and Buddha. The idea that the ruling king is a bodhisattva destined for future buddhahood (e.g., Maitreya) was nothing new. What might have been new was that the barbarian ruler Holin Bobo went further and declared himself a living buddha. The idea of a *tathagata*-king was also endorsed by the Doba who founded the Wei dynasty in the north. The Wei emperor Taizu (r. 386–409) commanded the homage due him from Faguo; the leader of the Sangha he appointed around 396–398 acquiesced. This set a norm for the north, where the king would assume the dual roles of king of the domain and effectively also the vicar of the Sangha.

What scholars called state Buddhism can easily give the wrong impression that the state was in full control of the Sangha. Although it has become proverbial that *dharma* flourishes and declines according to the fortunes of the state, this does not mean that state support translated into state control or even into the Sangha's prosperity. One clear proof that state Buddhism repeatedly failed to police the Sangha is, of course, the state's repeated persecution of the faith. If the Sangha had been under the state's control, the use of force—the last political resort—would not have been necessary. In fact, often a pious ruler woke up one morning to find on his hands a state within a state. And even after persecution, the Sangha frequently rebounded. But all that belongs more to a sociopolitical history than to our concerns here.

The *Huahu* Controversy

In 520, in Loyang, there was a court-sponsored public debate between

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the Daoists and the Buddhists over the *huahu* thesis: did Laozi leave China and reappear in India as Buddha? Or did Buddha will his own rebirth in China as Laozi? This debate was a product of the Han perception of Buddha and Laozi as equal sages, and each side sought to absorb the other. (Centuries later, the Hindus would also claim that Vishnu had masqueraded as a heretical Buddha in order to deceive and weaken the demonic hosts.) In the process of the debate, the Chinese Buddhists and Daoists pushed the relative dates of their respective founders farther and farther back until Buddha was said to have died in 1052 B.C.E. The Buddhists won the debate, but that also moved the date of the demise of the *dharma*, set by one popular count as coming 1,500 years after Buddha's death, which would move the beginning of the last age to 552 C.E. When 552 came around, reality seemed to confirm that prophecy. A civil war was raging, and the temples of Loyang had gone up in smoke. The darkest hour came with the anti-Buddhist persecution of 574–577. Yet out of that trial by fire, the Buddha *dharma* would rise like a phoenix, and a result would be the Sinitic Mahayana schools that flourished in the Sui and the Tang dynasties.

The mature Sinitic Mahayana synthesis was not like the earlier "concept-matching" syncretism. The period of digesting Indian subtleties had ended; a time of independent creativity had begun. But before we consider a philosophical analysis of the Sinitic Mahayana schools, we need to consider the building blocks of that edifice.

Paradigm Shifts before 600 C.E.

The four major concerns of Chinese Buddhist thought before the Sui and Tang era were as follows.

1. Before 400: emptiness and the immortal soul.
2. After 420: "two truths and one reality."
3. Around 500: speculations on Buddha-nature.
4. Around 550: synthesis under the "one" of *ekayana* ("one vehicle").

Although these do represent significant shifts, their unfolding naturally overlapped.

1. Beyond nihilism. For the Han Chinese, the doctrine of karmic rebirth entailed the transmigration of the soul—a presumption that they could not do away with even when they accepted the doctrine of emptiness. Since *nirvana* was seen as a return to a pure origin, it was believed to be achieved by discarding the defiled. Refining one's inner self was thought to be a process of attaining a sublime *shen* (spirit) that would realize nirvanic immortality or nondeath.

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Nearly all the early *keyi* Buddhists believed in refining the spirit by reducing being to nonbeing. The monk Mindu (fl. 340) was an exception, however. He became aware, first, that, Buddha had no doctrine of a soul; second, that emptiness was not a Daoist, nihilistic void; and third, that since emptiness was not other than form, one should never empty reality but could only empty the mind—and only if the mind was emptied would the world appear empty. A prophet is, proverbially, without honor in his own country, and Mindu was vilified for denying the existence of the soul. Still, because his daring concept of *xinwu* (emptiness of mind) challenged the concept of *benwu* (original nothingness), he provided the momentum for what are called the six *prajna* schools—each of which proposed how emptiness might be better understood.

Mindu, to repeat, held that there is no soul but that there is a real outer world, and thus that one should empty the mind, not objects or forms. The other schools never conceded the "no-self," but they all knew better than to endorse naive nihilism, and nearly all of them incorporated Mindu's psychological argument. Zhi Dun (Zhi Daolin, 314–366) probably developed the most complex synthesis of opinions of his time. In three steps, he first reduced being to nonbeing ontologically; then blamed the distinction between being and nonbeing on a discriminating mind, which he duly emptied; and finally united this refined mind or spirit with the *dao*. Thus Zhi Dun roamed psychically in emptiness while abiding physically in the world of forms. In a sense, he combined the nonbeing of Laozi and the roving freedom of Zhuangzi.

The six *prajna* schools did not have the benefit of Kumarajiva's guidance. Sengzhao (374–414), who was tutored by the Kuchan master in the dialectics of Nagarjuna, reviewed the past attempts and found them all one-sided—they missed the "middle path." He selected three schools to analyze, taking *benwu* to task for valuing nonbeing over being, faulting *xinwu* for emptying the mind without facing up to the problem of form, and accusing Zhi Dun of having espoused a causalist or a relativist reduction of form by form without tackling the inherent emptiness of all form. All three, Sengzhao held, failed to see the inherent emptiness of the unreal. Sengzhao was well received in his own time but thereafter was soon forgotten. He was not even counted within the Madhyamika lineage by either the Sanlun or the Tiantai school and was not to be rediscovered later.

2. Detour into a higher reality. One reason for Sengzhao's eclipse is that when Nagarjuna introduced the notion of the "two truths," the Chinese evolved a new discourse. Instead of talking about being and emptiness at just one level, they became preoccupied with investigating two layers. As a result, the problem of form and emptiness was

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elevated to a problem of the mundane and the highest truth. An amateurish reading would consider the real to be the mundane truth and the empty to be the highest truth. But since that reading seemed to create a new dualism—between *samsara* and *nirvana*—it led to a search for a still higher, nondual truth. We begin to hear of a third truth, and soon of higher and higher unions of two truths.

Zhou Yong once disputed with the Daoist Zhang Rong, arguing that whereas Buddha knew the emptiness of both being and nonbeing, Laozi knew only the reduction of being to nonbeing. In his treatise *Three Schools of Two Truths,* Zhou Yong exposed the biases of his contemporaries, avoiding the two extremes and staying with the middle path. After Zhou Yong, the southerners evolved more fanciful unities of the two truths. The early *prajna* schools, faced with the problem of explaining how things could be both real and not real, could offer only relatively simple metaphors such as dreams and magical illusions. The new theorists compared this duality to rolling and unrolling a lotus leaf, bobbing a melon into and out of water, or flipping a coin from front to back and vice versa. In this way, the Chinese were sharpening their earlier cosmogonic speculations on how the unity of the great ultimate (*taiji*) could evolve into the two aspects of *yin* and *yang*. Later, this would affect the way the Huayan school handled its pan-cosmic-Buddhist metaphysics.

Nagarjuna, however, never taught a third truth. Nor would the Chinese have taught this, if they had realized that the two truths were epistemic, not onto-logic—that is, two ways of looking at the world and not two sides, aspects, or levels of some singular reality. It was Jizang (549–623) of the Sanlun (Three Treatises, Madhyamika) school who exposed that mistake. He reminded the Chinese that the two truths pertained to two modes of discourse; they did not denote principles in reality. Even so, Jizang himself had to fight fire with fire; he had to go along with an opponent's wrong assumptions in order to expose the fallacy. Jizang even developed a "fourfold two truths" (one more than the standard three), but his goal was not to pile up more ontic unities: he called for an end to fixation on the *yin-yang* synthesis.

The Chinese did not embark on their quest for a higher "one truth" without a reason. They had gathered from the *Nirvana Sutra* that the final Buddhist teaching of a universal Buddha-nature constituted the one truth. This suggested to them that there was a "positive truth" above emptiness and the two truths. It was while they were looking for a way to reconcile emptiness and this one truth that they came across Harivarman's treatise *Chengshilun* (*On Establishing the Real*). Harivarman reduced all elements to their finest parts until a virtual nil was reached. Also, among the Four Noble Truths, he considered the third one—about nirvana—the one truth. The other three—describing

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the nature, the cause, and the way out of the world of suffering—were too mundane to be considered transcendental truths. But using Harivarman's basically Hinayanist scheme to explicate the Mahayana emptiness of Nagarjuna and the one truth of Buddha-nature turned out to be a mistake, which Jizang, again, would later undo.

3. Locating the Buddha-nature. China was attracted especially to the doctrine of the universal Buddha-nature, so much so that Xuanzang's Yogacara school was later called Hinayanist simply for deviating from it. By teaching the Buddha-nature, the *Nirvana Sutra* seems to reverse the earlier Buddhist teaching of no-self and the initial Mahayana teaching of universal emptiness. Daosheng circumvented the problem, noting succinctly that there was no samsaric self of life and death but there was a nirvanic self, which was the Buddha-nature. Still, it was not always easy to keep the Buddha-self from being confused with the Daoist immortal soul, despite all cautions against this.

Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (r. 502–549), the King Asoka of China, once presided over a court debate that sought to refute Fan Zhen's denial of an immortal soul. The emperor wrote an essay establishing the spirit as that which would one day become enlightened. This essay has been criticized for confusing the transmigrating soul—a ghost tainted by karma and ignorance—with the transcendental seed of enlightenment that is the Buddha-nature. But the essay did forge a synthesis that anticipated a formula in the *Awakening of Faith in Mahayana*, a text compiled within the next half century in China that became a cornerstone of Buddhist philosophy: in this text, the "one mind" has two aspects—suchness (or thusness), and birth and death (samsara). The emperor's essay also postulated a pure core (the enlightened spirit) that is somehow, inexplicably, trapped in darkness (ignorance). The spirit itself, being one with suchness, is destined for enlightenment; ignorance is what mires a person in birth and death. The emperor probably came up with this ambiguous mixture by drawing on canonical references to the Buddha-nature as the innately pure mind that is somehow accidentally polluted, or on the idea that, like *tathagatagarbha*, it encompasses samsara and nirvana. The *Awakening of Faith* might have done nothing more than express this paradox in a more sophisticated way.

The similarities do not end there. The poet Shen Yue was asked along with other courtiers to comment on the emperor's essay. In Shen Yue's response—which was miscataloged by the *Guang hongmingji* and broken into a number of independent short essays—enlightenment was a matter of putting an end to momentary thoughts. The same psychology is found in the *Awakening of Faith*, where *wunien* (no-thought, or a stripping away of delusions) is equated with suchness. This equation would later appear in the *Platform Sutra* of the sixth

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patriarch as a slogan of the southern Chan school. Sudden enlightenment is based on this sudden cessation of the thought process. To what extent Emperor Wu, who was a patron of both Daoism and Buddhism, had actually fostered a Sino-Buddhist synthesis of consequence still awaits investigation. But it is perhaps telling that he is also said to have written a commentary on the *Doctrine of the Mean*. The Buddhists were among the first to discover in this Confucian text, which later entered the neo-Confucianists' canon as one of the Four Books, a psychic depth that Buddhists could identify with and that neo-Confucians would regard as a distinct feature of their own philosophy.

Because humans are said to possess Buddha-nature, there was considerable speculation on its exact location in man. And because the *Nirvana Sutra* noted that this *atman* was somehow related to as well as separate from the human personality, there was ample room for debate. Like western attempts to locate the seat of the soul, this speculation could be stimulating but could also prove ultimately futile. In hindsight, any location is an expedient. As a synonym for emptiness and for wisdom, Buddha-nature is not an ontic entity but a function of intuition, not so much a knowable object as a metaphor for knowledge, awakening, and realization. The mistake of the nirvana school is that it read the text too literally—as Jizang was to explain.

4. Resurgence of the Lotus ekayana. If the early sixth century was known for its synthesis of the two truths and Buddha-nature, the century ended with a rediscovery of the unity of the middle path and the "one vehicle." Both Jizang and Zhiyi of the Tiantai school underscored this. It is customary to consider southern China as having excelled in theory while the barbaric north excelled in practice, but by the early sixth century that was no longer true. After the Tuoba Wei had reunited the north in 439 and, by 493, moved the capital to Loyang, a sinicized emperor, Gaozu (Xiaoywendi, r. 471–500), initiated a cultural renaissance; and judging from the fragments of northern works that have survived, the north became at least equal to the south in intellectual achievements.

Unlike southerners—who worked almost exclusively on the *Nirvana Sutra* and followed the authority of Harivarman—northerners maintained their appreciation of the *Lotus Sutra* and Nagarjuna. Both the Sanlun school and the Tiantai school had roots in the north, and both criticized the southerners' shortcomings and won. A merging of the northern and southern traditions was brought about in part by the anti-Buddhist persecution of 574–577 in the north. The Northern Zhou emperor Wu out-Chinesed the Chinese by returning to the ancient Zhou ideal, supporting only Confucianism, and banning Buddhism and Daoism. Many northern monks migrated to the south, and the Sinitic Mahayana schools were born in response to this historical crisis. North

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and south were reunited under the Sui emperor Wendi in 589. And the Parthian Jizang was honored in the capital. He took Harivarman to task, demolished various current theories of two truths, and returned the dialectics of the middle path to a neither-nor format that avoided both extremes. With a sharp eye for internal contradictions in the various theories on the what, how, and whereof of Buddha-nature, Jizang demolished their biases and revealed the true. Properly understood, positive Buddha-nature was none other than emptiness. In the end, there was nothing to gain (nil to ascertain) but the freedom that comes with the denial of pros and cons. Though committed to emptiness, Jizang also recognized the *Lotus ekayana*, or "one vehicle."

The metaphor of the one vehicle came from the *Lotus Sutra*. In the parable of the world as a burning house, the Buddha as father lured his children out of danger by a promise of three carts awaiting them outside. His final gift to them all is the large, white bullock cart. The parable is meant to show how the one Buddha vehicle (*ekayana*) replaces the three vehicles of the listener, the solitary buddha, and the bodhisattva. Kumarajiva's translation had referred to this *ekayana*—also known as Mahayana—as the Buddha vehicle. Kumarajiva also considered the *Lotus Sutra* as teaching Buddha's secret store, a teaching more profound than the bodhisattva vehicle of the *Emptiness* sutras.

By preferring the *Nirvana Sutra* to the *Lotus Sutra*, the Nirvana school missed the import of *ekayana*. It knew the one truth of the Buddha-nature as Buddha's final teaching. That "one" is a teleological one which came at the end of a progression of teachings. With regard to the parable of the burning house, this is like saying that the three carts were once real options; it is only in the end that they were superseded by the white bullock cart. The preferred reading is that the three vehicles were never real; they were only expedients (white lies). From the very beginning, the truth was that there is only one vehicle, which subsumes all the other vehicles.

As a philosophical discourse, this means qualifying the ultimate "one" (the teleological cause) by making it also a genealogical and omnipresent one (the material and the efficient cause). As a gift of an all-pervasive Buddha-wisdom, it is a priori enlightenment that brings about a seemingly incipient enlightenment. If the one is the beginning, the middle, and the end, that would make an end of all the mundane, karma-driven, causal realities. Realizing the one would then bring an insight into the emptiness of one and all. It would entail dissolving the distinction between past, present, and future. *Ekayana*, then, absorbs all Buddhist teachings into one holistic teaching. In terms of intellectual history, it would imply that as China was reunited under the Sui, the fragmentation of reality that accompanied the age of disunity had been

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overcome by a synthesis of ideas and a realized harmony. The world as disparate elements and the self as the product of karma were no longer too far removed from the nirvanic "beyond." In the words of the *Awakening of Faith*—which summarizes the essentials of Mahayana—self and world, mind and suchness, are integrally one. Everything is a carrier of that a priori enlightenment; all incipient enlightenment is predicated on it. The mystery of existence is, then, not, "How may we overcome alienation?" The challenge is, rather, "Why do we think we are lost in the first place?"

The Sinitic Mahayana Schools

Four Buddhist schools emerged in China that had no direct, exact precedents in India. India produced the *Lotus Sutra*; Central Asia put together the *Avatamsaka* ("garland," "wreath") corpus; but only China produced the distinct schools of Tiantai and Huayan. Although it is customary to regard these schools, especially Chan (Zen), as Chinese, it should be kept in mind that they are first and foremost Buddhist. Not even Kamalasila at the debate in Lhasa, in Tibet, would deny that Chan was Mahayana or label it Chinese the way Hu Shi would.

Chinese Buddhism is often said to have reached its apogee in the Tang era. But in one sense, it only shared with Confucianism and Daoism the glory, the power, and the prosperity of the Tang. Confucianism would enjoy a revival, especially in the second half of Tang; religious Daoism had the patronage of the ruling house, which considered itself descended from Laozi. Thus, during the Tang, Buddhism had to contend with serious rivals. Earlier, in the Six Dynasties, Buddhism was responsible for new social experiments. During the Tang, it had to come up with more sutras of filial piety, to accord with the family values of Confucianism. Buddhist monks in the Tang could still withstand the pressure to pay homage to rulers (as to parents), but the Sangha had by then lost much of its old autonomy. In the Northern Wei, the Sangha had a leader at the court; by the Sui, that office was replaced by a committee of ten elders; and during the Tang many of the vacancies were left unfilled. When the Japanese pilgrim Ennin came to China in the early ninth century, he needed permission to travel from the local authorities. The Sangha was effectively under the control of the civil authorities. Thus the Sangha—which had once been the mover and shaker—had become part of an entrenched establishment. It owned land and had peasants as tenants; as a result, it lost their support in the anti-Buddhist persecution of 845. This is not to say that Buddhism did not innovate during the Tang—it did, especially with regard to lay devotion and bodhisattvic vocation—but the most

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daring innovations came from the extraordinarily successful Three Periods sect. The state, however, disestablished this sect, with no protest from any of the major schools.

In the realm of ideas, we will focus on the Tiantai, the Huayan, and the Chan schools. The Pure Land school in China, which did not develop a philosophy of faith, will be covered only in passing, as an adjunct to Tiantai and Chan.

Tiantai (*Lotus*, *Saddharmapundarika*) *school*. The first Sinitic Mahayana school was Tiantai, whose third patriarch, Zhiyi (538–597), found favor with the Sui rulers (581–618). These rulers sought to live up to the Asokan ideal. They revered Buddha, divided the relics, and built a network of state temples. Zhiyi finally became a resident holy man in the capital, his hopes of returning to a meditative life at Mount Tiantai having been repeatedly dashed. Still, the capital was then once more the cultural center of a united China; as a trendsetter, it would also be the home of the later major Sinitic Mahayana schools.

Unlike the Tibetan Buddhists, who followed the Indian *sastra* (commentary) tradition in forming their schools, Chinese Buddhists built their schools directly on the words of Buddha in the sutras. By regarding a sutra as self-revelatory, they in effect produced their own style of commentary that, when necessary, could bypass the Indian authorities. For example, the Tiantai school—named after Mount Tiantai, where Zhiyi (Master Zhizhe) lived—claimed direct inspiration from Buddha (to Zhiyi in a former life). It also claimed a direct transmission from Nagarjuna, so that it could circumvent Indian authorities such as Aryadeva and even discount Kumarajiva, who was the translator of the *Lotus Sutra* but was not considered a patriarch. Jizang, earlier, would not have made such presumptions.

The *Lotus Sutra* is an inspired work, but it is not a systematic treatise. To develop a philosophy out of it requires nothing short of turning mythopoeic narratives into rational discourse. To do that, first, a basic unity is assumed for the sutra; this principle had already been set by Tao'an in the fourth century. Second, a basic teleology is postulated for all sutras; this method of classifying tenets was initiated by Huiguan in the fifth century. To this Zhiyi added something new, a common essence for all Mahayana sutras; this ensured that they all would preach the "one form" of the real.

Zhiyi also innovated a new reading of the *Lotus Sutra*. He broke this work into two parts and located two principles instead of one. The first has to do with the "trace aspect"; this pertains to the absorption by the one vehicle (a singular truth) of three vehicles. The second has to do with the "root aspect"; this pertains to the revelation of the boundless life span of Buddha. This formula—original root and manifest trace—allowed the same one substance to be present in all

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three vehicles as functions. It solved the problems of the two truths of the transmundane, formless *Dharmakaya* (*Body of Law*) and the mundane, physical *Rupakaya* (*Body of Form*). It subsumed all other sutras under the *Lotus Sutra*. It proclaimed the presence of the omnipresent Buddha-wisdom (another term for Buddha-nature) in all things. It collapsed into the eternal Buddha the "three times"—past, present, and future. Whereas all sutras share this essence, only the *Lotus Sutra* knows it fully. In Hegelian terms, in this work Mahayana attains *ekayana* self-consciousness. That teleology, when spelled out, becomes the theory of the Four Periods and the Five Teachings.

Zhiyi developed a new Buddhist hermeneutics. He distinguished the words and sentences from the hidden meaning of the *Lotus Sutra*. He transformed *mythos* into *logos* by an extensive use of allegories. The budding, flowering, and falling of a lotus blossom carry many more shades of meaning for Zhiyi than the rather arid correlative paradigm of the five processes (*wuxing*) used in the Han. In his *Fahua xuanyi* (*The Hidden Meaning of the Dharma Flower*), he laid out the final mystery, wisdom, and insight: the telescoping of the limit of reality (3,000 worlds) into a single moment of thought. Scholarly details aside, this says that all realities in time and space crisscross, and all can be made present to the mind at any time.

According to this cosmic vision, Buddha must be present at every level of reality, from the highest (nirvana) to the lowest (hell), the top and bottom of the "ten realms." From that came the Tiantai theory of essential evil. Even Buddha has this evil as an element of his nature. If he did not, he would be unable to manifest himself in the evil paths to help deliver sentient beings trapped there. Christian critics have accused the *Lotus Sutra* of Docetism; Zhiyi's reading here is an important corrective. His reading is firmly committed to an existential analysis of evil. It does not opt for a gnostic escape from the fallen world but instead works hard at accumulating merits in this life for realizing enlightenment in the here and now. All Sinitic Mahayana schools have this innerworldly activistic component.

The cornerstone of Tiantai philosophy is the "harmony of three in one." China was already familiar with *yin-yang* harmony, but that is the harmony of a complementary pair, either member of which, by itself, would be considered a cause of discord. Tiantai "harmonism" depicts perfection: a triadic round (*yuan*, "circle") in which all three members are equally holistic. This formula—three-*qua*-one—is the Chinese counterpart of Christian Trinitarianism, or three in one. However, there is a difference: the Chinese formula has no possibility of a procession (analogous to the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Son and the Father); in Tiantai, there is no "first person in the three"—no apex but only the round. Any one of the three is equally eligible to be alpha or omega.

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The framework of the round is provided by Zhiyi's reading of the following verse (as translated by Kumarajiva) in Nagarjuna's *Madhyamika-karika* (*Middle Treatise*):

> What is produced by cause and condition
> Is what I mean by the Empty
> Known also as conditioned coarising.
> It is also what is meant by the Middle Path.

Nagarjuna intends the four descriptions—causation, emptiness, interdependence, and the middle—to be synonymous. Zhiyi, however, reads the passage as noting that (1) reality is (2) empty and (3) real yet (4) neither. This should not be considered a distortion of the original; it is Zhiyi's way of reconfiguring Nagarjuna's four-cornered dialectics. Instead of piling up a pyramid of two truths as the Chengshi masters would do or aiming at an ultimate negation as Jizang would require, Zhiyi rounded everything off.

Everything in the universe is thus seen as simultaneously empty, real, and neither. Any one of the three, taken as a starting point, will be in sequence negated, affirmed, transcended, and returned to itself in a full circle, a perfect round. This became the Tiantai formula of the three truths: three perspectives on the one form of the real (*dharmata*). These three modes of knowledge are correlated with the "three wisdoms of one mind." In order make the picture complete, Zhiyi would insist that a person should always learn to look at reality from all sides: the positive, the negative, and neither. Ingeniously, Zhiyi had turned the four corners of an empty square into three points on an endlessly revolving round.

In so doing, Tiantai liberated the practitioner's mind from all conceptual bias and gave him an exhilarating sense of utter freedom before the nondual. In that vision, every color, every aroma (any object that can be smelled or seen) is, as such, the middle path. Centuries earlier, Zhuangzi had pondered the question of the truth about things and the many theories of things. Are things different? Are they the same? Do I have the truth? Or do you? Do we just think we do? Does thinking makes it so? And how can we ever be sure? In the history of ideas, it would appear that Zhiyi had reformulated and then resolved those questions, giving an answer that is clearly of the Mahayana and Madhyamika. He might have been inspired by Zhuangzi to "forget the pros and cons," but he was, clearly, also more reassuring than Zhuangzi. In relatively recent times, Mou Zongsan's philosophy produced something of a stir by reversing the traditional judgment, considering Tiantai with its perfect round as a more perfect teaching than Huayan. Unknowingly, Mou had revived an old controversy

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surrounding the advent of these two schools.

Huayan (*Garland, Avatamsaka*) *school*. Tiantai was patronized by the Sui rulers, and so when the Sui dynasty fell, it too fell into disfavor. The new Tang rulers, whose surname was Li, considered themselves the descendants of Laozi and gave Daoism official recognition and support. During the reign (627–650) of Emperor Taizong, the pilgrim Xuanzang (Master Tripitaka) returned from India and was much honored. A new, large-scale translation project began under him, with imperial auspices. Xuanzang had brought back the new Yogacara philosophy of "consciousness only," which for a while was the rage of the capital, until it was superseded by the Huayan school supported by Empress Wu of Zhou (r. 684–705). To appreciate this ideological upheaval, we need to backtrack a little.

In India, Hinayana produced its own scholasticism, called Abhidharma, that reduced reality to a multiplicity of elements. Repudiating that, the Mahayana *Wisdom* sutras deemed all such ontic distinctions empty, and Nagarjuna (in 150 C.E.) systematized this into the philosophy of emptiness. His "middle path" school taught universal emptiness. Around 400, the brothers Asanga and Vasubandhu built on other, later Mahayana sutras and founded Yogacara, the idealist school of Yoga masters who, while accepting the doctrine of universal emptiness, qualified it by declaring that everything is empty because it is of the mind or is known through representations only (*vijnaptimatrata*, "consciousness only"). This school of thought entered China in the early sixth century but was rejected by many because it seemed to have a subjective bias—i.e., it seemed to claim that there are no cognized objects; there is only cognition itself.

Zhiyi of the Tiantai school shared this opinion, so even though he knew Yogacara, he kept to Madhyamika. He held that his "round" would avoid both extremes: subjectivism and objectivism. He then pitted form against mind and subject against object, working out his threefold dialectics to ensure perfect harmony. That was important, for when it is applied to the problem of whether the "pure land," the paradise that devotees of the Buddha Amitabha would seek to be born into, is real or not real, the Tiantai would typically answer yes-no-both-neither. Accepting it as real supports the piety of the Pure Land school. Reducing it to a correlate of the mind entails seeing the realm as pure only to the extent that the mind is pure; this accommodates what would be Vimalakirti's understanding, a view typical of Chan (Zen). The Tiantai school on principle avoids both extremes of faith and wisdom; it observes the middle path and incorporates both. It regards the "pure land" as a real icon of perfection that can induce (or be induced by) a parallel perfection in the mind. Although it considers the mindless chanting of Amitabha's name an expedient for lesser intellects, the

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Tiantai school has traditionally been supportive of Pure Land piety. That is true also of the Tendai school in Heian Japan. But in the Kamakura period in Japan, a sectarian Pure Land school developed that broke away from Tendai and produced a well-thought-out argument for relying solely on faith. Japan also developed an equally sectarian Zen school that in theory would not practice Pure Land devotion. In China, by contrast, Pure Land devotion and Chan wisdom went hand in hand. (For lack of a systematic critique, the Pure Land school will not be discussed further here.)

By the early Tang, Yogacara was gaining a sizable following. But it was divided by a difference of opinion concerning the status of the "storehouse" consciousness (*alayavijnana,* the deepest stratum of the mind, where all experiences and forms of knowledge are stored). The question was, Is this core psyche tainted or pure? Is it essentially defiled, in which case it cannot reach the fruition of enlightenment? Or is it the pure Buddha-nature, destined for self-awakening? Tradition has it that Xuanzang, unable to find a definitive answer in China, sought one in India. What he learned at the Nalanda university, from an existing school headed by Dharmapala, was that the storehouse consciousness as such was tainted; the possibility of enlightenment existed in it as seeds, so that this eighth consciousness would not itself subsist as buddhahood. Also, there was—logically—a class of people devoid of this seed of enlightenment; in other words, Buddha-nature was not universal. Chinese had accepted Buddha-nature for a long time, so it is understandable that this new teaching of Xuanzang's would eventually be rejected and even condemned as less than Mahayana.

The thinker largely responsible for that was the Huayan patriarch Fazang (643–712). According to legend, Fazang was a member of Xuanzang's translation project but left after an open disagreement with Xuanzang. A change in political fortunes—the usurpation of Tang rule by Empress Wu, who founded her own Zhou dynasty—saw the rise of Fazang and the Huayan school. For Fazang, the right understanding of mind was found in the *Awakening of Faith in Mahayana,* which postulated a "suchness" mind (a true consciousness) at the heart of all realities. The Huayan formula—that the three realms are of mind only —is taken to mean that everything is derived from this "true mind." As in the classic debate on whether human nature is evil (Xunzi) or good (Mencius), in this case the proponent of good, Huayan, won and the "consciousness only" school lost; the Tiantai doctrine of essential evil also lost. This victory of the "pure mind" would anticipate the later Mencian revival among the Song neo-Confucians.

Huayan philosophy is usually condensed into the formula "all is one; one is all." It is called totalism, and it holds that any one part of the universe is immediately the numinous whole of that universe. To

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understand how this pan-cosmic-Buddhism came about, it is perhaps instructive to analyze how Huayan had remade the metaphor of the water and the waves that in the *Awakening of Faith* explains how delusion arose from the pure mind. The argument is that the wind of ignorance ruffled up the calm ocean of the suchness mind; thereupon, the waves of phenomenal forms appeared. Although the rising and falling of the waves may create an illusion of samsaric change, in truth the waves, being no less watery, are identical in substance with the suchness of the pure mind. In this way, the Mahayana dictum “samsara is nirvana” is affirmed, but it is also given a new twist. Since in this paradigm, the forms (waves) and the abiding essence (water) are of the same substance, appearance and essence, phenomenon and noumenon, are fundamentally one.

However, this metaphor was from the *Lankavatara sutra*, where it served a slightly different end. There, the wind of phenomenal forms stirs up the waves of the corresponding six senses. The sutra describes a relationship between the (once calm) storehouse consciousness and the other (now active) consciousness; it is not about the consubstantiality of the suchness mind and samsaric reality. The latter came from a reinscribing of that metaphor in the *Awakening of Faith*, which is most likely a Chinese, not an Indian, compilation. Relying on this text, Fazang was able to undermine Xuanzang. Because it separated essence and form, the new teaching from India was called *faxiang* or *dharma-laksana*, while the old teaching (championed by Fazang) was credited with knowing *faxing* or *dharmata*. The former —”consciousness only”—was criticized, metaphorically, for separating a house from the ground that supports it (this is the classic Sanskrit reading of *dharma*). The latter was praised for seeing that fluidity between water and waves alone qualified as the (pure) “mind only” school. That Sinitic understanding of the nature and function of mind led to the following tenets in Huayan philosophy:

1. The mind is pure; everything generated from this suchness mind is likewise pure.
2. The genesis of the world is due to this interaction between ignorance (the wind) and wisdom (the sea). The true and the false interact, somewhat like *yang* and *yin*.
3. The discrete forms of things in the world (waves) may delude the unsuspecting but not the wise. The waves being no less watery, the wise can find in any form (such as Wordsworth’s blade of grass) a token of eternity (suchness).
4. Since pure suchness is the substance of the mind, the forms of things and the essence of mind, *dharma-laksana* and *dharmata*, are ultimately one.

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5. Since every single wave encapsulates the wetness of the whole ocean, each wave is at the same time all other waves and the sum of all waves.

Thus the Huayan formula: “one is all and all is one.” With it, Huayan superseded the Tiantai harmonism based on three-*qua*-one, upholding instead the totalism of all-*qua*-one.

The final vision is hard to put into words. But if we imagine the ocean to be boundless and churning out wave after wave, incessantly, by itself, without even the aid of an external wind of ignorance, so that at any one time each part of this whole is contributing to the regeneration of itself and the whole, that would approximate what Huayan calls *dharmadhatu* causation. At one point, Fazang explained this perfect, sudden, tenfold (instead of threefold) mystery at court. He pointed to a golden lion, saying that every speck of gold contained the whole lion, every hair encapsulated the whole, and every part reflected and captured every other part. It is like the jewels woven into Indra’s net: every jewel reflects every other jewel. Totalism, which presumes a perfect fusion and interpenetration of part and whole, is predicated on the idea of the infinite. In an infinite universe, every part is identically infinite. This vision is inspired by a hologramic universe revealed in the rich mythopoeic language of the *Huayan sutra*. A faint echo can be detected in the philosophy of Hui Shi, the first Chinese thinker to become aware of the infinite.

The extravagant Huayan philosophy was patronized by Empress Wu, who ruled as a female Maitreya and who saw her realm as, and turned it into, an incarnation of Indra’s net. She had a gigantic Sun Buddha built in the capital and miniature versions enshrined in every provincial state temple, symbolically creating an all-penetrating *dharmadhatu*, a Buddha-kingdom on earth. This vision was too good to be true, too perfect to last; when her dynasty fell, the Huayan school had to adjust itself to an imperfect reality. Just as Tiantai had always supported the Pure Land faith, Huayan had traditionally advocated Chan. The adjustment of Huayan theory to the more practical ends of Chan meditation was later completed by Zongmi (780–841), who was considered a patriarch by both the Huayan school and the Chan school.

The Chan (*Zen*) *school*. The Chan school is often said to be the most Chinese of all schools. In legend, Bodhidharma brought this teaching to China in the early sixth century. A certain Bodhidharma did arrive in Loyang, and the *Record of the Loyang Temples* described him as singing the praises of the spectacular Yongning pagoda. A different picture emerged a hundred years later, when Chan legends described a Bodhidharma who was highly critical of the kind of merit-making temple piety he saw in the southern capital. Instead of trying to decide

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which image of Bodhidharma is more authentic, we would do well to recognize that Chan was a school which claimed to rely on secret transmission, and so its early history cannot be determined one way or another by pitting esoteric against exoteric records. In other words, the Chan tradition is created by its own legends. These narratives depict Chan primarily as a school that began with monks of the forests and ascetics of the mountains who conflicted with city monks and popular lecturers—a very familiar tale in the history of Buddhism, and a conflict that went all the way back to the post-Asokan Sangha and to the birth of Mahayana itself.

What modern historians can ascertain is that Huike (487–593), a disciple of Bodhidharma (d. 532), was an ascetic of some renown. This lover of the forest life was eclipsed by popular Buddhist lecturers in the city, according to the records, which blame one leading Loyang elder monk in particular. But then the anti-Buddhist persecution of 574–577 in the north effectively undermined this monk's urban base of support. It drove monks to take refuge in the hills, where, in retrospect, they criticized urban temple piety as superficial or shallow. The soul-searching undertaken in response to persecution called for a return to the fundamentals of the faith, and especially to meditation.

This beginning—asceticism—is clear. Huike was a *dhuta* (extreme ascetic) who schooled others, and one of his disciples was Sengzan (d. 606). However, the link between this pair and Daoxin (580–651, now deemed the fourth Chan patriarch) is far from clear and remains tenuous. This is perhaps unsurprising, because with Daoxin a new style emerged. A sizable fellowship now gathered at his East Mountain. It was supported by a powerful local lay patron. Extreme asceticism became outmoded; Daoxin even criticized a lone wayfarer who visited him—when the man left, Daoxin said he was not of Mahayana stock, i.e., not ready to rejoin the world. Daoxin's burgeoning community would rejoin the world, following a set of precepts he had compiled for bodhisattvas. Daoxin also taught a more relaxed form of meditation that would bring peace of mind to a wider and less hardy circle of monks and lay practitioners.

Daoxin and his disciple Hongren (601–674) co-taught at the Twin Peaks, from which their fame spread to the capital. Around 700 C.E., Empress Wu invited Shenxiu (c. 605–706), who had apparently succeeded Hongren, to come to Chang'an. Whether or not the tradition had actually begun with forest monks who rejected the world, it had by then matured into a force which the world had to reckon with—and which, in turn, had to reckon with the world. Considering the politicization of the tradition, it is not surprising that soon afterward, Shenhui (670–762), seeking imperial patronage, began a campaign in which he argued that the real sixth patriarch was not Shenxiu but his

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own master, Huineng (638–713).

Up to that point, the school did not call itself Chan (meditation), a rather colorless name. It was in fact still looking for a name, and the custom then was to tie a new teaching to a sutra. Huike used the *Srimala sutra*, but Daoxin later drew inspiration from the *Awakening of Faith*. Members of the East Mountain Teaching, realizing that the *Awakening of Faith* was a *sastra*, came up with the next best; they conjured up a lineage of *Lankavatara sutra* masters, this being the sutra that informed the *Awakening of Faith*. Shenhui then perpetuated the myth that Huineng favored the *Diamond Sutra*. Actually, none of these labels really indentifies the school's ideological affiliation, because this tradition apparently never used one sutra to legitimize itself.

Shenxiu, who used five *upayas* (expedients)—five formulas for wisdom excerpted freely from five or more sutras—is a good example of the school's typically loose practice. The formulas are the means; wisdom is the end. The intention wa[illegible]ut of the cloister and make it accessible to th[illegible], catchy dicta were used to encapsulate the [illegible]*m Sutra* describes itself, for example, as teac[illegible]ling, no-form. A school in Sichuan (Szechw[illegible] itself by modifing this slightly; there, even th[illegible]arge but intensive sessions lasting fourteen days over the new year and be tutored, receiving certified enlightenment with *dharma* names (previously given only to monks) as well. Today we might call this pop Zen or instant Zen; it was to bring many into a form of wisdom hitherto reserved for a few. This was accomplished by lectures on *dharma* like the one Huineng gave in the Dafan Temple in Canton, and by massive precept "platforms" like the one Shenhui presided over to raise money for the throne.

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The *Platform Sutra* of the sixth patriarch gives the southern school's account of how Huineng composed the better "mind verse," for which he received—in secret, at midnight—a transmission from Hongren. The decline of the northern school, the success of Shenhui's campaign, and later the destruction of major temples (especially in the north during the anti-Buddhist persecution of 845) guaranteed the preeminence of two surviving southern lineages. Regional styles emerged, and an infusion of folk wisdom created a folk Zen tradition, which has rarely been studied.

Much has been written on the depth of Chan wisdom, and most of it is true. If we take a longer view, though, we see that there is nothing in Chan which was not present before. What was new in Chan is its effective and dramatic teaching. Whether one wanted to see one's own nature, achieve sudden enlightenment, or cut off all thought, these formulas for wisdom under the personal guidance of a master could

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provide liberation. Much as Luther's dictum "By faith alone" condensed a lifetime of profound reflection on the scriptures, so Chan slogans reduced Mahayana wisdom to its essentials. The following four lines are said to capture the essence of Chan:

> No reliance on words.
> Transmission outside the scriptures.
> Point directly at the minds of men.
> See your (Buddha) nature and be enlightened.

This passage is attributed to Bodhidharma or to Huineng, but it actually appeared after Mazu Daoyi (709–788) and may better describe his innovation. In any case, however, the four lines would free many from the letter of Buddhist law and, with their reference to mind and nature, bring the Buddhist discourse back to an important Mencian concern. The fact that by now Buddhism—in decline in India—could offer little further inspiration to China meant that Chan would evolve its own indigenous, secondary scriptures: the colloquial Yulu and the Gong'an that would even more effectively connect the two traditions.

Conclusion

What did Buddhism contribute to Chinese thought? Neo-Confucians in the Song era denied that they owed any debt to Buddhists, but their denial only underscored their indebtedness. The friendships some of them had with Chan monks tell us that, public polemics against Buddhism notwithstanding, personal exchanges continued. Buddhist terminology appears here and there in their writings, but it is often given a reading that is as much nonclassical as non-Buddhist. In fact, the intercultural dialogue had a hybrid nature. Drawing a line between what is Buddhist and what is Confucian is not easy. For example, it is well known that Li Ao (d. c. 844), a disciple of Han Yu (768–824), gave an evaluation to human emotions so negative that it was deemed too Buddhist by the Song masters. In turn, the Song masters were considered crypto-Buddhists by the Qing scholars who sought a return to Han scholarship. So the question remains.

In retrospect, the major innovation of medieval Buddhist thought had to do with probing the structure of the mind and the grandeur of metaphysical reality and considering how one reflected the other. In that sense, Buddhist thought is inherently idealist; it is—as Lovejoy recalled of William James—the mind taking a holiday from the seemingly fragmented realities of a world in chaos and discovering a refuge in monistic pathos. Over the long term, however, the strength of

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this inner self would return to, and bear on, changing reality for the better. The standard complaint of the Confucians is that the Buddhists neglect social ethics. That is not true—the Buddhists also had a sense of moral behavior and a moral code—but this is not the point. Rather, the point is that, to follow Foucault's last writings on ethics, the Buddhists delve into ethics understood (by Foucault) as the self's relationship to itself. In that internal arena of spiritual exercises seeking self-transformation, there are four concerns: ethical substance, mode of subjection, self-forming activity, and telos. For the Buddhist, the substance is desire; the mode of control is dispassion; the activities are largely ascetic; the goal is liberation. It is ultimately this art of self-analysis and self-transformation that the Buddhists would leave as a gift to all those who came after.

See also Buddhism: Zen (Chan); Fazang; Hui Shi; Huineng: The Sixth Patriarch; Jizang; Mazu Daoyi; Shenhui; Shengzhao; Xuanzang; Zhiyi.

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Buddhism: Zen (Chan Zong, Ch'an Tsung)

Hsueh-li CHENG

I

Buddhism was founded by Gautama Buddha (563–483 B.C.E.) in India about 2,500 years ago. It became popular inside and outside India, and it developed from early Buddhism into Hinayana (Small Vehicle, also known as Theravada) and then Mahayana (Great Vehicle) Buddhism. Both conservative Hinayana and liberal Mahayana Buddhist teachings were introduced from India to China in the first century C.E. Chinese people have generally preferred Mahayana to Hinayana Buddhism. Since the fifth century, Chinese Buddhist masters have transformed Indian Buddhism to Chinese Buddhism and created many new Buddhist schools in China. Chan, or Zen (the Japanese transcription of the Chinese term), is a new Mahayana Buddhist school founded in China; one cannot find a counterpart in India.

Although Chan Buddhism—hereafter Chan—as established in China is a new school, orthodox Chan Buddhists have claimed that it is the real, original teaching of Buddha. According to Chan tradition, Gautama Buddha was the first patriarch of Chan Buddhism in India. He is said to have gathered his disciples to hear his holiest message at the Mount of the Holy Vulture. But instead of giving a verbal statement, he simply held up a bouquet of flowers before the assemblage. No one understood the meaning of his gesture except the elderly Mahakasyapa, who smiled at Buddha as if he completely realized the master's teaching. At this moment, it is said, Buddha appointed Mahakasyapa as his successor by proclaiming, "I have the most precious treasure, spiritual and transcendental, which this moment I hand over to you, O venerable Mahaka-syapa!" In Chan tradition this incident has been taken as the origin of the Chan school.

After Mahakasyapa, Chan Buddhism is said to have been transmitted through twenty-six chief masters. Bodhidharma (d. 532)

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was regarded as the twenty-eighth patriarch of Chan Buddhism in India. Yet he has been revered as the first patriarch of Chan in China because he came from India to China to bring the following special Chan teaching:

> A special transmission outside the scriptures,
> No dependence upon words and letters.
> Direct pointing at the human mind,
> Seeing into the nature to attain buddhahood.

Bodhidharma came to south China during the reign of Emperor Wu (520–550). He is said to have crossed the Yangtze (Chang) River on a reed, and he taught a new way of meditation. He lived at Shaolinsi monastery, sat facing a wall, and meditated for nine years.

Bodhidharma is well known as a great master of meditation. His way of meditation is called *biguan*, "wall-gazing." Bodhidharma's sitting meditation became a trademark of Chan Buddhism in China, Japan, and Korea.

In the Chan tradition the question why Bodhidharma came from the west is often posed, and Chan writings frequently use Bodhidharma's journey from India to China to point to the essence of Chan. In the *Wumenguan* (*Gateless Gate*) we read: Zhaozhou was once asked by a monk, "What is the meaning of the first patriarch's coming from the west?" Zhaozhou answered, "The tree of life in the front garden." The same question has been answered by saying, "Hand me that support over there" or "No meaning."

The Mahayana doctrine of emptiness is the important message Bodhidharma taught. In his first encounter with Emperor Wu of Liang, he conveyed the idea that all things, including good deeds and meritorious virtues, are empty. The emperor asked Bodhidharma, "Ever since the beginning of my reign I have built so many temples, copied so many sacred books, and supported so many monks and nuns; what do you think my merit might be?" Bodhidharma bluntly answered, "No merit whatsoever, sire!" The emperor then asked, "Why no merit whatever?" Bodhidharma said, "All these are inferior deeds, which would cause their doer to be born in the heavens or on this earth again. They still show the traces of worldliness. They are like shadows, but have no reality. As to true merit, it is full of pure wisdom and is perfect and wonderful. Its essence is emptiness. One cannot obtain such merit by any worldly achievement."

The emperor thereupon asked, "What is the first principle of the holy doctrine?" Bodhidharma replied, "Vast emptiness, nothing holy." "Who is it then that now stands before me?" "I do not know," was the answer.

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Chan is not a doctrine, theory, or dogma, but a way of avoiding dogmatic views and assertions. Chan *dharma* is not a body of fixed truths, but rather the stoppage of all thoughts. This is illustrated by the following familiar account.

After his nine-year stay in China, Bodhidharma wished to return to India. He called in all his disciples and said, "The time has now come for me to depart, and I want to see what you know about Chan." The disciple Taofu (Daofu) replied, "As I see it, the truth is above affirmation and negation, for this is the way it moves." Bodhidharma said, "You have got my skin." Next came the nun Zongchi, who said, "As I understand it, the truth is like Ananda's viewing of the Buddha land of Akshobhya: it is seen once and never again." Bodhidharma replied, "You have attained my flesh." Taofu presented his view, saying, "The four great elements are originally empty; the five skandhas have no existence. According to my view, there is no *dharma* to be grasped." Bodhidharma said, "You have got my bones." Finally, Huike bowed respectfully and stood silent. Bodhidharma claimed, "You have attained my marrow." Huike inherited the robe from the master and became the second patriarch of Chinese Chan Buddhism.

II

After Bodhidharma, the best-known Chan patriarch is Huineng (638–713), the sixth patriarch. He was born in Canton. As a child he sold firewood to support his mother. One day, on his way to deliver firewood to a customer's home, he encountered a man reciting the *Diamond sutra*. It is said that as soon as Huineng heard the text, his mind became enlightened. He was advised to study Buddhism with Hongren (601–674), the fifth patriarch, who was then living at Yellow Plum in Qinzhou.

The master asked him where he came from and what he wanted. Huineng replied, "I am a commoner from Xinzhou of Canton. I have traveled far to pay you respect, and ask I for nothing but buddhahood." The master rejected him. "You are a native of Canton, a barbarian? How can you expect to be a buddha?" Huineng answered, "Although there are northern men and southern men, north and south make no difference as to their Buddha-nature. A barbarian is different from Your Holiness physically, but there is no difference in our Buddha-nature." The fifth patriarch was impressed by the boy's statement and let him stay at the monastery. However, Huineng was accepted not as a regular disciple, but merely as a worker to pound rice in the barn.

One day Master Hongren, wanting to appoint a successor, asked his disciples to compose poems that would show their understanding of

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Buddhist *dharma*. Shenxiu (d. 762), the most outstanding disciple in the monastery, wrote the following poem on the wall in the temple hall:

> The body is the Bodhi tree,
> The mind is like a clear mirror on a stand.
> Take care to wipe it all the time,
> Allow no speck of dust to cling.

Master Hongren praised the poem publicly and ordered all disciples to memorize it. But in private he told Shenxiu to write another one, since the verse expressed Hinayana *vinaya*, gradual moral discipline, rather than the Mahayana philosophy of emptiness. Huineng, an uneducated man, seemed to be the only one who knew what the flaw in Shenxiu's verse was. He composed his own poem and asked a temple boy to write it on the wall:

> There is no Bodhi-tree,
> Nor is there a stand with a bright mirror.
> All things are originally empty,
> Where can the dust alight?

This poem is an excellent expression of Mahayana philosophy; it teaches that all things, including meditation, religious discipline, enlightenment, good and evil, are empty.

Chan is indeed the practice of *sunyata*, emptiness. Publicly, Master Hongren said that Huineng's poem was no good, yet privately he called Huineng to his side and appointed him as his successor. Huineng, following the master's order, fled south to avoid jealousy and persecution by the other disciples.

While Shenxiu's teaching of gradual enlightenment was popular in northern China, Huineng promoted Chan *dharma* as abrupt enlightenment in the south. Eventually, Huineng was recognized as the sixth patriarch, and his teachings became the orthodox message of Chinese Chan Buddhism. The *Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patriarch from the High Seat of the Treasure of the Law* is the only Chinese Buddhist writing which is called sutra—that is, scripture.

Meditation is the most important practice in Chan. Yet Chan should not be identified with the physical act of sitting in contemplation. This lesson is exemplified by a tale.

Mazu (709–788) was a diligent and gifted monk. He sat constantly in meditation. Master Huairang (677–744) asked, "Virtuous one, why are you sitting in meditation?" Mazu replied, "I want to become a buddha." Thereupon Huairang picked up a tile and rubbed it continuously in front of the hermitage. Mazu asked, "What is the

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master doing?” The master replied, “I am polishing this to make a mirror.” The monk exclaimed, “How can you make a mirror by polishing a tile?” The master responded, “How can you make a buddha by practicing *zuochan* (*zazen* in Japanese), sitting meditation?”

Biguan (wall-gazing), *zuochan*, and other religious disciplines are all fine. But enlightenment depends on inner nature; it is the opening of one’s inner mind flower.

III

According to Madhyamika Buddhism, all things are devoid of definite nature, character, and function, and one should not be attached to anything. Now, since all things are equally empty, any incident, for Chan, can be an appropriate occasion for awakening. The meditation hall is not the only place where one becomes enlightened. According to Chan, one can have *wu*—enlightenment—while hearing an inchoate voice, listening to a senseless remark, seeing a plant grow, or experiencing a trivial event such as opening a door, reading a book, or drinking tea. The great Chan masters did not stick to fixed patterns to express themselves; they used every possible means, including unconventional shouting, kicking, and beating, to enlighten sentient beings. Enlightenment can be attained in many different ways, even without formal education or religious discipline.

One needs to be liberated from traditional valuation, and unconventional approaches can be an effective means to free us from enslavement to conventional values, institutions, and establishments. For example, the monk Linji (d. 867) studied under Huangpo (d. 847). For a long time, Linji received no instruction from the master, but he was a diligent disciple and was very eager to learn. One day he asked the master, “What is the great meaning of Buddha’s *dharma*?” The master kept silent. Linji asked the same question three times. Three times the master told him not to ask questions, beat him, and drove him out. Linji was disappointed and could not comprehend the master’s behavior. He left Huangpo and went to study under Dayu. Linji complained to his new master about his previous experience with Huangpo: “I do not know where my fault was.” Instead of comforting him, the master praised Huangpo and stated, “Huangpo was so kind. He exerted himself to the utmost for you. Why do you go on speaking of fault or no fault?” Linji was said to be awakened immediately, and later he became the founder of the Linji Chan school (in Japanese, Rinzai).

An enlightened person is not one who faithfully follows a master and blindly accepts his teachings. Thus a Chan master taught: “When you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha. When you meet the patriarch,

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kill the patriarch." Chan Buddhists often reject the deification of Buddha and even deliberately downplay the ontic status of Buddha. For example, a monk asked Master Dongshan (807–869), "Who is the Buddha?" The master replied, "Three pounds of flax." A monk asked Master Yunmen, "What is the Buddha?" Yunmen said, "A stick of dry dung."

Yet for Chan, Buddhist *dharma* is not a teaching of negativity or passivity. Rather, it means being open-minded and creative. Whenever people asked Master Judi questions, such as "Why does the patriarch come from the west?" or "What is the essence of Buddhism?" he would simply raise one finger. His way of teaching is known as one-finger Chan. His actions appear to say nothing but really proclaim an important *dharma* teaching: "Penetrate one place, and at once you penetrate a thousand places, ten thousand places." Clearly apprehend one device, and at once you apprehend a thousand devices, ten thousand devices.

One of Judi's disciples is said to have imitated the master. When someone asked him, "What method does your master usually use to teach people?" he raised one finger. If the boy was asked, "What is it the Chan master teaches?" he would stick up one finger. Judi learned of this and cut off the disciple's finger with a knife. As the disciple ran out screaming, the master called to him. As soon as the disciple looked back, Judi raised one finger. The disciple was said to have been enlightened immediately.

Chan is a dynamic, living, imbued experience. Physically, the raising of the master's finger and the disciple's finger looked alike. Yet spiritually one was living Chan, and the other a dead practice.

Chan enlightenment is an individual activity. It has to be done by the individual personally and creatively. In the strict sense what is created in one's personal experience is not a new thing, but rather an old thing comprehended from a new, unattached perspective. Again, an example serves.

Once a monk came to see Master Ciming (986–1040) for instruction. The master asked, "What is the fundamental principle of Buddhism?" The monk replied:

> No clouds are gathering over the mountain peaks,
> And how serenely the moon is reflected on the waves!

Master Ciming appeared unhappy with the answer and scolded the monk, shouting, "Shame on you! For such an old, seasoned man to have such a view! How can you expect to be delivered from birth and death?" The monk humbly requested more instruction. The master said, "You ask me." The monk repeated the same question, "What is the

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fundamental principle of Buddhism?" Ciming replied:

> No clouds are gathering over the mountain peaks,
> And how serenely the moon is reflected on the waves!

Immediately, the story goes, the monk was awakened. Objectively, nothing new occurred, but internally the monk's mind was opened.

In Chan, nirvana is samsara, and vice versa. An enlightened person does not live outside this universe, and Chan is a way of seeing the same old things in this world from a new perspective. Enlightenment involves a change of outlook, not obtaining any new, external thing. Master Qingyuan (d. 740) expressed his experience of enlightenment as follows:

> Before I had studied Chan for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains, and waters as waters. When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point where I saw that mountains are not mountains, and waters are not waters. But now that I have got its very substance I am at rest. For it is just that I see mountains once again as mountains, and waters once again as waters.

Enlightenment is not something remote from us. Master Nanquan taught: "Dao is everyday-mindedness."

IV

Chan is also the practice of the Buddhist teachings of the middle way and the twofold truth. After Buddha attained his own enlightenment, the first sermon he gave was on the doctrine of the middle way. He advised the five mendicants not to live a pessimistic ascetic life or a hedonistic, worldly life, but to go beyond the two extremes. Chan masters followed Buddha's doctrine of the middle way and extended it to cover not only extreme views of life but also all extreme philosophical and religious positions.

For Chan, the middle way is a way to avoid all conceptual and dualistic thinking by eschewing "is" and "is not." People may describe the reality of the universe as something permanent or impermanent, going or coming, internal or external, appearing or disappearing. But Chan masters may dismiss all such concepts as extreme views. Huineng stated:

> The true nature of an event is marked by
> No permanence, no impermanence;
> No arrival, no departure;

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No exterior, no interior;
No origination, no extinction.

Chan negation, of which this is an example, is a wholesale negation of all limited views. Truth, for Chan, is not a new view but an absence of views. Huineng taught that right is "that which is without any view" and wrong is "that which is with some view."

Teachings and practices in Chan Buddhism can be comprehended by means of the "twofold truth," a convenient term for the standpoints of worldly and ultimate truth. The twofold truth expresses a difference about the way we perceive things. Worldly truth involves emotional and intellectual attachment to what we perceive, while ultimate truth eliminates all attachment. Comprehended in this light, many paradoxical words and actions in Chan do not appear so illogical and absurd as one might at first believe. For example, the sixth patriarch beat Shenhui with a stick and asked, "Do you feel pain?" Shenhui replied, "I am both pained and painless." From the ordinary standpoint, anyone would feel pain when he is beaten. However, if examined from the higher point of view, all things, including pain, are empty. So Shenhui, the brilliant disciple of Huineng, expressed the twofold truth by stating, "I am both pained and painless."

Chan paradoxes are essentially tactical devices. They are given to awaken people. As long as they can help sentient beings toward enlightenment, these expressions, no matter how absurd they may appear, can be accepted as "true." Truth, for Chan masters, is practical and pragmatic, and its value consists in its effectiveness as a means to achieve nirvana.

Ultimately, no claim to truth should be made, and often no words apply. For example, a monk asked Master Nanquan (748–834), "Please tell me what it is that goes beyond the four alternatives and the hundredfold negations." The master made no answer but went back to his room. A monk asked Master Kueishan (771–853), "When the great action is taking place, how do you determine it?" The master came down from his seat and went to his chamber. For Chan, silence like this is often the best answer to questions about *dharma*.

Yet the masters have spoken out and sometimes written extensively. How could Chan masters be silent and open at the same time? Their seemingly inconsistent behavior may be apprehended by means of the twofold truth. From a transcendental standpoint, one should keep silent. But from the conventional standpoint, discursive expression is a good means to attract sentient beings to the *dharma*. Chan masters have the mind of compassion to help all sentient beings, so they might be silent and open at same time. Many of Chan's paradoxical teachings and practices are really a manifestation of Chan

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compassion.

V

Indeed, Chan is an outcome of cultural communication between India and China. In many ways it reflects the Chinese way of thinking and feeling. The great Chan masters were often well versed in both Indian and Chinese culture. They selected from Mahayana, Confucian, and Daoist (Taoist) thought, and beautifully blended the parts together to create a new religious-philosophical ethos that is quite original.

Like many other Chan writings, Bodhidharma's poem, his special message from India to the Chinese people, is really a product of the Chinese mind rather than the Indian mind. In many ways its philosophy is more like Chinese Confucian thought than Indian Mahayana. Its key philosophical term is *xing* ("nature," a thing's own nature or self-nature). To know the *dharma* and hence to become a buddha is to see into one's own nature.

According to Indian Mahayana Buddhism, all things are empty or devoid of their own nature or self-nature. The Indian doctrine of emptiness is *wuxing* (no nature, without nature, elimination of nature). Seeing into nature is the very idea the Indian Mahayana masters tried to repudiate. According to them, all things are causally conditioned and hence nothing has its own nature. Opposed to this view, Chan teaches that to become a buddha one should see into nature. This is something new and quite different from the message of Indian Buddhist scriptures. Therefore, Chan is said to be a "special transmission outside the scriptures." If one interprets traditional Indian Buddhist writings literally, one would never obtain enlightenment, Chan advises. So it counsels: "no dependence on words and letters."

Chan's doctrine of seeing into nature is actually a practical application of Chinese Confucian philosophy. Since ancient times, the *xing* has been an important issue in Chinese thought. Confucius and Mencius pondered the problem and are known for their thesis that human nature is "good." For them, all human beings are alike in nature and become different owing to their external environment. In its original state, human nature is sound and innocent. Each person has a mind (*xin*) that cannot bear to see the suffering of others.

In Confucianism, *xin* (mind) is *xing*, and vice versa. This nature or mind is not an ontological substance such as the Greek *substratum*, Hindu *atman*, or Theravada *svabhava*, but a quality or ability inherent in human beings. Axiologically, it is a value or qualitative attribute that makes human beings moral and valuable. Without this nature or mind, a person would be merely a beast. With this nature, a person can

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become a sage, since the mind is the spring of all virtues.

Following this vein of thought, Chan masters skillfully absorbed the Confucian sense of mind, nature, and sagehood into Buddhist *dharma*. The outcome of this skillful measure (*fangbian*, *upaya*) is the teaching, "Direct pointing at the human mind; seeing into the nature to attain buddhahood." The same teaching is stated in the opening passage of Huineng's *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*: "Virtuous ones! The Bodhi-nature is originally pure. To make use of this mind alone, one can directly become a buddha." In this respect, the human mind, nature, and the goal of spiritual discipline are similar in Confucianism and Chan Buddhism. The attainment of buddhahood in Chan is an opening of the human mind. In Mencius's words, it is "all already complete in oneself" and is "not far to seek, but right by oneself." Therefore, an abrupt enlightenment is possible.

VI

There was an extensive religious persecution against Buddhism in 845 C.E. After this anti-Buddhist movement, most Buddhist schools in China disappeared, but Chan continued to flourish. During the Song and Ming dynasties it influenced Confucianism and inspired Confucian scholars to reexamine traditional Confucian philosophy and develop neo-Confucianism, which has had a strong impact on intellectual, social, and political life in China, Korea, and Japan.

Chan has produced a wealth of distinguished literature. Collections concerning the words and deeds of Chan masters and practitioners are often known as collections of *gong'an* (in Japanese, *koan*). They are new religious writings in Buddhism. The brief Chan *gong'an* is used not just for comprehending Buddhist *dharma* but also as a means of achieving enlightenment. For Chan the Buddhist scriptures are not paramount, yet they may provide an occasion for opening the mind's flower. The way to express enlightenment is not just to write poems or *koan*. Nonverbal actions such as painting, arranging flowers, and drinking tea—and even the martial arts—can also be forms for developing spiritual life and conveying religious experience. In such modes Chan has exercised a lasting influence on Chinese cultural life.

During the Kamakura period (1185–1336) Chan was introduced from China to Japan. Since then, the Japanese have been enriched culturally and artistically by Chan Buddhism. It would be difficult to have a proper understanding of the east Asian mind and east Asian culture without knowing Chan.

See also Buddhism in China; Huineng: The Sixth Patriarch; Mazu Daoyi;

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Philosophy of Human Nature; *Xin*; *Xing*.

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中國哲學

C

Calligraphy

Jiuan HENG

To understand the significance of Chinese calligraphy, think of how a medium that is used by every educated Chinese to formulate and communicate ideas, feelings, and values might itself be used to embody these expressions of the mind-heart. Insofar as calligraphy integrates the content and form of thought, bridging the gap between saying and showing, it may be seen as an embodied philosophy. The aesthetic values that theorists have emphasized in the practice of calligraphy have changed from period to period, reflecting changing philosophical agendas. Nevertheless, certain features of the practice and assumptions about it have remained constant.

Fundamental Aesthetics of Calligraphy

Calligraphy is the art of movement captured in script, not merely a means of transcribing characters. The ninth-century theorist Zhang

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Huaiguan, in his systematic approach to calligraphy, revived a distinction between *zi*, the character, and *shu*, the gesture of writing (*Zhongguo meixueshi* 1983, 259). To have made this distinction is to have separated, in theory, the utilitarian and the aesthetic functions of writing. In viewing calligraphy aesthetically, as art, the reader finds meaning in the act of writing itself. In reading it functionally, as one might read a newspaper, one regards the inscription as a means of grasping thoughts expressed in words. The meaning of the thoughts is not affected by whether they are written, recited, or "composed in the head," because meaning resides in the grasp of the language in which the thought is expressed. Zhang (*Zhongguo meixueshi*, 261) goes so far as to pronounce that the connoisseur of calligraphy beholds only its vivacity of spirit (*shen cai*) and does not see the shapes of its characters (*zi xing*).

Yet Chinese characters are the building blocks of the art of calligraphy. They determine the composition—the strokes, the sequence, the direction of reading and writing—and, of course, contribute to the literal meaning of the text. The aesthetic dimension builds on these semiotic markers of the Chinese character system, even if it is possible to overlook semantics. Looking for meaning in the gesture of writing may be likened to listening for tone in a telephone conversation: it gives us immediate clues to the other party's state of being, regardless of what he affirms or denies, supplying a subtext to and a context for the explicit text. Somehow, the act of expressing ourselves in words inevitably reveals even as we conceal ourselves, and conceals even as we reveal. The body, by contrast, is guileless. Zhang's defense of calligraphy hinges on the notion that the gesture of writing can accomplish directly what a sign system does indirectly:

> Literary composition needs several characters to complete the meaning, whereas calligraphy can reveal the mind with only one character. This is certainly the ultimate attainment of economy and simplicity. (Kao 1991, 75)

Under the aesthetic gaze, gesture becomes the grammar of the body and the mind simultaneously, insofar as the movement of the calligrapher's mind is connected at once to the movement of his energy (*qi*) and his brush. The connection between the state of mind of the calligrapher and the calligraphy is kinetic. The brush and its traces are manifestations of the body and its energy.

Calligraphy is the supreme art of variation. The four basic script styles developed sequentially, and all of them remain in use today: the seal scripts (*da zhuan* and *xiao zhuan*) of the Shang, Zhou, and Qin periods (c. sixteenth century to 206 B.C.E.); the clerical script (*li shu*) of the Han (206 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.); a running script (*xing shu*) of the fourth

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century; and the final version of the standard script (*kai shu*) in the Tang (618–907). No other script style has been invented or accepted since. The calligrapher must accept as given the form of the characters and the script style in which he will compose; sometimes the text of his composition is not his own. The calligrapher's contribution lies in the nuances of style that he introduces to the writing—the way he inflects his strokes, the subtleties of spacing between strokes and characters, the variations in the size and appearance of each stroke and character. Sun Guoting, the Tang author of the *Treatise on Calligraphy* (*Shu pu*), notes: "Within a single stroke, changes result from alternately raising and lowering the tip; inside a single dot, movement rebounds at the very end of the brush" (Chang and Frankel 1995, 4). He raises variation to the level of philosophy: calligraphy is an attempt to model the process of transformation that is fundamental to Chinese ontology, integrating movement within rest and rest within movement.

Variation introduces a dimension of ritual to the art: because of the limits prescribed by the form, every variation is identifiable and thereby definitive of the individual calligrapher. The practice of "copying" the texts of celebrated calligraphers creates opportunities for a later calligrapher to recall his influences, display his depth of learning and his inventiveness, test his versatility, and continue a tradition. The *Thousand-Character Essay,* for instance, transcribed by calligraphers for centuries, becomes a rich intertext in which calligraphers refer to one another while expanding the possibilities of the art.

For writing to be adequate to the expression of mind and body, the materials of writing had to evolve into a performance medium. It is no accident that brush and paper replaced the earlier instruments of the scribe—tortoiseshell, bamboo slips, and silk. On these other surfaces, writing had to be incised or carved, and even when written with the brush it served ritual and monumental functions. The brush, when it had improved to the point where it could be pliable and still hold most of the ink in reserve, could modulate strokes and respond to every movement of the calligrapher's hand. The invention of an absorbent paper, which registers each ink trace as movement in time, provided the final catalyst. Calligraphy became an art for personal expression. Yang Xiong (53–18 B.C.E.) described calligraphy as the image of the heart-mind (*Zhongguo meixueshi*, 118).

The sensitivity of the medium enabled the calligrapher to literally compose on paper, to link characters in a running script, to improvise the placement of his characters as the flow of writing and space demanded. Writing could then become a performance art that transcended the ephemeral moment of the performance, as each reader could reenact, by following the order of writing, the calligrapher's movements.

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Writing Inspired by Forces of Nature

The emphasis on movement can be traced to one of the earliest theoretical texts on calligraphy: *Bi zhen tu* (*Strategic Plan of Battle for the Brush*), by Madam Wei (272–349). Writing, she says, comes from the body: each stroke must be executed with the full strength of the body. She then models the appreciation of writing on the body, equating strength of the brush with "having bone" and weakness of the brush—that is, ink without structure—with "having much flesh." Calligraphers who have an excess of "bone" over "flesh" are "sinewy" writers. Ideally, "bone" and "flesh" should be balanced: she calls a calligrapher who achieves this "sagely." This balance forms the basis of calligraphy—a point that constitutes the background of her contribution to the theory of calligraphy. She relates each of the seven fundamental calligraphic strokes to an image of dynamism in nature:

> [The horizontal stroke is] Like a cloud formation stretching a thousand li; indistinct, but not formless.
>
> [The dot is] Like a stone falling from a high peak, bouncing and crashing, about to shatter.
>
> [The left diagonal stroke is] The tusk of an elephant or rhinoceros thrust into and broken by the ground.
>
> [The right diagonal hook is] Fired from a three thousand pound crossbow.
>
> [The vertical stroke is] A weathered vine, ten thousand years old.
>
> [The right diagonal stroke is like] Crashing waves or rolling thunder.
>
> [The angular stroke is like] The sinews and joints of a mighty bow. (Barnhart 1964, 16)

By this period, dots and strokes were not mere dabs on paper but had become models of the vital forces in nature that calligraphers wanted to enact. Madam Wei's essay could not, by itself, have maneuvered calligraphy into an arena of creative forces, but she probably modulated the expressive possibilities of each stroke and reinforced the idea that the combination of strokes had to be a matter of strategy, like a battle plan, for maximum efficacy. A difference between calligraphy (*shu*) and characters (*zi*) is that while the calligrapher may vary the order of strokes of his characters to maximize his kinesthetic advantage, so that the stroke order of the character in each script type (*shu ti*) may vary, the stroke order of a character (*zi*) is prescribed.

In the Song dynasty, the poet and calligrapher Su Shi extended the critical vocabulary of calligraphy based on human physiology to include blood, *shen* (spirit), and *qi* (breath or physical energy)—the

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dynamic energy that distinguishes a living body from a corpse (*Zhongguo meixueshi*, 373).

As the notion took hold that calligraphy manifests the heart-mind, movement acquired a psychological significance. Sun Guoting writes about the need to match technical mastery with mastery of the heart-mind:

> Force combined with speed is the key to superb beauty, and deliberate lingering leads to perfect appreciation and comprehension. If you proceed from lingering to speed, you will reach a world of consummate beauty; but if you get stuck lingering, you will miss the ultimate perfection. Being able to move without haste—this may be called true lingering; but lingering for the sake of delay—how can this be considered appreciative understanding? Unless the mind is at ease and the hand skilled, it is difficult to achieve both speed and lingering. (Chang and Frankel, 13)

Moreover, calligraphy discloses the character of the man through style, essentially his manner of movement:

> If a person is straight, the writing will be rigid and lacking in vigorous beauty; if a person is hard and ruthless, it will be stubbornly unsubmissive and lacking in suppleness; those who are overly careful will have the defect of being unrelaxed; those who are careless and superficial will be lacking in exactitude; those who are genial and gentle will suffer from softness; those who are impetuous will be excessively hasty; those who hesitate will get stuck; those who are clumsy will limp and lack sharpness; those who are trivial and petty will have the style of vulgar clerks. (Chang and Frankel, 13)

Calligraphy as a Means of Cultivating the Self: The Discipline of Brushwork

In an aesthetics of manifestation, the inner reveals itself, unintentionally and ineluctably, on the surface, and writing is read as a map of the psyche. The hermeneutics of self-manifestation, superimposed on the inherently demanding art of calligraphy, gave its technical demands an ethical dimension. The self could be cultivated through the discipline of art. For instance, while the vertically held brush is ideally poised to move in any direction, thus allowing the greatest spontaneity of response, it also projects an effect of serenity, of the controlled power of the brushwork. These are not just aesthetic values but qualities that a Confucian gentleman should cultivate. The vertical brush holds most of its ink in reserve, symbolizing the moral strength and energy that the gentleman harbors within. Or again, while

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writing a stroke by beginning in the opposite direction increases the dynamic force of the stroke, it also produces an effect of containment.

Sun links the cycle of training in calligraphy to the cycle of self-cultivation. It is the process of exposing oneself to extremes of experience that permits self-mastery, spontaneously doing what is right:

> When you first learn to structure your writing, seek only the level and straight. After the level and straight, seek the daring and precipitous, but after that, return to the level and straight. In the beginning, you do not go far enough, halfway through, you overstep the bounds. When you have achieved thorough mastery, both man and calligraphy would have matured. Confucius said, "At fifty, I knew the decree, at seventy, I followed my heart." Only when you have encountered the level and the precipitous will you be able to act without deliberation and without error. (adapted from Chang and Frankel, 12)

The Tang dynasty saw a consolidation of technical methods as well as the establishment of a state-sponsored orthodox tradition, derived from two calligraphers of the Six Dynasties, Wang Xizhi and his son Xianzhi. The *Eight Laws of Yong*, an analysis of the brushstrokes in the character *yong*, were first formulated at that time, to instruct the student in the dynamics of each stroke. Subsequently, variations on these eight amounted to as many as seventy-two laws. Essentially based on the standard script, Tang calligraphy sought an objective, ideal standard of beauty. Consider the long list of criteria found in an anonymous essay on Ouyang Xun's methods:

> Every brushstroke must be centred…. Investigate the momentum of the character: it should be balanced on four sides, complete in eight directions. Lengths should be proportionate, thickness evenly distributed, the disposition level, the spacing correct…. Leaning or standing upright like a gentleman, the upper half sits comfortably, while the bottom half supports it. (Wang et al. 1708, *chuan* 3: 3b–4a, translation adapted from Harrist and Fong 1999, 45)

The conviction that man can be shaped in the image of art—that aesthetics could be put to the service of ethics—resulted in a proliferation of standards, methods, and laws in calligraphy. Once instituted, the prescriptions made for a thoroughly absorbing practice, a veritable training ground for patience and a cathartic outlet for obsession. Ouyang Xiu, the Song statesman and poet, explains:

> Whenever I am free I practise my calligraphy. It is not that I seek to excel at this art, it's simply better than exerting myself at other activities. Those who do not need to lodge their minds in any material

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> thing are "sages." Those who lodge their minds in things that improve them are superior men. But those who lodge their minds in things that assail their nature and convulse their emotions, doing injury to them, are stupid and confused men. To practise calligraphy does require exertion but at least it does not injure one's nature and emotions. If you would attain the joy found in quietude, there is only this. (*Zhongguo meix-ueshi*, 334, as translated by Egan)

From Self-Cultivation to Self-Expression: The Emergence of Spontaneity

Although calligraphers of the Tang and the Song shared a vision of calligraphy as a means of self-cultivation, Song calligraphers rejected the preoccupation of their Tang counterparts with rigor, symmetry, and perfect balance in favor of spontaneous, natural expression. These qualities could be better explored through the running and cursive scripts than the regular script. Reversing the Tang tenet of training the mind through calligraphy, the Song calligraphers emphasized the importance of establishing one's intent (*yi*). The notion of intent is that of an orientation of the heart-mind, the incipient energy that has yet to crystallize into an emotion, a thought, an idea, or a form. It goes to the core of the making of a self, for once we train our intent in a particular direction, our lives gain a focus; opportunities and challenges follow. Mi Fu writes of how, when his intent (*yi*) is abundant, he naturally follows it, releasing his brush in ink play. Su Shi, in an enthusiastic, if not uncharacteristic, moment, pronounced that if one could penetrate intent, one could discard learning. He took as his guides the "primordial lack of models" and "naturalness and spontaneity" rather than orthodox calligraphic models. What makes these aesthetic ideals particularly interesting is that they stem from a philosophical-religious syncretism. Note, for instance, the Buddhist logic behind the rejection of models in this fragment: "Calligraphy relies on form for its excellence; when there is form, there will be irregularities. It is better to arrive at emptiness, to rejoice in the moment" (*Zhongguo meixueshi*, 365).

In fact, the Song calligraphers did not reject models as such; they rejected only a strict fidelity to models that hampered the development of an individual style. Mi Fu forged a highly individualistic style, after undertaking a highly systematic study of models ranging from Yan Zhenqing of the Tang to bronze inscriptions. Huang Tingjian modeled his work on the two Wangs of the Sui dynasty—a very orthodox choice, but he used it lightly. According to Wen Fong (1984, 83), he "borrowed a single element from [Wang Xizhi's] *Burying a Crane*—two horizontal strokes, the roof radical from the character *qin*—as the

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hallmark of his personal style."

Influence of Calligraphy on Painting

The idea of establishing one's intent in calligraphy paved the way for the final realization, in the Yuan dynasty, of the "three perfections"—painting, calligraphy, and poetry—within the same work. This concept freed painting from its representational function and from conformity to an objective measure of truth; and it transformed painting into an extension of calligraphy. A literati painting commonly goes by the term *xie yi*: writing intent.

The Yuan calligrapher, painter, and statesman Zhao Mengfu pioneered a revolutionary type of painting, systematically grafting calligraphic brushwork onto pictorial forms. He codified his program for integrating painting and calligraphy in a colophon to his *Elegant Rocks and Sparse Trees*:

> Rocks as flying white, trees as seal script;
>
> When painting bamboo, one should master the spreading-eight method.
>
> Those who understand this principle thoroughly
>
> Will recognize that calligraphy and painting have always been one. (Fong 1992, 440)

Painters before the Yuan painters chose their brush-work to suit the subject; Yuan painters, by contrast, adapted the subject to the brushwork they had chosen. The brushwork prototype of a literati painting retains its integrity, uncompromised by painterly effects. This meant that a painting could be read, and reading the symbolic values of calligraphic brushstrokes into painting transformed painting into an art of personal expression, a declaration of the self.

See also Aesthetics; Philosophy of Art.

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Chen Daqi (Ch'en Ta-ch'i)

Vincent SHEN

Chen Daqi (1887–1983) is a very significant figure among contemporary Chinese Confucians, because his logical and ethical approaches to Confucianism differ from the transcendental and ontological approaches of Mou Zongsan (Mou Tsung-san) and Tang Junyi (T'ang Chün-i). As a scholar of psychology and logic, Chen conducted a serious and profound program of research in basic Confucian concepts, ethical argumentation, and virtue ethics. He can be considered a pathfinder in these domains: "The pioneering study of the conceptual aspects of Confucian ethics has been Chen Daqi's *Kongzi xueshuo* [*Doctrines of Confucius*]" (Cua 1998).

From Logic to Confucianism

Chen started his study of psychology and logic in the early twentieth century, and then—when he began to teach at Beijing University in 1914—concentrated on logical inquiries. With his training in logic, he extended his research first to Indian logic and next to Chinese logic. After he moved to Taiwan in 1948 with the government of the Republic of China, he turned to Chinese philosophy—perhaps motivated by the cultural crisis that had been caused by the communists' takeover of mainland China. He began to conduct research in the logical and conceptual aspects of Confucianism, beginning with Xunzi, tracing the sources back to Mencius and finally to Confucius, going deeper and deeper into Confucian ethics. Thus his academic career moved from psychology to comparative logic to classical Confucianism.

Among Chen Daqi's works, those in classical Confucianism are probably the most interesting, though much can, of course, be said for his studies in comparative logic. He was the first Chinese scholar to introduce western formal logic for the purpose of expounding the method of debate and the argumentative character of Indian logic. Also, he identified two weaknesses of Indian logic. First, because it is an argumentative logic in which winning a debate is the only point of

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argumentation, its truth becomes situational and lacks absolute necessity. Second, it depends to some extent on psychology rather than on formal structure.

Chen's Confucian studies moved from Xunzi, the classical analytic, argumentative Confucian; to Mencius, an argumentative yet ethical thinker; to Confucius himself, a purely ethical thinker. His philosophy could therefore be characterized as founded on an analytical, conceptual approach to virtue ethics, which is quite different from the transcendental approach to Confucianism represented by Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi, who may have overemphasized the transcendental structure and dynamism of human subjectivity.

Chen Daqi's Confucian studies focus on the philosophical significance of Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, through logical and conceptual analysis of the notions and ideas implicit in their philosophical texts. His earlier study of Xunzi's ethical, conceptual structure and argumentation culminates in an explication of Confucius's ethics, supplemented by his critical evaluation of Mencius's thought. His approach may be described as a version of the realist approach to Confucian logic, theory of human nature, and ethics.

This essay will concentrate only on Chen's creative interpretations of classical Confucianism: (1) his studies on Xunzi's logic, (2) his conceptual studies of Confucian ethics, (3) his comparison of Xunzi's and Mencius's theories of human nature, and (4) his status as a pioneer of virtue ethics.

Studies on Xunzi's Logic

Chen Daqi's Confucian studies begin with research on Xunzi's logic, or *mingxue*. With his psychological and logical background, he discusses Xunzi's doctrine of human nature based on the human capacity to discern right and wrong. For him, Xunzi's doctrine of human nature belongs to a kind of intellectualism that emphasizes a psychological ability, *bian*—"discernment" or "discriminating." This ability is displayed in what may be called discerning discourse or argumentation. The objective of argumentation is to make a decision about right and wrong, for which criteria must first be set up. According to Chen's interpretation, Xunzi's concept of *dao* represents the ultimate criterion or standard of right or wrong; it includes *lei* (kind, class), *tong* (unity, coherence), and *fen* (division, distinction) as subcriteria. In order to distinguish right from wrong, one has to keep one's mind in a state of "great and pure enlightenment" (*da qing ming*), that is, one's mind must be "empty, united, and still" (*xu yi er jing*). Negatively, one must discard all obscuring factors (*jie bi*); positively,

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one must always be alert to another, easily neglected aspect of an issue. According to Chen, "name" (*ming*) means almost the same as the concept in western philosophy, and "discernment" seems to be functionally equivalent to *logos*, reason, or reasoning.

To analyze Xunzi, Chen Daqi applies the distinction between "intension" and "extension" of terms in western formal logic. With regard to intension, he finds in Xunzi a distinction between names for superiority-inferiority and names for identity-difference. According to Chen, these represent, respectively, concepts indicating values and concepts indicating facts—the former being higher than the latter. With regard to extension, Xunzi distinguishes between generic names (*gongming*) and specific names (*bieming*); according to Chen, these can be analyzed by the relations of inclusion or "belonging" between classes and subclasses. Finally, concerning reasoning, for Xunzi, *dao* is the ultimate criterion of right and wrong, and *dao* can be sorted into different classes (*lei*); therefore *lei* can be seen as the basis of all deductive and inductive reasoning.

Conceptual Studies of Confucian Ethics

Chen Daqi's studies of Confucius's thought led him to ethics. He differs from Mou Zongsan, a contemporary neo-Confucian who, in developing a "moral metaphysics" of Confucianism, neglected the importance of praxis in Confucian ethics. Chen takes ethics as the core of Confucius's thought—which he sees not as a theoretical philosophy but rather as a practical philosophy. When applied to education, say, it becomes an educational philosophy; when applied to politics, it becomes a political philosophy.

Other contemporary interpreters understand *ren* (humanness, goodness) and *yi* (rightness, appropriateness) as the ultimate values in Confucianism. Chen Daqi, by contrast, assumes that *an* (calm happiness) is Confucius's ultimate value, whereas *ren* and *yi* are merely two instrumental or secondary values contributing to calm happiness. But he does think that *ren* and *yi* have a necessary relation to *an*, to the extent that when *ren* and *yi* are realized, *an* will be attained as a consequence.

Also, Chen takes the position that *ren* and *yi* should be united. *Ren* can be seen as both a collective and an individual concept. As a collective concept, it means the summation of all virtues; as an individual concept, it means love—love of self and love of others, establishing oneself and establishing others, achieving oneself and achieving others. *Ren* as love, when applied to one's parents, becomes "filiality"; when applied to brethren, it means *di*, "brotherhood"; when

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applied to executing obligations, it means loyalty; when applied to keeping one's promises, it means trustworthiness.

Yi can be seen as having a positive aspect and a negative aspect. Negatively, it means not being fixated on one point of view or not being obstinate. Positively, it means using one thing properly—being appropriate or, better, "hitting the mark."

According to Chen Daqi, *ren* and *yi* are best when united because *ren* means love, yet love without appropriateness could result in silly acts. And appropriateness comes from *yi*; *yi* should hit the mark, but to hit the mark without satisfying ethical conditions would invite evildoing—here, the condition comes from *ren*. *Yi* when united with *ren* becomes true *yi*, and *ren* when united with *yi* becomes true *ren*. Chen believes that Confucius, in positing calm happiness as the ultimate aim of human life, takes *ren* and *yi*—united—as the most necessary means toward this end.

Comparing Xunzi's and Mencius's Doctrines of Human Nature

A dominant traditional interpretation assumes that Mencius's and Xunzi's theories of human nature are contradictory, that the one supposed human nature to be innately good and the other supposed it to be innately evil. Chen Daqi, through conceptual and textual analysis, argued that they are not contradictory, and indeed that they are complementary.

Conceptually, he pointed out that these two thinkers use the term "human nature" (*xing*) identically with regard to name but differently with regard to reference. Mencius uses *xing* to refer to three levels of human nature. On the lowest level we find four beginnings of goodness: the senses of (1) sympathy, (2) yielding to or respecting others, (3) discerning right and wrong, and (4) shame about doing wrong. On the middle level these four senses develop into four beginnings: *ren, yi, li* (ritual propriety), and *zhi* (wisdom). On the highest level we find the virtues of *ren, yi, li*, and *zhi* as a fulfillment of those four beginnings. Mencius never took desire as an element of *xing*.

Xunzi, on the other hand, examines human psychological capacity in terms of three functions: *xing* (human nature), *zhi* (knowledge), and *neng* (abilities). He never understands the sense of yielding to or respecting others as belonging to *xing*. On the contrary, he presumes that competition or struggle is a necessary evil consequent to the human desire for "self-profit." Xunzi sees the sense of right and wrong as belonging to the capacity of knowing, not to human nature. As for *yi* and *li*, they have to do with deliberate efforts of sages and are by no means innate. Also, Xunzi considers desire an important constituent of

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human nature.

In short, since Mencius sees four good beginnings as belonging to human nature whereas Xunzi takes desire—the beginning of evil—to be part of human nature, their references for *xing* differ. Therefore, their views on human nature should not be considered contradictory. On the other hand, both take *ren, yi, li*, and *zhi* as good and sensuous desire as evil, so their theories of human nature are different merely in name, not in logic.

Further, Mencius and Xunzi can be seen as complementary in at least two ways. First, the a priori goodness of human nature needs human effort a posteriori, and human perfectibility in the process of education and culture presupposes some sort of good ability in human nature. Second, according to their effective consequences, Mencius's theory of the goodness of human nature can encourage those who feel frustrated and abandoned, and Xunzi's theory of human nature as evil can be a calming, clarifying remedy for those who are self-complacent and self-limiting—helping them overcome laziness and practice self-cultivation.

Chen as a Pioneer of Virtue Ethics

Chen Daqi can be described as a pioneer in interpreting Confucian ethics according to virtue ethics. In western philosophy, though the movement began as early as the 1960s, it was not until the 1980s that the ethics of virtue became a serious contender with the ethics of obligation and Aristotelian ethics became a serious rival to Kantian ethics. Contemporary neo-Confucians such as Mou Zongsan and his followers use Kant's categorical imperative to interpret Confucian ethics, neglecting the importance of ethical praxis. Chen Daqi, recognizing the importance of utilitarian ethics (in positing calm happiness as the ultimate human value) and ethics of obligation (in formulating a list of minimal ethical obligations), integrated them into an ethics of virtue, emphasizing virtuous praxis and the formation of character.

Chen Daqi addressed the problems of conflict between vice and virtue and the need to establish certain criteria for distinguishing between true virtue and vice. For him, true virtue should first of all direct itself to the attainment of calm happiness. This is the most important of all criteria. Other, secondary criteria consist in (1) not going beyond and not falling short, which means holding to the principle of *zhong*, understood not as the middle but rather as the pertinent principle; (2) acting according to the demands of a situation, in keeping with the principles; (3) considering the positions of others

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and, especially, considering the consequences of one's acts and words from others' point of view; and (4) adopting the right or legitimate means. In all these criteria, Chen Daqi emphasizes the consequences of an act—he seldom touches on motivation. Therefore, we can say that he is a consequentialist.

In brief, Chen put forward a consequentialist, intellectual virtue ethics that presupposes a correct knowledge of what is best for others and what is to be done. For Chen, the act of discerning right and wrong always presupposes a knowledge of true and false.

Conclusion

Chen Daqi represents a pioneering logical and conceptual approach in contemporary Confucianism. His conceptual and argumentative studies laid an analytic foundation for contemporary Confucian studies. Notably, these studies inspired Antonio Cua's reconstruction of Confucian argumentation and rhetoric (1985; 1998, Essays 1 and 10). He does not go on to unfold the transcendental and ontological dimensions of Confucianism for self-awareness and speculative discourse. Chen Daqi's own interest is in science rather than in speculative philosophy, and he posits an ethical consciousness based on praxis, although he does not discuss the transcendental structure or dynamism of human subjectivity. It should be noted that those who do take up transcendental subjectivity are not necessarily moving toward a true ethical consciousness, which presupposes recognition of the other. We might even say that where there is no recognition of the other, there is no ethics worthy of the term. In Chen Daqi's ethics there is always a recognition of others; his ethical praxis is in a context of "being-with" others. Ultimately, in ethical matters praxis is more important than any discourse. More than any contemporary new Confucianists, Chen Daqi, in emphasizing ethical praxis and the formation of virtues, goes directly to the essence of ethics.

See also Confucianism: Ethics; Confucianism: Rhetoric; Confucianism: Tradition; Mou Zongsan; Tang Junyi; Xunzi.

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Chen Que (Ch’en Ch’üeh)

Kai-wing CHOW

Chen Que (Ch’en Ch’üeh, 1604–1677) was a native of Haining County in Zhejiang. His life spanned the most tumultous period of the transition from the Ming to the Qing. His philosophy marks the beginning of a reorientation of Confucianism in the Qing period. He studied with the renowned philosopher Liu Zongzhou (1578–1645), who was an avid student of Wang Yangming. Although he was Liu Zongzhou’s student, Chen was repelled by the subjectivistic and syncretic tendencies in ethical thought characteristic of many followers of Wang Yangming in the late Ming period. Chen’s own philosophy is distinguished by a monistic ontology and a ritualist approach to the cultivation of morals. He is important in Qing thought for at least two reasons. First, Chen’s philosophy was informed by two powerful currents in the early Qing: ritualist ethics and Confucian purism. Second, his efforts to purify the Confucian classics by identifying heterodox texts and concepts presaged the eventual triumph of the purist hermeneutics of the Han “learning movement” in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Chen Que takes a monistic view of human nature. Like many of his contemporaries, Chen criticized the dualistic concept of human nature that was generally associated with Cheng-Zhu Confucianism. For Chen, it was erroneous to speak of human nature in terms of essence (*benti*) and physical embodiment (*qizhi zhi xing*). This was a result of applying Buddhist ideas to Confucian teachings by the Song *Daoxue* Confucians. Human nature is nothing but the corporeal (*qi*), sentiments (*qing*), and faculties (*cai*). They are all good (*shan*). But man’s good nature, Chen insisted, could be discerned only after its “full extension” (*kuochong*). By extension he meant moral exertion (*gongfu*). To put this differently, one’s nature in lived experience depended exclusively on the totality of one’s moral exertions. Those who dwelled on vacuous speculation on the abstract nature prior to man’s physical existence could easily lead people into believing Chan Buddhism. The problem with the dualistic notion of human nature is that it provides an

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excuse—the inferior physical constitution—for not actively cultivating morality.

In his attempt to foreground on Confucian ethics in ritual, Chen drew textual evidence from the *Book of Change*s and the *Mencius*. In his treatise *Explaining Human Nature* (*xingjie*), he cited from the *Book of Change*s the phrase *ji shan cheng xing* ("sustained effort in doing good to establish one's nature") and from the *Mencius* the expression *jin xin zhi xing* ("exhaust the mind to discover the fullest extent of one's nature"). Both phrases, according to Chen, explain Confucius's view of the "similarity of human nature" (*xing xiang jin*). Both phrases point to an ethics that stresses effort in the dynamic cultivation of the good nature of human beings. While he reiterated Mencius's view that humans are born with a good nature, he insisted that the full actualization of the good is a result of human effort. The good is not a given, nor is it fixed at birth and immutable thereafter. It is not something that can be sought before birth (*qiu zhih fumu wei sheng zhiqian*) but something that humans themselves have to develop (*renxing wu bushan, yu kuochong hou jian zhi*). Chen is making a distinction between potential good and actualized good—that is, good conduct. In other words, there is no morality without human action. Morality has to be practiced. One simply does not know whether a person *is* good even though he or she is capable of goodness. The phrase *ji shan cheng xing* from the *Book of Changes* emphasizes sustained effort in actualizing the good. Only through an unceasing sustained moral effort can one's good nature be firmly established. This implies that good nature needs to be actualized and can be lost when actualization stops. When it stops, human nature is incomplete. Without actualization, there is no demonstration of the full endowment of the good by heaven.

Significantly—and reminiscent of the ritualist ethics of the Song *Daoxue* Confucian Zhang Zai—Chen Que's ethics stresses the need to develop good habits in accordance with moral standards encoded in rituals. Nowhere is Chen's regard for rituals more forcefully expressed than in his instruction to his son: "What distinguishes man from beast is man's capacity to devote himself to ritual practice. Man also set himself apart from beasts by practicing ritual in earnest." For Chen, ritual practice provided the solid, sure ground for the development of good habits.

Cheng-Zhu Confucianism reemerged as the dominant school in the second half of the seventeenth century. When exponents of *Daoxue* Confucianism of the Cheng-Zhu school rejected Wang Yangming's teachings and all forms of syncretism as heterodox, a more "radical" strain of purism was taking shape in the 1650s that worked to undermine the theoretical and textual basis of Song *Daoxue*

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Confucianism. This purism came to focus on identifying heterodox elements in the Confucian classics at the level of commentary. The correct understanding of Confucian texts would be possible when non-Confucian phrases and expressions were identified and excised. Chen's effort to ground his ethics in the *Mencius* and the *Book of Changes* was an integral part of his attempt to purify the Confucian canon. He was among the first to launch a full-scale attack on Song *Daoxue* Confucianism in the early Qing. Through identifying texts, terms, and concepts, Chen sought to purify the Confucian canon and doctrine.

Chen Que was deliberately polemical in his philosophical treatises, for he believed that Confucian ethics had been deeply flawed by the pernicious influence of Buddhism. He believed that a "correction" of the wayward interpretation of Confucian doctrine had to begin with a comprehensive purging of heterodox ideas and textual corruption. He disputed the idea of self-sufficiency of the moral will (*benti*), which he believed to be essentially a Buddhist teaching, introduced into Confucianism later by the Song *Daoxue* Confucians. Anticipating the methodology of the eighteenth-century Han "learning school," Chen pointed out that the term *benti* (original substance), denoting the essential rather than the experiential aspect of human nature, was not to be found in the classics. It had its origin in Buddhism. Man's good nature could not exist in abstraction, any more than moral acts could spring naturally from a sheer "discovery" of the essential nature of the mind, i.e., the moral will. Moreover, moral will is not in itself sufficient to ensure moral conduct. Chen therefore opposed seeking good nature in abstraction, which he associated with Buddhism and the various trends of syncretism of the late Ming.

The most disturbing of Chen Que's writings was the treatise *Distinguishing the Great Learning* (*Daxue bian*), a critique that he began to work on as early as 1654. The basic Confucian text *Daxue*, he argued, was in origin a crass writing by a Han scholar. Strangely, he argued that the teaching of the text is that of Chan Buddhism. The primary reason was its exclusive focus on "knowing" (*yan zhi bu yan xing*) without concern for practice (*xing*). He singled out the phrase *zhizhi* ("knowing where to stop") as evidence for Chan Buddhism. "How could a scholar's quest for knowledge stop?" Chen asked. To aver that "knowing where to stop" was, for him, to entertain the Chan Buddhist idea that once one attained perfect knowledge, no further knowledge was necessary. For Chen, the teaching of *zhizhi* (extension of knowledge) resulted in two ethical problems: first, the belief that once one knows, there is no more to know; second, that knowing is sufficient without practice.

The strategies or textual methods Chen used to discredit the *Great Learning* involve both ordinary methods of textual criticism and

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interpretive devices. Chen declared that the *Great Learning* was not written by Confucius or his disciple and tried to prove that there is no evidence for attributing the *Great Learning* to Confucius. Nor is there any reference to the term *Daxue* in other, indisputable Confucian texts such as the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the *Book of Odes*, and the *Book of Documents*. Chen then explained how Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi contributed to turning this heterodox text into the most important text of *Daoxue* Confucianism.

In dismissing the *Great Learning* as a doubtful piece of writing, he rendered the controversy about the textual structure and the meaning of *gewu* irrelevant to the proper understanding of Confucianism. Chen clearly had no concern for possible damage done to *Daoxue* Confucianism. Despite his admiration for Wang Yangming, who venerated the *Great Learning*, Chen did not apologize for his vehement attack on this central text of *Daoxue* Confucianism. His iconoclastic treatise immediately elicited protests, even from his friends. Chen was moving ahead of his contemporaries in abandoning Song exegetical traditions. He called for a return to the classics for the authentic Confucian teachings. Chen was among the first in the early Qing to call for a demarcation between Song *Daoxue* Confucianism and classical Confucianism. He criticized the teachings of Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Xi for having assimilated a strong dose of Chan Buddhism.

Chen Que's ritualist ethics and Confucian purism were not meant to be merely polemical. They informed his own ritual practice at both the family level and the lineage level. From the 1660s on, the efforts to restore the house of Ming were channeled into the preservation and glorification of Chinese rituals, and of Chinese culture in general. Chen Que, Zhang Lüxiang, and their inner circle of friends had been striving to rectify ritual abuses in accordance with canonical rituals. They came to realize that the canonical ritual of the descent-line system (*zongfa*) formed the basis of Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*. Chen Que, on learning the descent-line principle that "secondary sons do not make sacrifice" (*zhizi bu ji*), renounced his right to worship his father, since he was not the eldest son. It is apparent that Chen regarded classical ritual not as arbitrary rules but as sacred principles that transcended variations in dynastic institutions. Whether or not the Manchus granted the right to worship "four ancestors," it remained everyone's obligation to abide by the classical regulations. The classical rituals were meant to be strictly followed, for Chen equated them with "heavenly principle" (*tianli*). Any action going beyond the specific boundary, which was "heavenly principle," was nothing but human desire (*renyu*).

The principle of the descent line lies at the heart of the controversy regarding the canonical model of lineage. Chen Que saw the ancestral hall and the descent-line system as important institutions to bring

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together otherwise loosely linked kin. Chen took exception to Cheng Yi's idea that all could worship their "four ancestors" by virtue of their mourning obligation. By granting privilege to all descendants to worship their own four ancestors, Cheng Yi's view presented a theoretical obstacle to creating lineages through centralization of ritual authority in the heir of the line of descent.

In addition to his treatises on proper burial, weddings, mourning, and worship, Chen Que compiled a list of rules for his family called the "family covenant" (*jia yue*). He also wrote a supplement to Lü Qi's *New Manual for Women* (*Bu xinfu pu*), in which he expressed his objection to many activities popular among women in the late Ming. He exhorted women not to watch drama or invite matchmakers and nuns into their homes. Women should not be allowed to watch religious and festival parades in public, nor should they be allowed to visit monasteries and make pleasure trips.

Chen Que's radical attack on the *Great Learning* and his ritualist ethics have not received as much attention as the scholarship and anti-Manchu activism of Gu Yanwu and Huang Zongxi. But Chen was no less important in his contribution to the reorientation of Confucian ethics and classical scholarship in the early Qing.

See also Cheng Yi; Huang Zongxi; *Li*: Rites or Propriety; Liu Zongzhou; Ritualism; Wang Yangming; Zhu Xi.

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Chen Xianzhang (Ch'en Hsien-chang)

William Yau-nang NG

Chen Xianzhang (1428–1500) was a famous Confucian scholar of great philosophical originality in the early Ming period. He came from Xinhui, Guangdong, and was better known as Chen Baisha, after the name of the village where he lived. In 1447, he passed the provincial examinations in Guangdong. After failing the metropolitan examinations in the next year, he entered the national university.

In 1454, Chen went to Jiangxi, where he studied under Wu Yubi (1397–1469), the founder of the Chongren school. Chen reported that he failed to find the "entrance gate" to truth. However, he learned much from Wu regarding the study of the classics and was particularly inspired by Wu's personal example. Thus Chen made up his mind to seek sagehood.

After returning to Guangdong, he spent years on extensive book learning, the customary approach of the school of Cheng-Zhu. However, his futile efforts eventually convinced him that learning was a matter of self-realization and spiritual cultivation should be the real basis of learning—not vice versa. He then led a hermit's life and spent years in tranquillity. In the experience of enlightenment Chen discovered that mind-heart (*xin*) is the master and the basis of the universe. This discovery was crucial to the new philosophy he eventually developed. Meanwhile, his new teaching, together with the great success of his spiritual pursuit, attracted many followers, among whom Zhan Ruoshui (1466–1560) was the most important.

In 1466, Chen went back to Beijing to try for public office and reenrolled in the national university. Three years later, he failed again in the metropolitan examinations and returned home. On the recommendation of the governor, Zhu Ying, Chen was summoned to Beijing in 1482 and finally received the title of Hanlin corrector from the emperor. Shortly afterward, Chen returned to Guangdong, where he died in 1500. In 1585, the honorific title "Wen Gong" was conferred on

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him, and his tablet was enshrined in the Confucian temple—the highest posthumous honor for a Confucian scholar.

Chen believed that the *dao* could be grasped only by a purified mind that had reached the utmost tranquillity. However, the *dao*, according to Chen, is ineffable, and thus any attempt at theorizing or analysis would simply lead nowhere. Chen said, “If you talk about *dao* in words, you end up referring only to its crude and trivial aspects.” Thus he saw book learning, an important part in the teaching of the school of Cheng-Zhu, as a hindrance to the pursuit of *dao*. Chen himself did not even attempt to write books. In Chen’s philosophy, if we take it to its logical extreme, the only sensible attitude is silence.

Chen believed that the right path for a spiritual pursuit was to nourish the *duanni* in tranquillity. Here, *duanni* refers to “indications” of the presence or the “beginnings” (*kaiduan*) of the unfolding of mind-heart. After years of practicing spiritual cultivation, Chen finally experienced an inner world of peace and tranquillity through which he acquired a sense of the oneness of all things. However, he held that this stage of spiritual pursuit was attained not so much by strenuous efforts as by the “effort” of the natural (*ziran*).

In fact, *ziran* is the basis of Chen’s philosophy. Chen stated clearly: “My learning is based on the natural.” But what is the “natural”? Chen’s understanding of the term was heavily influenced by Daoist as well as Chan Buddhist and other Neo-Confucian scholars, especially Cheng Hao (1032–1085). Jen Yu-wen, a modern expert on Chen’s philosophy, pointed out that “his general concept of the natural was similar to that of the Neo-Daoists in recognizing that it was at once self-caused, self-completing, self-existing, self-reproducing, and self-perpetuating” (1970). While all these adjectives point to important aspects of the “natural,” one should not ignore the basic meaning that expressed the very nature of Chen’s understanding of the mind-heart—spontaneity.

The mind-heart, according to Chen, is a source of spontaneous creativity. It is an inexhaustible reservoir of potentialities and possibilities. One important manifestation of the creative power of the mind-heart is to correlate everything into one universal whole, which is a kind of spiritual experience rather than a result of intellectual activity. Paul Yun-ming Jiang has pointed out that in Chen’s philosophy, “to cultivate the self is to pursue (or rather to recruit) its inner spontaneity in order that the Mind will unfold its primordial functioning in the process of creativity” (1980). Functioning in a creative way, the mind-heart, in this sense, is actually the *dao* or the “principle,” the ultimate ontological reality in the Confucian tradition. Thus one can say that the principle is both immanent and transcendent.

By identifying the mind-heart with the principle, Chen took a

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radically different position from that of the school of Cheng-Zhu, which separated the mind-heart from the principle. By emphasizing the importance of spontaneity, Chen also discarded any artificial effort to acquire wisdom. He went so far as to say that it is wrong even to talk about how to learn. Again, this view directly contradicts the teachings of the school of Cheng-Zhu. Chen's emphasis on focusing inward marked a break from the school of Cheng-Zhu. Naturally, Chen's philosophy met with serious criticism from scholars influenced by Zhu Xi. Among them, the most famous one was Hu Juren (1434–1484), who—like Chen—was a student of Wu Yubi. In his *Juyelu*, Hu accused Chen of mistaking *qi*, which is commonly translated as material force, for *li* (principle). According to Zhu Xi, *li* is attached to but separable from *qi*. Hu also said that Chen's position—embracing myriad things in one mind-heart and nourishing the *duanni* in one's tranquillity—was heretical, being influenced by Daoism and Buddhism. Chen, consistently with his concept of tranquillity, did not respond.

While it is clear that Chen's philosophy differs drastically from Zhu Xi's, Chen's inward turn in his spiritual pursuit was not a complete break from the dominant trend of thought in his time. Modern scholars, like Wing-tsit Chan, Yamanoi Yu, and Peiyuan Meng, reach a consensus in pointing out that the school of Cheng-Zhu in the early Ming period had shifted its emphasis from the investigation of external things to the pursuit of the inner realm of the mind-heart. In this respect, Chen's position was in line with the new development within the Cheng-Zhu school. However, the difference between the school of Cheng-Zhu and the school of Lu-Wang is traditionally interpreted as a contrast between the principle and the mind-heart. Chen's inward pursuit of the mind-heart is viewed as foreshadowing Wang Yangming's philosophy, which emphasized the pursuit of one's moral sense (*liangzhi*). Thus Wang's philosophy was viewed as a further development of Chen's. This understanding of the relationship between the two philosophers was popularized by Huang Zongxi's *Mingru xue'an* (*Records of Ming Scholars*), which held that Ming learning had started to become precise with Chen and had started to become mature with Wang Yangming. This may be so, but there is no conclusive evidence for the assertion that Wang Yangming was directly influenced by Chen. Wing-tsit Chan held that Wang Yangming never read Chen's works, and Paul Jiang pointed out that Wang Yangming mentioned Chen's name on only three occasions.

If the relation between Chen and Wang remains unclear, it is clear that Chen's philosophy became influential in the early years of the Ming dynasty. This was to a considerable extent because of the contributions of Zhan Ruoshui, who had studied under Chen's supervision for six years. Chen was delighted to have such a gifted

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disciple and openly declared Zhan his successor. Zhan was eventually very successful in his political career. With his tremendous resources, Zhan built academies spreading Chen's teachings wherever he worked.

As Wang Yangming's philosophy eventually came to dominate the academic arena, the influence of Chen's teaching continued to diminish. Yet the Chinese from Guangdong, and naturally those from Xinhui County in particular, continued to honor Chen. In 1745, to pay tribute to him, a local Confucian academy, Baisha Shuyuan, was built next to the Confucius Temple in Zhanghua, a city in central Taiwan. This academy eventually became the National Chang-hua University of Education. In the 1960s there was a resurgence of interest in Chen in Hong Kong that eventually led to the publication of his complete works. In 1982 the San Wui Commercial Society (SWCS) Chan Pak Sha Secondary School was founded in Hong Kong.

See also Wang Yangming; Wang Yangming: Rivals and Followers; Zhan Ruoshui; Zhu Xi: Rivals and Followers.

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Cheng (Ch'eng): Wholeness or Sincerity

Kwong-loi SHUN

Cheng has the meaning of something's being truly or really the case and is contrasted with *wei*, meaning "false appearance." It is used in early Confucian texts, including *Mengzi* (*Mencius*), *Xunzi*, *Daxue* (*Great Learning*), and *Zhongyong* (*Centrality and Commonality*), to refer to an ideal state of the heart (*xin*) in which the heart is completely directed toward ethics; in such contexts, *cheng* is often translated as "wholeness" or "sincerity." It becomes a key concept in the thinking of several later Confucian thinkers, including Li Ao (eighth to ninth century), Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073), Zhu Xi (1130–1200), and Wang Yangming (1472–1529).

Cheng occurs in two passages of *Mengzi*. Passage 7A.4 observes that the ten thousand things are already one, and there is no greater joy than realizing, upon self-reflection, that one has *cheng*. Passage 4A.12, a variation of which is also found in *Zhongyong* (ch. 20), describes *cheng* as dependent on understanding goodness and as necessary for pleasing one's parents, being trusted by friends, obtaining the confidence of superiors, and bringing order to the people. It describes *cheng* as the way of heaven (*tian*) and as reflected in the way of human beings, and observes that *cheng* is necessary for moving or affecting others. *Daxue* also describes *cheng* as something inevitably manifested on the outside and detected by others (ch. 6). *Xunzi* describes *cheng* as a method for nourishing the heart, as necessary if one is to transform others, and as the ideal basis for government (3.26–34). The most elaborate discussion of *cheng*, however, is in *Zhongyong*, the second half of which is devoted primarily to this subject.

Although the beginning of *Zhongyong* (ch. 1) does not explicitly mention *cheng*, it refers to the idea of being watchful over *du* (solitude, privacy), an idea also found in *Daxue* (ch. 6), in the context of discussing what it is to make one's thoughts and inclinations *cheng* and how *cheng* is manifested on the outside. This indicates that the idea of

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being watchful over *du* is related to *cheng*, and the discussion of the idea in these two texts shows that it concerns one's being watchful over the innermost part of oneself, in which the minute and subtle activities of the heart first arise. By being watchful over oneself, one ensures *cheng* in the sense of being completely directed toward ethics, so that there is not even a single thought or inclination in oneself that could lead to the slightest reluctance or hesitation in doing good.

In the second half of *Zhongyong*, *cheng*—as noted above—is presented as the basis of the social and political order: it is only when one is *cheng* that one can please one's parents, be trusted by friends, obtain the confidence of superiors, and bring order to the people. Furthermore, the effect of *cheng* transforms and nourishes everything in the universe; a person who has *cheng* will have a transformative effect on the character of others, and in government, such a person will also ensure that the ten thousand things take their proper places. This effect comes about naturally and without deliberate effort; in this regard, the person is like heaven, which also nourishes the ten thousand things without deliberate effort. *Cheng* as the way of heaven is contrasted with making oneself *cheng* ("whole" or "sincere"), which is the way of human beings. Efforts are required to make oneself *cheng*—one has to understand what is good and choose the good. This contrast between someone who is *cheng* and someone who tries to become *cheng* is described in terms of the relation between *cheng* and *ming* (illumination or understanding). Someone who is *cheng* will *ming* ("understand," "illuminate"), meaning either that the person will understand goodness or that he will illuminate everything. Someone who is *ming*, presumably in the sense of understanding goodness, can thereby become *cheng*.

The notion of *cheng* is taken up by later Confucians and elaborated on in the context of their metaphysical thinking and views of human nature, in a way that goes beyond the *Zhongyong*. In his "Essay on Restoring Nature" (*Fuxing shu*), Li Ao described human nature (*xing*) as the same in everyone and as perfectly good. Emotions (*qing*) are the activities of nature when it comes into contact with things, and emotions can be impure, accounting for people's failure to be ethical. The perfectly good nature he identified with *cheng*, a complete inclination toward goodness, which transforms, nourishes, and illuminates everything. Furthermore, drawing on ideas in the *Yijing* (*Book of Changes*), Li Ao characterized *cheng* as unmoving and without deliberate thought, presumably in the sense that the person who is or has *cheng* responds spontaneously to situations without effort or deliberation. Thus everyone originally is or has *cheng*, and the task of self-cultivation is to restore this original state by ridding the heart of distorting emotions and thoughts, just as one can restore the original

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purity of water by letting the sediment settle.

A similar view of the relation between *cheng* and human nature is found in the thinking of Zhou Dunyi and Zhu Xi, but with a metaphysical twist. Whereas *Zhongyong* described *cheng* as the way heaven operates, Zhou identified *cheng* with the "great ultimate" (*taiji*), a notion found in the *Yijing* and characterized as the source of everything. *Cheng* as the source of everything is supremely good, as can be seen from its transformative and nourishing effect, and Zhou characterized it in terms of nonaction (*wuwei*) because of the effortless way in which it accomplishes its work. *Cheng* is also present in every human being, taking the form of the five virtues (*de*): humaneness (*ren*), propriety (*yi*), observance of the rites (*li*), wisdom (*zhi*), and trustworthiness (*xin*). *Ji* (subtle incipient activation) refers to the activation of *cheng* when one comes into contact with external things, and it is in these emerging activities of the heart that the distinction between good and evil arises. So one should carefully examine *ji* to ensure that it is properly directed, an idea closely related to the idea of being watchful over *du* in *Zhongyong* and *Daxue*.

Drawing on Zhou's ideas, Zhu Xi identified *cheng* not just with the great ultimate but also with pattern (*li*). Drawing on ideas of Cheng Yi (1033–1107), Zhu regarded everything as consisting of pattern and material force (*qi*). Pattern is abstract and is what explains the way things operate as well as that to which their operation should conform. Material force, on the other hand, is the concrete but freely flowing stuff of which things are made. Pattern in human beings comprises the Confucian virtues; the nature (*xing*) of human beings, which is identical with pattern and with *cheng*, is therefore perfectly good. In identifying human nature with *cheng*, Zhu emphasizes that in the original state everyone is completely inclined toward the Confucian virtues. These virtues are fully or really (*shi*) there in that, in the original state, not the slightest thought or inclination in one is incongruent with them, and one acts effortlessly in accordance with them. Like Li Ao, he regarded ethical failure as a matter of deviation from this original state due to erroneous thoughts or problematic desires, and self-cultivation as a matter of restoring the original state.

Whereas *cheng* is presented in early Confucian texts as an ideal state of existence toward which one should strive, for later Confucians it is the original state of human beings to which one should return. For both early and later Confucians, *cheng* is an ideal state in which one fully embodies the Confucian virtues, and only when one is or has *cheng* will one have the transformative and nourishing effect on others that provides the ideal basis for government.

See also *Chengyi*; *Daxue*; Li Ao; *Zhongyong*; Zhou Dunyi; Zhu Xi.

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Cheng Hao (Ch'eng Hao)

Tze-ki Hon

To historians of Chinese philosophy, Cheng Hao (1032–1085) and his younger brother, Cheng Yi (1033–1107), are known as *Er Cheng* (the two Chengs). They and Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073), Shao Yong (1011–1077), and Zhang Zai (1020–1077) are called the "five masters of eleventh-century Chinese philosophy" for their role in neo-Confucianism. The writings of the Chengs, collected in *Er Cheng quanshu* (*The Complete Work of the Two Cheng Brothers*), are the major works in the neo-Confucian canon.

The Chengs were born into a scholar-official's family in Henan. When he was fifteeen, Cheng Hao, along with his brother, studied under Zhou Dunyi. Influenced by Zhou, Cheng Hao radically changed his view of learning. Instead of seeing learning as a way to pass the civil service examinations—which was the common view of educated people who aspired to upward social mobility—Cheng Hao set his mind to learning as an end in itself. Describing his learning as "the learning of the Way," Cheng Hao sought to be a fulfilled person morally and philosophically. In this quest, he first studied Buddhism and Daoism, as was typical of early neo-Confucianists. It took ten years of soul-searching to convert to him to Confucianism. Thereafter he expounded his thought, based on his own understanding of Confucian doctrine.

Cheng Hao's intellectual development suggests an ambiguous relationship between neo-Confucianism on the one hand and Buddhism and Daoism on the other. On the surface, the rise of neo-Confucianism countered Buddhism and Daoism. The goal of the neo-Confucianists was to revive Confucianism, making it competitive with the other two schools of thought. Thus it was common for them to openly condemn Buddhism and Daoism as heresies. In their internal debates, the neo-Confucianists sometimes called one another Buddhists and Daoists to make a rhetorical point. Yet many neo-Confucianists, such as Cheng Hao, had been students of Buddhism and Daoism before converting to Confucianism. Their understanding of Confucianism had been shaped

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significantly by their own exposure to Buddhism and Daoism, and their revival of Confucianism was aimed at conveying Confucian doctrine to an audience steeped in Buddhism and Daoism.

Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi broke new ground in Chinese philosophy by making *li* (principle, pattern, reason) the central concept of neo-Confucianism. For Cheng Hao, a single principle governed the universe—a universe that was continuously undergoing self-transformation and self-regeneration. But although he emphasized that one principle underlay this self-transformation of the multitude of beings, he also stressed that such transformations were nothing but concrete manifestations of the principle. With regard to transformation, Cheng Hao saw no ontological difference between the “one” and the “many.” As a general principle of transformation, the *li* of the one remains empty until it is particularized in unique instances of self-transformation, the *li* of the many. Conversely, the *li* of the many would be, in essence, particular manifestations of the *li* of the one.

Scholars have not yet identified the sources of Cheng Hao’s concept of *li*. Some scholars, who want to underscore Cheng Hao’s Confucianism, trace *li* back to the *Book of Rites*, one of the Confucian Five Classics. Others, focusing on Cheng Hao’s possible neo-Daoist roots, argue that he borrowed the term from neo-Daoist thinkers such as Wang Bi (226–249). Still others contend that Cheng Hao was influenced by Huayan Buddhism, which taught the interaction and interpenetration of the four realms of *dharma*: (1) facts; (2) principle, *li*; (3) principle and facts harmonized; and (4) all facts. Although none of the three sources is considered definitive, it is certain that Cheng Hao had access to a variety of resources in formulating his concept of *li*.

In arguing for an ontological identity of the one and the many, Cheng Hao wanted to show that ethics has a basis in metaphysics. In comparison with Buddhism and Daoism, classical Confucianism is strong in ethics but weak in metaphysics. Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) himself seems to have been reluctant to discuss metaphysical issues such as the nature of the universe, life after death, and the human role in the cosmos; in some cases, he apparently avoided metaphysical issues rather than confronting them. In the *Analects*, for instance, he responded to a student’s inquiry about the worship of ghosts and spirits by saying, “We don’t know yet how to serve men; how can we know about serving the spirits?” (11.11). Similarly, responding to an inquiry on death, Confucius said: “We don’t know yet about life; how can we know about death?” (11.11). Confucius’s vagueness regarding metaphysics is sometimes said to have been partially responsible for the popularity of Buddhism and Daoism in medieval China.

To revive Confucianism, in contradistinction to Buddhism and

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Daoism, Cheng Hao found it imperative to strengthen Confucian metaphysics. By arguing that the one and the many are ontologically identical, Cheng Hao turned the Confucian weakness in metaphysics into a strength. Since the same principle of self-transformation underlies the one and the many, Confucius's attitude toward—or avoidance of—metaphysics can be interpreted as a profound recognition of the relationship of humankind and the cosmos. Instead of discussing the cosmos as an entity separate from humankind, Confucius focused on ethics to emphasize that what is human is, as such, metaphysical. Since the *li* in human daily practices is the same *li* that governs the universe's self-regeneration, human beings need not go beyond themselves to know the cosmos. If they simply concentrate on their everyday moral practices, those practices will have an impact on the universe as a whole.

In his essay "On Understanding the Nature of *Ren*," Cheng Hao explains the intimate connection between ethics and metaphysics by offering a fresh interpretation of the Confucian concept *ren*, "humanity." In classical Confucianism, *ren* is understood as proper regulation of human relations based on love, respect, and reciprocity. In the *Analects*, for instance, Confucius remarks that *ren* consists in "loving men" (12.22). He also regards the person characterized by *ren* as someone who seeks to establish himself by establishing others, and who achieves success by helping others succeed (6.28). In both cases, *ren* is understood primarily as altruism and reciprocity in human relationships.

In Cheng Hao's version, however, *ren* is understood as having both moral and metaphysical significance. The person of *ren* is someone who not only loves his fellow human beings but also "forms one body with all things without any differentiation" (*Er Cheng quanshu*, 2A.3a). The person of *ren* sees himself as carrying out a cosmic mission in human relationships. He regards his fellowship with humankind as part of his fellowship with all beings of the universe.

Applying this novel understanding of *ren*, Cheng Hao discusses how a human being can embrace all beings in this universe. He addresses the issue through a paradox. He emphasizes, on the one hand, the vastness of the universe, which is beyond human comprehension. On the other hand, he stresses that all operations of the universe are in fact human operations. How can a finite part possibly embody the infinite whole?

Cheng Hao offers a resolution to this paradox by quoting the *Mencius* (7A.4): "All things are already complete in oneself." If we consider the size and complexity of the universe, we must conclude that no human being can comprehend it. However, because the *li* governing the universe's self-transformation is the same *li* governing the

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transformation of human life, it follows that by coming to grips with the problems of their lives, humans become in tune with the rhythm of the universe's self-regeneration (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 2A.3b). To illustrate this point, Cheng Hao once told his students that even sweeping a floor or answering a question has metaphysical significance. By themselves, such acts are mundane. But in performing them we concentrate the mind on things at hand and begin to listen to the rhythm of the universe. That experience is metaphysical, he said, because we are performing more as members of the cosmic family of beings than as members of the human community (13.1b).

Regarding the connection between ethics and metaphysics, Cheng Hao seems to have much in common with Zhou Dunyi, his early teacher. Zhou, in his essay "An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate" (especially its second half), goes so far as to argue that a sage is half human and half cosmic. Despite their similarity, though, Cheng Hao did not acknowledge his intellectual debt to Zhou, nor did he mention Zhou's essay in his own writings—a striking omission. Evidently, Cheng Hao wanted to keep his distance from Zhou Dunyi.

One way to understand why this was so is to compare Cheng Hao's concept of *li* with Zhou's concept of *taiji* (the "great ultimate"). For Cheng Hao, to repeat, *li* is the principle underlying the self-transformation of the universe. The key to this concept is that part and whole are organically connected and affect each other in the process of transformation: "There is only one principle [*li*] in this world. You may extend it to the four seas and it is everywhere true…. Therefore to be serious is merely to be serious with this principle. To be humane [*ren*] is to be humane with this principle. And to be faithful is to be faithful to this principle" (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 2A.19a; Chan 1963, 534).

By contrast, in Zhou's concept of *taiji* the relationship between part and whole is less important. Zhou maintains that *taiji* is the final source of the entire universe. *Taiji* first gives birth to the yielding cosmic force *yin* and the assertive cosmic force *yang*—the source of motion in the universe. The interaction of *yin* and *yang* gives birth to the "five phases" (water, fire, wood, metal, and earth); then, the mutual causation and mutual checking of the five phases create the many beings. *Taiji*, in short, sets into motion a sequential process of creation that finally brings the universe into being. Through this cosmogony, Zhou maintains that human beings share an ontology with the universe, but he does see all existent things as dependent on *taiji*. It seems that *taiji* is the precondition for any relationship between part and whole.

If Cheng Hao wanted to distance himself from Zhou Dunyi, he thought highly of the essay "Western Inscription" (*Xi ming*) by Zhang Zai, who was the Chengs' maternal uncle. Zhang Zai offered a holistic vision of the universe as the organic unity, and of the intrinsic

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connection between ethics and metaphysics:

> Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst. Therefore that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions. (*Song Yuan xue an*, 17.3a; Chan, 497)

In bold language, Zhang Zai describes the universe in ethical terms. Unlike Zhou Dunyi, who prefaced his discussion of ethics with a cosmogony, Zhang Zai treats ethics as a branch of metaphysics. He calls heaven and earth his parents and all beings in the universe his relatives. He loves the universe in the same way that he loves his actual parents and relatives, and he takes care of the universe in the same way that he takes care of his family. For Zhang Zai, ethics is not just a matter of proper behavior in the human community; it also has to do with proper human behavior in the universal family of beings. This anthropic-cosmic approach, as Tu Wei-ming (1979) calls it, was what Cheng Hao had attempted to articulate in "On Understanding the Nature of *Ren*."

Traditionally, Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi have been considered together, but more recent scholarship has identified fundamental differences between them. Scholars such as Feng Youlan (Fung Yu-lan), Mou Zongsan, and A. C. Graham describe Cheng Hao as an idealist because he regarded the mind as the sole agent in understanding moral principles, and Cheng Yi as a rationalist because he gave equal importance to the intuition of the mind and the empirical study of the external world in discovering such principles. In fact, for many scholars, the difference between the Chengs went beyond this: it was a fundamental difference between two schools of neo-Confucianism—the idealistic "mind and heart" school (*xinxue*) of Lu Xiangshan (1139–1193) and Wang Yangming (1472–1529), and the rationalistic "principle" school (*lixue*) of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi (1130–1200).

A fundamental difference between the Chengs was their understanding of the intrinsic connection between the *li* in one's body and the *li* in the universe. For Cheng Hao, since ontologically a part is an element of an organic whole, there is no need to do anything except remind oneself of this organic unity. Learning is more an inner task than an outer task; it is a matter not of seeking knowledge from without but of attaining spiritual enlightenment from within. The goal of learning is to activate one's innate ability to feel connected with all beings in the universe.

What some scholars call Cheng Hao's "idealism" is found near the

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end of “On Understanding the Nature of *Ren*,” where Cheng Hao argues that moral cultivation is simple and easy, involving nothing more than the preservation of *ren* in one’s mind (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 2A.3b). We have seen that Cheng Hao modified the classical Confucian concept of *ren* as a matter of human relations, making it instead a concept that emphasized the organic unity of part and whole, of humankind and the cosmos. In this essay, however, Cheng Hao goes a step further, arguing that in order to be complete and fulfilled, a person needs to keep in mind the inseparability of humankind and the cosmos. This is why moral cultivation is so easy—it requires only that we remember our roots in the universe. It is simply a return to our inner self for a deeper understanding of who we are.

To emphasize that moral cultivation is a return to one’s inner self, Cheng Hao describes it as “preserving *ren*.” Since *ren* is an innate human ability, we do not need to acquire *ren* from without; we need only preserve what is already given to us. This is like inheriting property—we do not need to earn it; we need only put it to good use. On some occasions, Cheng Hao used a metaphor from medicine to explain the preservation of *ren*. He compares a lack of *ren* to a paralysis of all four limbs (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 2A.2a–b). In Chinese medicine, every being in this world is invigorated by *qi* (vital force). Just as the *li* of the one and the *li* of the many are connected, *qi* in the universe is the same as *qi* in any single being. By sharing the same *qi*, all beings in the universe are connected as a family. Similarly, the human body as a whole and its parts are connected by *qi*. The limbs become paralyzed not because they have been separated from the body but because *qi* has ceased to penetrate them. The cure is to reactivate *qi* by applying such measures as acupuncture. Moral cultivation has much the same purpose: it adds nothing new to the human mind; rather, it awakens a paralyzed sensitivity so that humans will again see themselves as an integral part of the universe.

Cheng Hao’s emphasis on inner transformation in moral cultivation is also shown in his discussion with Zhang Zai, who acknowledged that Cheng Hao was ahead in learning the Way and sought advice from him. Despite his admiration of “Western Inscriptions,” Cheng Hao disagreed with Zhang Zai regarding the degree to which the external environment influences the human mind. In a letter responding to Zhang Zai’s queries, “Reply to Master Hengzhu’s Letter on Calming Human Nature,” Cheng Hao counseled that no special care is necessary to protect onesef from the influence of one’s surroundings (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Mingdao wenji*, 3.1a–b). For Cheng Hao, the question whether or not the external environment has an impact on the mind is wrongly posed. First, is not the external environment a perception of the mind? If there are temptations, they are

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manifestations of an impure mind far more than they are external or real. Second, is it not the goal of moral cultivation to reawaken the human mind so that it can see the universe as a family of beings? For the person of *ren*, the mind encompasses all beings in the universe. Such a person will never separate (as Zhang Zai did) the internal from the external, or the human mind from the human feelings. He is never worried about external temptation. Much in the spirit of Zhuangzi's sage, he responds spontaneously to things as they come.

Unlike Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi emphasizes both internal awakening and external conformity to ritual. In his essay "A Treatise on What Yanzi [Yan Hui] Loved to Learn," Cheng Yi expresses the same concern about external temptations as one finds in Zhang Zai. He agrees that human beings are, by nature, pure at birth. But he stresses that after birth humankind encounters many temptations from without —temptations so powerful that they can pervert human nature. To counter these temptations, Cheng Yi suggests two steps. First, one cultivates one's mind (this is similar to what Cheng Hao suggested). Second, one practices daily rites to create a positive external environment. For Cheng Yi, Confucius's favorite student, Yanzi, best exemplified the second step: he did not see, hear, speak, or do what was contrary to propriety. By carefully controlling his seeing, listening, speaking, and movement, Yanzi "learned" to be a sage (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yichuan wenji*, 4.1a–2a).

With regard to learning, then, the Chengs shared something but also differed. For Cheng Hao, learning involves only learning to have a "right mind." But for Cheng Yi, learning includes, as well, following the right *li*—principles of action. Whereas the Cheng Hao's "monism" paved the way for the *xin* or "mind-and-heart" school of neo-Confucianism, Cheng Yi's "dualism" set the stage for the *li* or "principle" school.

See also Cheng Yi; Confucianism: Song; *Li* (Principle); *Qi*; Zhang Zai; Zhou Dunyi.

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Cheng Yi (Ch'eng I)

Tze-ki Hon

At age twenty-four, Cheng Yi (1033–1107) entered the imperial academy in the capital, Kaifeng, and quickly became an outstanding student. His student essay, "A Treatise on What Yanzi Loved to Learn," won the admiration of his teacher, Hu Yuan (993–1056), and earned Cheng a reputation as a moral philosopher. At twenty-five, Cheng Yi wrote long exhortations to Emperor Renzong (r. 1023–1063), to practice the kingly way. A few years later, in the capacity of expositor-in-waiting, Cheng Yi had the opportunity to lecture the emperor regularly on moral cultivation. But Cheng's strong opinions on political reform soon involved him in factional struggles at the court; as a result, he was blacklisted, his property was confiscated, and he was forced to leave the capital. Like his older brother, Cheng Hao (1032–1085), Cheng Yi spent most of his life as a private teacher. He taught mostly in the Yi River area in Henan, and for this reason he was often called Master Yichuan (Yi River). As a teacher, Cheng Yi was highly respected; two of his students once spent hours standing in the snow rather than disturb his nap.

The Cheng brothers are known as *Er Cheng* (the two Chengs) for their shared role in founding neo-Confucianism. However, Cheng Yi differed from his brother in several respects. One difference was in temperament: while Cheng Hao was warm, approachable, and agreeable, Cheng Yi was stern, strict, and demanding. Once, when the brothers entered a hall and went to opposite sides of it, everyone else in the room followed Cheng Hao—no one followed Cheng Yi.

Another difference between the two Cheng brothers was their moral philosophies. In general, they had the same vision of the universe as an organic whole. Both maintained that *li* (principle) was the common ontological root of all beings in the universe. And in the formulation "The principle is one and its manifestations are many" (*liyi fenshu*), they both argued that ethics was intimately connected with metaphysics. But they differed with regard to methods of moral cultivation: Cheng Hao emphasized the illumination of the mind as the

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sole means of moral cultivation; Cheng Yi stressed a pairing of inner illumination with an outer quest for objective knowledge. Behind this difference lay a disagreement on whether the human mind alone is capable of achieving moral perfection—a disagreement that prepared the way for the intensive debate between the idealist "mind-and-heart" school and the rational "principle" school of neo-Confucianism.

The difference between the Chengs' moral philosophies is evident in Cheng Yi's early essay "A Treatise on What Yanzi Loved to Learn," which addresses the human propensity for evil. Cheng Yi argues that although human nature in its original form is pure and tranquil, it is easily perverted when it comes into contact with external stimuli. Once stimulated, human nature will express the "seven feelings": pleasure, anger, sorrow, joy, love, hate, and desire. Many people, according to Cheng Yi, lose their original purity when they allow the seven feelings to shape their lives (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 4.1a–2a).

What is important about this essay is that Cheng Yi modifies Mencius's notion of the innate goodness of human nature. On the ontological level, Cheng Yi agrees with Mencius that at birth human nature is good, because *li* is manifested and particularized in the human body. Xunzi, the archrival of Mencius, was wrong in teaching that original human nature is evil. But for Cheng Yi, accepting Mencius's notion of the innate goodness of human nature does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that moral cultivation is simple or easy. What is ontologically given is at best a potential awaiting activation. There is a vast gulf between what is ontologically given and what is manifested.

For this reason (which is somewhat similar to the dichotomy between nature and nurture in western philosophy), Cheng Yi modifies Mencius's thesis, distinguishing between human nature *by* birth, which, as a manifestation of *li*, is innately good; and human nature *after* birth, which is contingent on one's social environment and one's efforts at moral cultivation. If the social environment nurtures innate human goodness and adequate efforts are made to preserve this innate goodness, then it will develop fully. In this case, human nature by birth and after birth will be the same. Cheng Yi calls this "turning the feelings into the original nature." However, if the social environment impedes the full manifestation of innate goodness and efforts to preserve innate goodness are inadequate, then innate goodness will not develop or function properly, and human nature by birth and after birth will differ. Cheng Yi calls this "turning one's nature into feelings."

In this concept of the fragility of innate goodness, Cheng Yi disagrees with his brother. Cheng Yi argues that moral cultivation must be strenuous and time-consuming, because it is a constant struggle against an adverse environment, a ceaseless attempt to ward off temptation. In seeking guidance for moral cultivation, one cannot rely

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solely on a mental recognition of the potential goodness of human nature. One must combine this recognition with actual experience if innate goodness is to be fully realized. For this reason, Cheng Yi argues that moral cultivation must be a dual process. Inwardly, it is a "rectification of the mind" (*zhengxin*). Outwardly, it is a "nourishment of one's nature" (*yangxing*) in order to create an external environment conducive to the realization of innate goodness (*Er Cheng quanshu, Yishu*, 4.1a).

Cheng Yi considered Confucius's student Yanzi (Yan Hui) the prime example of this dual process of inward awakening and outward nourishment. Yanzi's moral cultivation was extremely self-disciplined and included both "firm faith in the Way" and a determination to practice a series of proper behaviors: right seeing, right listening, right speech, and right movement. One of Yanzi's virtues—for which he was famous—was not committing the same mistake twice. Cheng Yi believed that it was Yanzi's inward self-reflection and outward conformity to strict rituals that made him so dear to Confucius, who wept over his untimely death (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 4.1b).

In later life, Cheng Yi developed sets of binary categories to highlight the importance of controlling one's external environment. For instance, he juxtaposed *li* (principle) with *qi*—the vital force that propels the universe, a gigantic system of relations that brings the whole universe together. While *li* is structured and orderly, *qi* is dynamic and creative. While *li* provides the universe with a system of operation, *qi* sets the universe in motion, propelled by the duality of *yin* and *yang*. To move unceasingly, the universe requires both the structure of *li* and the dynamism of *qi*.

From the human perspective, *li* is a given. No human being can change the cosmic pattern or his role in it. What a human being can change is the configuration of *qi* in his body and the process by which *qi* will help him nourish his life. By carefully nurturing *qi*, human beings can be more effective members of the cosmic family. To explain the importance of nurturing *qi*, Cheng Yi used the example of a fish in water. A fish's existence does not come from water, and human existence does not come directly from *qi*. But a fish does require water to survive, and, similarly, human beings depend on *qi* for nourishment. To better their lives, human beings need to take special care in nurturing *qi* (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 15.17b).

Another set of binaries is nature (*xing*), an innate human potential endowed by the universe; and capacity (*cai*), a specific configuration of human characteristics and social setting that makes a person unique. *Xing* is universal among human beings, but *cai* varies from person to person. Everyone is the same in having an innately good nature; differences arise from humans' efforts to come to grips with an adverse

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environment so that they can fully manifest their innate goodness. To explain the difference between nature and capacity, Cheng Yi takes wood as an example. A piece of wood is by nature straight or crooked; whether it can be used as a beam or a truss is determined by its capacity. While the nature of wood is always good in general, the capacity of a particular piece of wood may be good or bad, depending on how it is treated and how it is to be used (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 19.4b).

By formulating binary categories to express the dynamism and materiality of the universe, Cheng Yi was implicitly criticizing Buddhism. In eleventh-century China, Buddhism as an ethical and religious doctrine (especially Chan Buddhism) competed with neo-Confucianism and posed a threat to it. In many respects, neo-Confucianism was a response to Buddhism, particularly to Buddhist metaphysics, which had proved to be far more sophisticated than Confucian metaphysics. By stressing the dynamism and materiality of the universe, Cheng Yi joined other neo-Confucianists (such as Zhou Dunyi and Zhang Zai) in affirming that the universe is a living entity and human existence is not illusory.

An example of Cheng Yi's anti-Buddhist stance is found in a conversation with a student on avoiding external stimulation:

> Question: How about hating external things?
>
> Answer: This is due to ignorance of the Way. How can things be hated? That is the doctrine of the Buddhists.
>
> They want to cast aside affairs, and do not ask whether according to *li* [principle, reason] they exist or not. If they exist, how can you cast them aside? (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 18.10b; Chan 1963, 564)

By emphasizing mastery of the external environment in moral cultivation, Cheng Yi indicates the neo-Confucian belief that the universe is organic.

To clarify similarities and differences between him and his brother, we can consider a statement in which Cheng Yi summarized his moral philosophy: "Self-cultivation requires seriousness; the pursuit of learning depends on the extension of knowledge" (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 18.5b). The first half of the statement is what Cheng Hao advocates—introspection to return to one's innate goodness. In the second half, Cheng Yi adds something to Cheng Hao's suggestion: he calls for sincere efforts to increase one's knowledge of the external world. The statement as a whole gives equal weight to the inner and outer, or spiritual and practical, dimensions of moral cultivation. It helps to define the position of the *li* school (*lixue*) of neo-Confucianism.

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Cheng Yi's statement is also significant in that it incorporates the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*) into the neo-Confucian discourse. Thus far, eleventh-century neo-Confucianists had based their philosophies on four texts: the *Book of Changes*, *Analects*, *Mencius*, and *Doctrine of the Mean*. Zhou Dunyi and Zhang Zai, for instance, founded their moral metaphysics on their reading of the *Book of Changes* (especially the *Great Appendix*) and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (especially the concept of *cheng*, "sincerity"). Cheng Hao had made frequent reference to the *Analects* and the *Mencius* to elucidate his concept of cultivation of the mind. But the *Great Learning* (originally a chapter in the *Book of Rites*) did not have a prominent role in neo-Confucian discourse until Cheng Yi built his moral philosophy on it.

In the second half of Cheng Yi's statement, "extension of knowledge" (*zhizhi*) is adopted from the *Great Learning*. Strikingly similar to Cheng Yi's moral thought, the *Great Learning* speaks of a dual process of outward expansion and inward deepening in moral cultivation. Regarding outward expansion, the *Great Learning* suggests four steps: cultivating one's life, regulating one's family, ordering one's state, and clearly manifesting one's character to the world. The four steps are like concentric circles that extend outward, enlarging one's social space—from self to family to state to universe. Parallel to them are four steps of inward deepening: rectification of the mind, sincerity of the will, extension of knowledge, and investigation of things (*gewu*). These steps lead one back to the inner world in a search for the true self—a search that is a process of unlearning and uncovering. By rectifying one's mind and making one's will sincere, one unlearns what society has imposed, liberating the social self to catch a glimpse of the natural self. Then, by the extension of knowledge, one finds one's common roots with all beings in the universe and regains a true identity as a cosmic being.

Cheng Yi chooses "extension of knowledge" as the exemplar of the four steps of inward deepening in the *Great Learning*—significantly, because this choice implies, at least in part, a critique of Cheng Hao's almost exclusive emphasis on the inner cultivation of the mind. It should be noted that Cheng Yi had great respect for his brother and may not have been aware that his own interpretation differed from Cheng Hao's. Still, by highlighting "extension of knowledge" rather than "rectification of the mind" as the most important step in the quest for the true self, Cheng Yi sees the quest as more experiential than introspective. One may know one's true self intellectually, but this knowledge must be put into practice: one must integrate oneself with the universe in daily life—otherwise, one cannot claim full self-knowledge.

To illustrate the distinction between knowledge acquired

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intellectually and knowledge gained from experience, Cheng Yi gives the example of being afraid of tigers. Virtually everyone, child or adult, knows that a tiger is dangerous; but no one is more "terror-filled" than the man who has been bitten by a tiger (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 18.5a). Similarly, in moral cultivation, "rectification of the mind" gives only a mental picture of oneself. For a full, true understanding, one needs to combine this mental picture with the living experience of being a part of the cosmic family. In this regard, Cheng Yi anticipates Wang Yangming's distinction between prospective and retrospective moral knowledge, or knowledge anterior to action and knowledge posterior to action (Cua 1982).

Cheng Yi emphasizes not only extension of knowledge (*zhizhi*) but also investigation of things (*gewu*). When he was asked about the foundation of learning, he answered unequivocally that it was to rectify the mind and make the will sincere—adding, however, that rectification of the mind and sincerity of the will depended on the extension of knowledge, and extension of knowledge depended on investigation of things (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 18.5b). When Cheng Yi asked his students to extend knowledge by investigating things, his purpose was not empirical knowledge. What he intended was a search for the *li* manifest in all beings. Since "the principle is one and its manifestations are many" (*liyi fenshu*), all things are manifestations of the cosmic principle. One may meditate on the nature of that cosmic principle, but for Cheng Yi, it is better to gain a sense of the principle by participating in its unfolding in life.

Since all beings in this world are manifestations of *li*, Cheng Yi sees "investigation of things" as a dynamic, allinclusive activity. It is an investigation not of one or two specific things but of the general pattern that brings all things together. Comparing the universe to a tree, Cheng Yi says that there is a universal principle running through all myriad beings, just as a tree's lifeblood runs through the roots, trunk, branches, and leaves. Investigation of things can involve reading books, discussing moral issues, analyzing historical events, handling daily affairs, and so on. In any case, the end remains the same—uncovering the universal principle that underlies the transformation of things (*Er Cheng quanshu*, *Yishu*, 18.5a–b).

Concerning the investigation of things, *gewu*, Cheng Yi has confidence in his interpretation of *ge*. Literally, *ge* means "to examine." But Cheng Yi fears that this suggests an idle observer analyzing the world around him, and so he interprets *ge* as "to arrive," which has a different connotation—an image of an active participant interacting with things in the world.

To support this interpretation of *ge*, Cheng Yi cites, tellingly, a classic statement: "The spirits of imperial progenitors have arrived" (*Er*

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Cheng quanshu, *Yishu*, 18.5b). As the spirits of one's ancestors (though invisible) are always present, one does not need to go outside the home or even intellectualize laboriously to commune with them. What one needs to do is participate earnestly in the daily ancestral worship and the management of the house. If indeed "the principle (*li*) is one and its manifestations are many," what is ordinary is already spiritual, and what is mundane is already transcendent. One does not need to separate the mundane from the transcendent or reach transcendence through pure thought.

One way in which neo-Confucianists distinguished themselves from classical Confucianists was by restoring the Confucian texts to the canon. To replace the five texts of classical Confucianism (*Book of Changes*, *Book of Documents*, *Book of Rites*, *Book of Poetry*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*), the neo-Confucianists put together their own classics, the Four Books: *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean* (these first two were originally chapters in the *Book of Rites*), *Analects*, and *Mencius*. The establishment of the Four Books was not completed until Zhu Xi (1130–1200), but Cheng Yi was instrumental in bringing the *Great Learning* into the neo-Confucian discourse. His emphasis on the last two steps of inward deepening in the *Great Learning* helped make this text a canon of neo-Confucian moral thought.

See also Cheng Hao; Confucianism: Song; *Daxue*; *Li* (Principle); *Liyi fenshu*; *Qi*; *Zhongyong*.

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Chengyi (*Ch'eng-i*): Making One's Thoughts Sincere

Kwong-loi Shun

Chengyi (making one's thoughts sincere) is presented in the *Daxue* (*Great Learning*) along with *gewu* (investigation of things), *zhizhi* (extension of knowledge), and *zhengxin* (rectification of the heart), as four steps in the process of self-cultivation. The *Daxue* was originally a chapter in the *Liji* (*Record of Rites*), which was probably compiled in the early Han. It explains *chengyi* in terms of fully satisfying oneself and not deceiving onself, and it depicts the petty person as someone who does bad things when alone but tries to conceal his badness in the presence of a superior person. It also describes how what is on the inside is inevitably manifested on the outside, so that one cannot conceal from others the way one is. In the context of these observations, it refers twice to how a superior person is always watchful over *du* (solitude, privacy); this suggests that there is a close connection between *chengyi* and watchfulness over *du* (*Daxue*, ch. 6).

The character *yi*, often translated as "thought" or "will," is used in early texts to refer to one's thoughts and opinions, the meaning behind what one says, or the meaning behind certain words or practices (such as rituals). It can also refer to one's inclinations—wanting to see certain things happen or thinking of bringing about certain things—and thus *yi* is something one can attain or fail to attain. *Yi* in the sense of inclinations is closely related to *yu* (desire) and *zhi* (intentions, aims, directions of the heart), and the terms are sometimes used together. For example, the *Mozi* refers to one's *zhi* and *yi* (70.39) and to the *yu* of one's *yi* (47.27–28). Still, these terms have different connotations. *Yu* can refer to certain inclinations (such as the tendency of the senses to seek objects) that simply exist without our having reflective awareness of wanting specific things. *Yi*, however, is more reflective, in that one is aware of the object of one's *yi* as part of one's thoughts, which pertain to the heart (*xin*). And *yi* is a less focused or less directed state than *zhi*: while *yi* can be no more than a thought in favor of something, without

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any actual decision to act on it, *zhi* does involve forming an aim or an intention to act.

Cheng, often translated as "making sincere" or "making real," indicates that something is true, or really the case. In early Confucian texts, such as *Mengzi* (*Mencius*), *Xunzi*, *Daxue*, and *Zhongyong* (*Centrality and Commonality*; this, like *Daxue*, was originally a chapter in the *Liji*), *cheng* is used to refer to an ideal state in which the heart is completely inclined or directed toward ethics. Sometimes *cheng* is contrasted with false appearances (*wei*); for instance, the *Xunzi* refers to making one's *cheng* manifest and getting rid of false appearances (20.34). The combination *chengyi*, then, refers to a process of directing one's thoughts and inclinations truly and fully toward ethics—an idea that Zhu Xi (1130–1200) described as making real (*shi*) what emanates from the heart.

The idea of being watchful over *du* also occurs in the *Xunzi* (3.26–34), in the context of discussing *cheng* as a way of nourishing the heart and as a precondition for having a transforming effect on others. The text says that there will be no *du* without *cheng*. Watchfulness over *du* also occurs in the *Zhongyong* (ch. 1); here the context is a discussion of how the superior person is cautious about what is not perceptible and how nothing is more manifest than what is hidden and minute. Although the idea is not explicitly related to *cheng* in the *Zhongyong*, *cheng* is the main subject of discussion of the second half of that text.

The interpretation of *du*, which has the meaning of being alone, is a matter of scholarly disagreement. However, given the context in which it occurs in the *Daxue*, *Xunzi*, and *Zhongyong*, it probably refers to the innermost self, where the minute and subtle activities of the heart first emerge. The *Zhongyong* relates being watchful over *du* to being cautious and watchful over what is imperceptible; this is the point at which it goes on to say (as mentioned above) that nothing is more manifest than what is hidden and minute. The commentary by Zhu Xi notes that here, *du* probably refers to what one alone (*du*) knows about, which is not known to others—the minute and subtle activities of the heart that are not yet manifested outwardly. Zhu relates watchfulness *du* to the idea of cautiously examining *ji*. This term, *ji*, is highlighted in the thinking of Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073); Zhu interprets it as referring to the minute activities of the heart that are in a state of transition from what does not yet exist to what exists—that is, the very subtle tendencies that have just started to emerge from the heart. A similar interpretation can be found in other Confucian thinkers. For example, in commenting on the *Zhongyong*, Li Ao (eighth to ninth century) explains being watchful over *du* in terms of guarding one's innermost self (2.7a–7b).

A common theme in Confucian texts is that the condition of the

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heart will inevitably be manifested on the outside and be perceivable by others, and that one's power to transform others depends on the heart's being truly and fully inclined in an ethical direction. Thus, although initially the minute and subtle tendencies of the heart are known to oneself alone and not yet perceived by others, they will eventually become manifest, and one's power to transform depends on ensuring that they are fully directed toward ethics. In emphasizing the need to be watchful over *du*, the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* both highlight the eventual and inevitable manifestation of these subtle, minute tendencies, whereas the *Xunzi* and the *Zhongyong* stress that one's transforming effect on others depends on the complete ethical inclination of these tendencies.

In the *Daxue*, the idea of being watchful over *du* and the idea of *chengyi* are related: it is by being watchful over the minute tendencies of the heart when they first arise that one can direct one's thoughts and inclinations truly and fully toward ethics. Thus there will be no self-deception: not a single thought or inclination will be incongruous with what is ethical; there will be nothing that could cause the slightest reluctance or hesitation about doing good. In Zhu Xi's commentary, self-deception is illustrated by the petty person; that he should try to conceal his badness in the presence of a moral superior shows that he is aware of what is good but cannot fully devote himself to it. Also, despite his attempts to conceal his badness, it will inevitably be perceivable by others, since what is in oneself will eventually be manifested outwardly.

Chengyi, then, describes the aspect of self-cultivation that involves cautiously watching over the subtle operations of the heart to ensure that the heart is fully inclined toward ethics. This is needed if one is to have a transforming effect on others; in turn, that effect constitutes the ideal basis for government. Later Confucians disagree about the relative importance of different aspects self-cultivation—they do not agree, for example, about the importance of studying the classics—but they would continue to regard watchfulness over one's own heart as a significant part of the process.

See also *Cheng*; *Daxue*; Self-Deception; *Zhongyong*.

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Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi)

Ke-wen WANG

Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975), also known as Jiang Zhongzheng, was the leader of Nationalist China. He was born in Fenghua, Zhejiang Province, and joined Sun Yat-sen's anti-Manchu revolutionary movement while studying at a military school in Japan in 1908. When the revolution of 1911 broke out, Chiang returned to China and took part in the uprisings in his home province. After the establishment of the republic, he again followed Sun in the failed "second revolution" against President Yuan Shikai. During the late 1910s, Chiang lived in Shanghai while occasionally offering his services to Sun's efforts against the warlord government in Beijing. In 1922, he came to Sun's assistance when Sun was ousted from Guangzhou by the local ruler Chen Jiongming. Chiang's relationship with Sun was said to have been strengthened after this incident.

In 1923 Sun, advised by the Comintern, instructed his Nationalist Party to form a United Front with the Chinese Communist Party. He sent Chiang on a study tour in the Soviet Union and then appointed Chiang commandant of the newly established military academy at Whampoa. This military position helped Chiang defeat other contenders for party leadership and assume control of the Guangzhou regime after Sun's death in 1925. The following year Chiang began the "northern expedition" to overthrow the warlords and reunify the country. As his troops entered the lower Yangtze (Changjiang) region in early 1927, Chiang, long dissatisfied with the United Front, broke off with the communists and massacred them in the thousands. In late 1928, the "northern expedition" was successfully completed and Chiang became the new leader of China.

In the next decade, Chiang's Nationalist government in Nanjing ruled the country as a party dictatorship. It faced constant threats from residual warlordism, communist insurgency, and Japanese aggression. Adopting a strategy of "domestic pacification before external

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resistance," Chiang made a series of territorial concessions to Japan while concentrating on crushing his domestic rivals. He waged several civil wars against the rebelling warlords and organized five "bandit-suppression" campaigns that eventually uprooted the communists from their base in Jiangxi. With help from western countries, the Nanjing government also improved the infrastructure of China's economy, especially in the coastal cities where the government's control was relatively stable.

Chiang's leadership, however, came under increasing criticism for its weak-kneed policy toward Japan. In December 1936, Chiang was placed under house arrest by one of his generals while visiting the northwestern city of Xi'an. He was released weeks later, after giving in to the general's demand that he stop his anticommunist campaigns and begin preparations for a war against Japan. That war came in July 1937. Although Chiang's forces suffered disastrous defeats in the first year of the war, losing the entire coastal areas to the invading Japanese, his prestige as the leader of national resistance rose. A second United Front with the Chinese communists was formed, in which the communists were allowed to keep their army and joined the Nationalists in the war effort. Chiang's wartime government in Chongqing (Chungking) fought a strenuous war with limited foreign help, until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 brought the United States into the conflict. After that Chiang relied on American assistance for the continuation of the war while preparing for a showdown with his temporary communist ally.

As soon as Japan surrendered in 1945, a full-scale civil war broke out between the Nationalist government and the communists. To Chiang's surprise, the long war against Japan had left his party and army demoralized and corrupt but had transformed the communists into an experienced and popular force. The Nationalists lost almost every battle in the civil war and were driven out of the mainland by the communists in late 1949. Seeking refuge on the island of Taiwan, Chiang and remnants of his following were saved from total defeat by the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. The United States, which had given up on Chiang a year earlier, decided to provide military and financial aid to Taiwan as part of its global strategy of "containment" of communism. For the next two decades, American protection and assistance ensured the survival of Chiang and his government in exile in Taiwan.

On the island, Chiang resumed his presidency of the "Republic of China" and was "reelected" four times, until his death. He ruled the island with an iron fist while continuing to claim sovereignty over the mainland. Political stability, American aid, and appropriate development strategies produced rapid economic growth in Taiwan

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during the 1960s and 1970s, while international support for Chiang's regime gradually faded. As the United States improved its relations with the People's Republic of China in the early 1970s, Taiwan lost its seat in the United Nations as well as its diplomatic ties with many countries. Chiang died, of an illness, amid this diplomatic crisis. His leadership on the island was passed on to his son, Jingguo (Chiang Ching-kuo).

Among the numerous books and treatises published under Chiang's name, the most famous may be *China's Destiny* (1943), an interpretation of China's recent past and a blueprint of its "revolutionary reconstruction"; and *Soviet Russia in China* (1956), a review of Sino-Soviet relations since the 1920s with an exposition of anticommunist strategies. Both works convey Chiang's strong anti-imperialist and nationalist sentiments. Chiang was certainly not alone among China's modern leaders in his desire for a strong and unified state. The interests of the state, in his view, take precedence over, and represent the ultimate realization of, the interests of the individual. However, the nationalism that Chiang (unlike many others of his generation) espoused was closely linked to an affirmation of China's cultural heritage.

Educated in Chinese classics, Chiang was traditional, and traditionalistic, in his worldview. Although he had been briefly attracted to social Darwinism in his youth, he was scarcely touched by the "new culture" of the May Fourth era. His leftist stance under the United Front of the early 1920s was largely motivated by political opportunism. Later, in *China's Destiny*, he would lament the erosive effects of western ideas such as communism and liberalism on China's social order. Despite his conversion to Christianity in the late 1920s—in order to marry Song Meiling, who had been educated in America—western culture was on the whole alien to Chiang. As commandant of the Whampoa Academy, he considered the writings of the Confucian generals Zeng Guofan and Hu Lingyi essential military and ideological texts. After assuming leadership of the Nationalist Party, he reinterpreted Sun Yatsen's political doctrines as an embodiment of the Chinese "moral tradition" (*daotong*) and presented his anticommunism as a defense of that tradition.

The Chinese moral tradition, according to Chiang, was based primarily on Confucian ethics. A student of the Wang Yangming school of neo-Confucianism, Chiang believed that the "rectification of mind" (*zhengxin*) was the fundamental approach to all human problems. He regarded China's modern social and political crisis as at least in part a result of its moral decline. The key to the revolutionary reconstruction of China, therefore, should be a moral renewal. "The goal of our revolution," Chiang once proclaimed, "is to revive our

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cultural heritage; … specifically, it is to continuously promote the Chinese moral tradition.” A collective rectification of the minds of the Chinese people, through the practice of Confucian ethics in daily life, would lead to what he described as a revival of China’s “national spirit” (*minzu jingshen*), or the “soul of China” (*Zhongguohun*). Only when this “national spirit” was imbued in every Chinese could the survival of China be truly secured.

Chiang’s vision of national renewal and reconstruction may be best seen in the “new life” movement he launched in 1934. In part an effort to cleanse the areas recently recovered from the communists of dangerous subversive influences, the movement aimed to restore social order by reforming the daily life of the populace. Its approaches combined elements of Confucianism, fascism, and the reformism of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA). The movement advocated moral renewal, with attention to attitudinal and behavioral details, as a substitute for socioeconomic programs in tackling China’s rural problems. Chiang identified “four cardinal bonds” (decorum, righteousness, integrity, and a sense of shame) and “eight virtues” (loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, love, sincerity, righteousness, harmony, and peace), all derived from Confucian doctrines, as the essential moral principles that must be reintroduced into the thought and actions of the Chinese. His method of measuring the application of these principles by the people, however, was rather superficial—he expected them to be “tidy” and “clean” in their daily routines and habits. This apparently reflected his own military background and his militaristic approach to governing.

The “new life” movement failed miserably to accomplish its intended objectives, but Chiang remained convinced of the critical role of moral renewal in revolutionary reconstruction. After his retreat to Taiwan in 1949, he concluded that the fundamental cause of the Nationalist defeat on the mainland was in fact a failure in “education and culture.” When Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Chiang quickly responded by initiating the “Chinese cultural revival” movement on the island. The movement displayed much of the same concerns and approaches as the “new life” movement three decades earlier. It explicitly promoted Confucianism as the foundation of modern Chinese society and portrayed the Nationalist regime as the defender of China’s tradition.

In an effort to affirm his status as Sun Yat-sen’s intellectual heir, Chiang completed Sun’s unfinished lectures, the “Three Peoples’ Principles,” by adding a treatise on education, recreation, and culture to Sun’s principle of people’s livelihood (*minsheng zhuyi*). He also provided his own interpretations of some of Sun’s philosophical formulations. Sun had criticized the neo-Confucianist idea that “to

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know is easy, to act is difficult" and proposed instead that "to know is difficult, to act is easy" (*zhinan xingyi*). An admirer of Wang Yangming, Chiang attempted to find a compromise between the two propositions. He argued that Wang and Sun defined "knowledge" in different ways. Sun was referring to practical and specific knowledge, Chiang said, while Wang concerned himself with the innate human ability of "knowing." Thus their different observations did not contradict each other. On the basis of this theoretical compromise, Chiang developed his own "philosophy of action" (*lixing zhexue*). Since it is easy to act, as Sun had proposed, and since Wang had advised "unity of action and knowledge" (*zhixing heyi*), Chiang believed that the utmost emphasis should be placed on action. "In all of the universe, from past to present," he declared, "everything has been created by action…. Even thought and speech can be regarded as parts of (human) action." To exist is therefore to act; one rediscovers one's "innate knowledge" (*liangzhi*) only through action. At times Chiang even broadened the connotation of "action" and equated it with "eternal movement" in the natural world. Yet epistemological clarity was never Chiang's primary concern; his main interests were social and political. Not unlike Sun before him, Chiang hoped that his philosophical exposition would convince his followers of the necessity of political action, of "practicing" (*shijian*) the revolution.

In his last years, facing new political situations in Taiwan, Chiang appeared to have moderated his attitude toward modern western intellectual trends. He suggested that the "essence" of the three peoples' principles could be summarized as "ethics, democracy and science," each corresponding to one of the three principles. The latter two, representing the "essence" of the principle of people's rights (*minquan zhuyi*) and the principle of people's livelihood, respectively, had been popular slogans of the May Fourth era. He now gave them credence. Nevertheless, Chiang continued to uphold "ethics" (*lunli*), defined in terms based on Confucianism as the "essence" of the first principle, the principle of people's national consciousness, or nationalism (*minzu zhuyi*). Ethics remained the deepest concern in his vision of nation-building.

See also Confucianism: Ethics; Confucianism: Tradition; Sun Yat-sen; Wang Yangming; *Zhixing Heyi*.

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Comparative Philosophy

David B. Wong

Doing comparative philosophy compels one to examine one's deepest assumptions about value, knowledge, the structure of reality, and the proper way to do philosophy itself. The comparison of Chinese and western traditions has yielded fresh and illuminating perspectives on the basic assumptions of each tradition. Comparative philosophy, however, presents special pitfalls as well as special benefits. The desire to draw an interesting and dramatic contrast between traditions often leads to overgeneralization and oversimplification of each tradition, making both appear more different than they are. On the other hand, the desire to make another tradition speak to the problems of one's own tradition often leads to a blurring of genuine differences.

Comparisons in Ethical Philosophy

Zigong said, "What I do not wish others to impose on me, I also do not wish to impose on others" (*Lunyu*, 5.11). "A man of *ren* [humanity, benevolence], wishing to establish himself [to establish his character], helps others to establish themselves, and wishing to gain perception [to gain a thorough understanding of the *dao* or Way], helps others to gain perception" (6.28). It is impossible to ignore the resemblance of these sayings of Confucius to the western "golden rule" (for the Christian version, see Matthew 7:12). This point of convergence suggests that a frequent (if not invariable) function of ethical codes is to encourage consideration of others' interest and to keep in check the most socially harmful impulses of the "dear self," as Kant put it.

Two important themes with cross-cultural resonance emerge from Confucius's comment on a student who questions the need for a lengthy mourning period for one's parents: "Was Yu not given three years of love by his parents?" (17.21). One theme is an ethical norm of reciprocity, the duty to return good for good. This theme is virtually universal across cultures, and it is not difficult to see why the theme would play an essential role in the life of creatures who survive and

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flourish through social cooperation but do not possess unlimited amounts of selfless goodwill toward their fellows. Another theme emerging from the passage is special duties toward those with whom one has some particular relationship—for example, duties that one has toward others not just because they are human but because they are one's family. As is well known, the Confucians defended the doctrine of "graded love" or "love with distinctions" (that one owes more to family members, say, than to strangers) against the Mohist doctrine of "universal" or equal and impartial love. A strikingly similar debate occurs within contemporary Anglo-American philosophy between utilitarians who see our fundamental duties as transcending the boundaries of special relationships (e.g., Singer 1972) and those who defend the irreducibility of special duties (e.g., MacIntyre 1984). A parallel conflict between duties to kin and duties to the state appears in *Antigone*, and it is the occasion for Socratic reflections on the nature of piety in the *Euthyphro*. Interestingly, Plato's motivations for eliminating the family in his ideal state are very much Mohist in spirit: to permit the family to survive is to encourage particularistic loyalties that undermine a wider concern for the common good (*Republic* 449c–d). Such conflicts may well be an inevitable feature of the ethical life across many different cultures: on the one hand, human beings depend on small groups for their survival, nurturance, and flourishing, and this gives rise to strong ethical ties within these groups; but on the other hand, these groups typically interact and cooperate, forming larger social units joined by the recognition of duties that transcend the boundaries of family, friendship, and local community. Perpetual debate about the relative priorities of these potentially conflicting duties would seem an inevitable result.

Confucian ethics fits into the category of "virtue ethics" and can appropriately be compared with ancient Greek ethics in this regard. As exemplified by the *junzi* (the superior person, the gentleman) and virtues such as *ren* (humanity, benevolence), *yi* (righteousness), and *li* (conformity to rules of propriety or of ritual), virtue ethics provides guidance to the individual primarily through description of ideal personhood and character traits to be realized rather than the application of general principles purporting to identify general characteristics of right or dutiful action. The very concept of *yi* connotes the ability to identify and perform the action that is appropriate to the particular context. While the traditional rules of ritual provide one with a sense of what is appropriate given standard contexts, the virtue of *yi* allows one to identify when those rules need to be set aside in exigent circumstances (Cua 1998). The parallel with Aristotelian practical wisdom (*phronesis*) is striking. The contemporary revival of virtue ethics is premised partly on a reaction against the

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ambition of modern ethical theory to guide primarily through general principles of action rather than through the specification of ideal character traits. That ambition has been judged overreaching and insufficiently heedful of the need to judge what is required in the particular context. Virtue ethics also tends to embody the theme that the ethical life is necessary for flourishing as a human being. This theme emerges most clearly in Mencius, who identifies distinctively human potential with incipient tendencies to develop the moral virtues (*Mengzi*, 2A.6, 6A.1, 3, 7). Aristotle held that reason makes us distinctively human, and that reason and our social nature compel recognition of the desirability of the ethical life for human beings (*Nico-machean Ethics*, 1097b, 1103b; see also Nivison 1996 for comparisons of Aristotle and Mencius and Yearley 1990 for comparisons of Aquinas and Mencius).

The similarities coexist with significant differences, however. Even if both Chinese and Greek virtue ethics emphasize the desirability of the ethical life, the Greeks seem to have been drawn to a quest for theoretical truth for its own sake, as exemplified by Aristotle's claim that a life focused on theoretical contemplation is best, while the social life of responsibility to others is secondary (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1179a). The Confucians are comparatively unequivocal about the primacy of the social life in individual flourishing, and this perhaps reflects a difference in the value placed on theoretical truth for its own sake. (It is a good possibility, furthermore, that in the Confucian tradition no importance was placed on the distinction between truth for its own sake and its practical consequences; see the discussion below on epistemology and metaphysics.)

Another contrast arises from the focus in modern western morality on individual rights to liberty and to other goods, where the basis for such rights to persons lies in attributing moral worth to each individual independently of what conduces to his or her responsibilities to self and others. Confucianism lacks a comparable concept, given its assumption that the ethical life of responsibility to others and individual flourishing are inextricably intertwined. There is little space for the idea that individuals may have ethically legitimate interests that conflict with the interests of the communities to which they belong. This sort of contrast has prompted such views as Hegel (1956) had to the effect that Chinese Confucian ethics exemplifies a less advanced stage in moral thinking than moralities with modern European origins. On the other side, some advocates of Confucian ethics criticize rights-focused morality for ignoring the social nature of human beings and portraying human life in terms of an excessively "atomistic" or "individualist" concept of persons (e.g., Rosemont 1986).

Such criticisms may not do justice to the complexity of comparing

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and evaluating traditions. Against the rights-oriented critics of Confucianism, it could be said that the framework of rights is not the only way to tend to the needs of individuals and protect them against mistreatment; the framework of responsibilities to others can afford significant protections and arguably addresses the human need for community and belonging better than rights frameworks (Rosemont 1991). Moreover, it is possible that rights in some sense did play a role in the Confucian tradition, even if such rights were not grounded in the idea of the independent moral worth of the autonomous individual. Rights in the sense of morally justified claims to be protected in certain kinds of action or morally justified entitlement to certain kinds of goods can be justified as necessary for individual flourishing and the life of responsibility to others. Mencius recognized a right to revolution against tyrannical kings (*Mengzi* 1B.8); furthermore, he advised kings to attach more weight to the opinions of their people than to those of their ministers and officers in making certain crucial decisions, implying that the people have a right to speak up (1B.7). Mencius's Confucian rival, Xunzi, recognized the need for subordinates to speak their views freely to their superiors and hence, by implication, their right to speak (*Xunzi, Zidao, Way of the Son*). On the other side, one must be wary of oversimplifications of western rights-oriented ethical codes. The social nature of persons is not denied by all such codes. (Of the major theorists, only Hobbes seems to take an unambiguously "atomistic" view of human beings, and Rousseau and Locke seem to require no such view.) It could further be argued that rights-oriented codes provide individuals greater protection when their interests collide with communal or social interests.

An evaluative stance different from asserting the superiority of one or the other tradition is that each tradition has something important to learn from the other. Chinese philosophy emphasizes the need to pay attention to the concrete details of the situation at hand and displays healthy skepticism about the power of general principle to reveal what sort of action is suitable to the situation. It displays an appreciation for the power of tradition, and in particular the *li*, in helping to make vivid and concrete and therefore meaningful such ethical abstractions as love, respect, and care for others. On the other hand, an appreciation for the concrete and for the culturally specific may obscure the possibility of general and transcultural principles that help to evaluate the concrete and culturally specific (Cua 1985).

A fourth possible attitude toward difference is that each tradition is not wrong to emphasize different values. The argument for such a pluralistic or relativistic answer may start with the claim that each sort of ethics focuses on a good that may reasonably occupy the center of an ethical ideal for human life. On one hand, there is the good of

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belonging to and contributing to a community; on the other, there is the good of respect for the individual apart from any potential contribution to community. It would be surprising, the argument goes, if there were just one justifiable way of setting a priority with respect to the two goods. On this view, comparative ethics teaches us about the diversity and richness of what human beings may reasonably prize, and about the impossibility of reconciling all they prize in just a single ethical ideal (e.g., Wong 1984).

Buddhism and Daoism are often adduced as evidence for a wide ethical gulf between east and west. There are, however, some important parallels in these philosophies to the Hellenistic Stoics and Epicureans, who argued for the need to accept the inevitable in human life, the need to dampen one's desires to achieve tranquillity in the face of the inevitable, and an identification with the world that makes acceptance and dampening of desires possible (Nussbaum 1994). These important parallels coexist with the equally important contrast over the Stoic belief in *logos* as the basis of the order of the world.

Some striking parallels and contrasts appear when Nietzsche is compared with Daoist and Buddhist thinkers. On one hand, there is a common wariness of the use of ethical categories. More specifically, Nietzsche and Zhuangzi share an awareness of the possible use of such categories to assert power over others and to dominate them (*Zhuangzi*, ch. 5; Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*). On the other hand, the contrasts between Nietzsche and these eastern philosophies are perhaps more striking. Nietzsche ends up proposing a radically individualistic break from ethical relation to others to a single-minded dedication to the aesthetic project of fashioning a life for oneself that is like a work of art. Given his emphatic rejection of conventional ethical values and his relatively low interest in refashioning Chinese society (at least compared with the *Daodejing*), Zhuangzi might be the closest the Chinese tradition comes to Nietzsche. Even Zhuangzi, however, advocates a kind of acceptance of the low and the lowly that seems anathema to Nietzsche's celebration of the *Übermensch*. Moreover, Nietzsche is well known for his scorn for the Buddhist theme of the oneness and interdependence of all life and of the resulting universal compassion. He would have rejected similarly the *Daodejing*'s embrace of compassion (ch. 67). More fundamentally, Nietzsche proposes strong, vital desire as the heart of the individual's aesthetic project, rather than its dampening. Nietzsche seems to represent a kind of radical individualism that did not find a congenial home in the Chinese tradition (Solomon 1995).

Some might argue that comparisons like those articulated above are fundamentally misguided in presupposing that various thinkers in the Chinese and western traditions are all talking about the same sort of

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thing, which is called "morality" in the west. Some contemporary thinkers (e.g., Williams 1985) have tended to confine the "moral" to a relatively narrow set of characteristics associated with Kant's moral philosophy—a belief in universal laws validated by pure reason, a belief that responsibility for one's actions requires freedom from determination by external causes. On this view of the moral, it could be argued that there is no equivalent in Chinese philosophy (Rosemont 1988). Yet such a conception of the moral seems to give Kant and his followers too much credit for having captured all that people in the west have meant by "morality," neglecting, for example, those filial duties and character traits recognized in western morality that overlap with Chinese virtue ethics such as Confucianism.

Cultures that emphasize the moral rights of individuals are also cultures that recognize duties between parents and children and such virtues as kindness, for example. Indeed, some Anglo-American philosophers have criticized modern western moral *theory* precisely for its neglect of the special duties and virtues that make possible a decent life with others (Baier 1987; MacIntyre 1981). Indeed, this overlap between a revival of interest in western virtue ethics and the virtue features of Confucian ethics accounts for much of the current surge of western interest in Chinese philosophy. Here it is absolutely crucial to keep in mind the difference between theories put forward by thinkers in a culture and the complex phenomena these theories are meant to explain. Such theories typically highlight certain aspects of the phenomena but obscure others. Comparative Chinese and western writers intent on portraying dramatic contrasts between cultures sometimes choose theories that conveniently support their case, paying insufficient attention to whether or not the theories are adequate explanations. One error of comparative philosophy is imposing an alien conceptual framework on another tradition, but a complementary error is extreme contextualism, under which any attempt to note broad thematic similarities across cultures is condemned as an unacceptable distortion of meaning uprooted from the surrounding web of belief and practice. The possibility of doing comparative philosophy squeezes in somewhere between these two errors.

To consider another example, the way in which Daoism and certain schools of Buddhism seem to reject conventional ethical values (for this theme in Chan Buddhism, see Huineng, *Liu zutanjing*, and *Recorded Conversations of Yixuan*) might make the Chinese tradition seem dramatically different from the west, but one must keep in mind that these philosophies seem to espouse a certain way of life that in many respects coincides with what might be called an ethic. Moreover, it is not difficult to find counterparts such as Nietzsche in the west to this combination of rejection of conventional ethics and espousal of

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unconventional ethics.

Comparisons in Epistemology and Metaphysics

Points of divergence over epistemology are perhaps best introduced through a contrast between Chinese and western conceptions of the modes and aims of philosophy. Confucius's *Lunyu* opens not with an argument but with a series of questions:

> To learn something and regularly practice it—is it not a joy? To have friends come from distant states—is it not a pleasure? Not to complain when men do not know you—is it not like a *junzi* [superior person, gentleman]? (1.1)

Such passages exemplify a method of persuasion that is not argumentative but invitational (Naess and Hannay 1972). Confucius was not propounding a set of doctrines and defending them with systematic argument but portraying a way of life to which a person would be drawn once it was properly understood. The *Daodejing* uses a similar method of persuasion to endorse an empty way of life free of contention with others and things (ch. 8). The *Zhuangzi* exemplifies not only an invitational mode of persuasion but the sort of therapeutic aim for philosophy that has parallels in Nietzsche and Wittgenstein but has occupied a more central place in mainstream Chinese philosophy than in western philosophy. The therapeutic aim typically presupposes skepticism about the power of argumentative and analytical methods of discovering the truth, or at least (in Wittgenstein's case) the kind of truth philosophers have sought. It is controversial whether *Zhuangzi* offers some other way of finding the truth in place of argumentative and analytical methods. What is clear is that it offers a way of being at home in the world which does not depend on these methods. That is what makes its aim therapeutic.

The argumentative mode is by no means absent from Chinese philosophy. It was Mozi's enduring contribution to the Chinese tradition to have explicitly introduced modes of critical analysis and argumentation. Mencius responded to Mo's critique of Confucianism through counterargumentation (Shun 1997), and Xunzi countered Mencius within the Confucian tradition with perhaps the most sophisticated and self-conscious methods of argumentation in the classical period (Cua 1985). The invitational mode of persuasion, however, is still strongly present in Mencius, as is evidenced by his discussion of the kind of courage that allows one to go forward against men in the thousands as long as one is in the right, a courage that allows tranquillity in the face of danger, the kind of courage that comes

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of cultivating one's heaven-sent sprouts of goodness and that allows one to cultivate the "flood-like *qi* [energy-stuff] that fills the space between Heaven and Earth" (*Mengzi* 2A.2). This is not argumentation but an invitation to realize a state of being.

The relative centrality of invitational method in Chinese philosophy may reflect a trait that is shared in varying degrees between Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism: a certain humility about human powers of theorizing, rational analysis, and argumentation in the face of the fullness of experience. Confucianism emphasizes that the particular cannot be eliminated from ethical judgment, especially as regards its virtue of *yi* (righteousness or rightness) and the way it constitutes the ultimate ground and basis for correcting or setting aside the general rules of *li* (ritual, propriety). Daoism emphasizes the way that experience invariably overflows the artificial and rigid boundaries of human names and categories of opposites. Chinese Buddhism turns this humility into a full-blown skepticism about the ultimate reality of the human self and a positive metaphysical view about the ultimate oneness and interdependence of things that our analytical powers would lead us to believe are ultimately distinct.

This humility about the human powers of theorizing, analysis, and argumentation corresponds to a confidence in practical human wisdom, a wisdom that apparently greatly exceeds human discursive resources for grounding and explaining its successes. This is the truth behind the common observation that Chinese philosophy is comparatively concrete, worldly, and practical. Given such epistemological themes, then, it should not be surprising if therapeutic aims and nonargumentative modes of persuasion should be more central to the Chinese tradition than to the western tradition.

It is important to note, however, that such features distinguish Chinese philosophy through their comparative centrality to the tradition as a whole. Similar features, after all, do appear in the western tradition, and sometimes in the most central of thinkers. Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, as indicated above, apply nonargumentative modes of persuasion and have therapeutic aims. David Hume's skeptical doubts about the unitary and stable self (*Treatise of Human Nature*, Book 1, sec. 6) would have fit nicely with Buddhist and Daoist themes. The theme of intuitive apprehension of reality as a unity underlying sensible diversity is of course found in mystical literature of the Christian and Jewish traditions.

Most traditions worth studying are complex and to a significant degree heterogeneous. Generalizations about the ways that Chinese movements such as the Confucian and the Buddhist differ from the ancient Greek or the modern western European tradition, for instance, are at best generalizations about the ways that dominant or frequently

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accepted themes differ. Themes that sound strangely familiar can emerge from the most exotic traditions. For example, a significant internal counterpoint to the dominant Confucian theme of nature as containing ethical qualities is represented by Xunzi's conception of nature as neutral to human aspirations and as a thing to be understood for the sake of satisfying these aspirations (*Xunzi*, *tianlun*). Part of the value of doing comparative philosophy may, in fact, lie not in confronting some totally alien system of thought but in recognizing how themes that are not currently dominant in one's own tradition are combined in unfamiliar ways and given enduringly dominant places in other traditions.

An issue about truth arises from the fact that in the Chinese tradition one rarely finds an appreciation of discovering the way things *really* are, divorced from all questions of how such a discovery would fit into a desirable way of life. Some hold that the lack of distinction between truth and desirability reflects a radical difference between western and Chinese conceptions of language and reality. One possible view along these lines (Hansen 1992) is that the classical Chinese thinkers conceived of the primary function of language not as descriptive or as attempting to match propositions with states of affairs, but rather as a pragmatic instrument for guiding behavior. A related interpretation is that the *dao* or Way in a thinker such as Confucius was conceived not as a reality independent of tradition and language, against which linguistically formulated beliefs were to be measured and judged reliable or unreliable, but in fact as a cumulative creation of individuals working from within a context provided by tradition (Hall and Ames 1987).

Such interpretations would align the classical Chinese thinkers with critics in the western tradition who have criticized the mainstream assumptions of a propositional theory of language, a correspondence theory of truth, and a realistic view of the relation between language and reality. While Confucius does show tolerance and flexibility in judging where the Way lies, it seems going too far to present him as a clear alternative to the western mainstream of thought about truth. When Confucius says that filial piety and brotherly love are at the root of humanity (1.2), there is no indication that he is limiting the claim to Chinese culture; rather, he means to say something about human beings generally. He is talking about the way human beings must learn to respond to authority that is based not on force or coercion but on love, respect, and care. Furthermore, Confucius clearly believes that rulers cannot hold power simply on the basis of law and punishment and that they need a kind of moral authority. He condemns the abuse of power for the sake of personal ambition or conspicuous consumption. There is no sign that such judgments are limited in scope to his own time and

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place.

Similarly, an urge to present the classical thinkers as a clearly pragmatic and antimetaphysical alternative to western mainstream metaphysics leads to some serious distortions. One must be very creative in explaining away all those apparently metaphysical passages in the *Daodejing* such as Chapter 4, where *dao* is described as empty, as seeming something like the ancestor of all things, as appearing to precede the *di*, "lord" (LaFargue 1992). Moreover, the passage on the "floodlike" *qi* in the *Mengzi* seems clearly metaphysical and links the *dao* of humanity with the *dao* of Heaven (*tian*).

However this issue is resolved, no one has denied that nonbeing *eventually* acquired frankly metaphysical meanings in the Chinese tradition, where it refers at the least to an indeterminate ground in which the determinate "ten thousand things" are incipient (Neville 1989). This embrace of an indeterminate ground of the determinate may reflect a decision to give a fundamental place in ontology to the phenomenon of change, rather than to an absolutely stable being as in Parmenidean ontology and as later reflected in Aristotelian and Cartesian notions of substance (Cheng 1989, 1991). The revival of interest in Chinese metaphysics has been fueled partly by a perception that twentieth-century physics undermined the strategy of giving determinate being ontological primacy (Zukav 1979).

The neo-Confucians Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming represent, respectively, the metaphysical and pragmatic bents present in the Chinese tradition. Zhu Xi (*Zhuzi yulei*) reinterpreted ethical themes inherited from the classical thinkers and grounded them in a cosmology and metaphysics. On his conception of *ren* as an allinclusive virtue, it constitutes the Way (*dao*) and consists of the fact that the mind of heaven and earth to produce things is present in everything, including the mind of human beings. Wang Yangming (*Chuanxi lu*) taught of the sage who formed one body with heaven and earth and the "ten thousand things," but he showed little of Zhu's interest in the *li* or principle of existent things. The investigation of things prescribed in the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*) was not the empirical inquiry Zhu envisioned but a rectification of the mind, ridding it of evil thoughts. Neither Zhu nor Wang constitutes an anomalous development of the classical tradition. Rather, both of them represent a development of tendencies which were present from the beginning and between which there was never conceived to be a mutually exclusive choice.

The temptation to see an interest in the metaphysical and culturally transcendent as anomalous or exported into the Chinese tradition is a temptation to see its thinkers as representing the path not taken by western philosophy, a path the interpreter might see as better or worse. Ironically, the path not taken in China is often taken in the western

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tradition, even if it is less trodden. The danger behind this temptation is that Chinese thinkers are enlisted in a fight that was not theirs and that perhaps they do not even regard as a fight. The alternative path the classical thinkers represent may rather be the *absence* of a division between the metaphysical and the pragmatic or the transcendent and the culturally particular. What is striking about the discussion of truth in the mainstream tradition is that it is highly theoretical and on a meta-level. To place oneself on one side or another of this debate, one must have the relevant theoretical concerns, and it is not clear that such concerns were present in the Chinese tradition. One simply does not find in China the discussions of the nature of truth that one finds early in the western tradition—in Plato and Aristotle, for instance. There is plenty of discussion that amounts to a search for *truths* about how to live and, as some might hold, the nature of the world; but there is none about the abstract concept of truth itself. Sometimes the search for truths lead to claims that seem to be concerned with things existing independently of human thought, and sometimes the main concern is how truths encourage human beings to lead a desirable life, but the anomalous element in the Chinese tradition may be, not an exclusive focus on one or the other, but rather the thought that one must somehow make a choice between these concerns.

Another topic that involves similar questions concerns the different ways in which the human being is "parsed" by traditions. Much of classical Confucian ethics contains no division between the rational, the emotional, and the appetitive parts comparable to the division that played such a large role in ancient Greek ethics, for example, and that in some form or another continues to play a role in the western tradition. For example, Mencius's inborn moral sprouts (*duan*) exhibit characteristics we associate with feeling or emotion but also possess a cognitive dimension of judgment. The sprout he calls the sense of right and wrong obviously possesses the cognitive dimension, but so does the sense of shame (Wong 1991a, b). The parable he tells (3A.5) about the ancients who did not bury their parents illustrates both the conative and the cognitive aspects of the sprouts. When the sons passed by the bodies of their parents they had thrown into gullies, a sweat broke out on their brows, they could not bear to look, and they buried their parents' bodies. Mencius presents their reactions, clearly conative in nature, as revealing the rightness of burying their parents. Feeling can be a guide to what is right and appropriate. Consider, by contrast, Plato's story in the *Republic* (440a) about Leontius, whose eyes (standing in for the appetitive part of the soul) desired to look at the corpses of human beings, whose reason told him that looking would be shameful, and whose spirited part became furious when his eyes defied his reason. Feeling (or, at least, anger) can be an ally of reason, but it is

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reason that discerns what is right.

A common and popular reaction to the difference between Mencius and, say, Plato is to conclude that Chinese philosophy is much more "intuitive" and "nonrational" than western philosophy. But again, this might be a mistaken enlisting of Chinese thinkers into an intramural fight within the western tradition between the "rationalist" mainstream and dissenters. As was noted above, Mencius certainly knows how to use argument. Reason is not absent from his philosophy; rather, the boundaries between reasoning, wanting, and feeling are not drawn sharply, and an issue is not made of whatever division can be made.

Xunzi's picture of moral motivation makes it even harder to see the Chinese tradition as emphasizing the intuitive and nonrational in its picture of the person. In his conception of human nature as containing desires for gain that lead to a self-destructive conflict with others, and in his conception of morality as born of the sages' reasoned reflection on what rules most effectively curb and transform this nature, Xunzi anticipates Hobbes. In his emphasis on the capacity of the mind to approve or disapprove of its inborn desires for gain and to prevent action on those desires when it runs against the self's overall interests to do so, Xunzi gets as close as many thinkers in the western tradition to Plato (or, for that matter, Kant). It is not clear how Xunzi conceives of the mind's power over desire, however. The original impetus for the sages to try to change human nature is rational self-interest, and he has a problem explaining how one can become a Confucian *junzi* whose motivations are of an altogether different kind (Nivison 1996). The solution to Xunzi's problem may lie in his chapter on ritual, where he further explains how acting according to the rules of ritual (*li*) can inculcate moral desires in human beings. His story seems to depend on positing in human nature some original feelings for family members such as parents (*Xunzi*, *Lilun pian*—"Discussion of Rites"). The power of the mind over desire, then, may rest in part on natural human feelings that are strengthened and trained according to the rules of morality. Here again, the temptation to see Xunzi as a Chinese version of Plato or Kant probably entails mapping philosophical divisions originating in the western tradition onto a thinker who did not make quite the same divisions.

See also Confucianism: Ethics; *Daxue*; *Junzi*; Mencius; Xunzi; Zhuangzi.

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Confucianism: Confucius (Kongzi, K'ung Tzu)

Roger T. Ames

Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) is arguably the most influential philosopher in human history—"is" rather than "was" because Confucius is still very much alive. He is recognized as China's first teacher both chronologically and in importance, and his ideas have been the rich soil in which the Chinese cultural tradition has grown and flourished. In fact, whatever wemight mean by "Chineseness" today, some 2,500 years after his death, is inseparable from the example of personal character that Confucius provided for posterity. And his influence did not end with China. All the Sinitic cultures—especially (outside China) Korea, Japan, and Vietnam—have evolved around ways of living and thinking derived from the wisdom of the sage.

The Historical Context

Confucius was born in the state of Lu in one of the most formative periods of Chinese culture. Two centuries before his birth, scores of small city-states owing allegiance to the house of Zhou filled the Yellow River basin. This was the Zhou dynasty (c. 1100–256 B.C.E.), out of which the empire of China was to emerge. By the time of Confucius's birth in the middle of the sixth century B.C.E., only fourteen independent states remained, with seven of the strongest elbowing each other militarily for hegemony over the central plains. It was a period of escalating internal violence, driven by the knowledge that no state was exempt, and that all comers were competing in a zero-sum game—to fail to win was to perish. The accelerating ferocity of battle was like the increasing frequency and severity of labor pains, anticipating the eventual birth of the Chinese empire.

Not only was the landscape diverse politically. Intellectually, Confucius set a pattern for the "hundred schools" that emerged during these centuries in their competition for doctrinal supremacy. Confucius

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began the practice of independent philosophers' traveling from state to state in an effort to persuade political leaders that their particular teachings were a practicable formula for social and political success. In the decades that followed the death of Confucius, intellectuals of every stripe—Confucians, legalists, Mohists, *yinyang* theorists, militarists—would take to the road, attracted by court academies which sprang up to be their hosts. Within these seats of learning, the viability of their various strategies for political and social unity would be hotly debated.

Confucius as Teacher

A couple of centuries before Plato was to found his Academy to train statesmen for the political life of Athens, Confucius had established a school with the explicit purpose of educating the next generation for political leadership. As his curriculum, Confucius is credited with having over his lifetime edited what were to become the Chinese classics, a collection of poetry, music, historical documents, and annals that chronicled events at the Lu court, along with an extensive commentary on the *Book of Changes*. These classics provided a shared cultural vocabulary for his students, and they were to become the standard curriculum for Chinese literati in subsequent centuries. Although Confucius was deferred to as a man of wisdom and culture by those around him, he described himself modestly as an avid student, and as a person who loved learning more than most.

As a teacher, Confucius expected this same degree of commitment to learning from his students. On the one hand, he was tolerant and inclusive. He made no distinction among economic classes in selecting his students, and he would take whatever they could afford as payment for his services. His favorite student, Yan Hui (Yanzi), was desperately poor, a fact that simply added to Confucius's admiration for him. On the other hand, Confucius set high standards, and if students did not approach their lessons with seriousness and enthusiasm, Confucius would not suffer them.

One stereotype of Chinese society and of Confucius in particular that is exploded by a careful reading of the *Analects* is the supposed reverence for age. Confucius did not promote an uncritical respect for age; instead, he respected accomplishment. In reflecting on the youth of his day, he said, "Young people should be regarded with awe—how do we know that those of today are better than those yet to come?" And on confronting an old acquaintance who had lived a worthless life, Confucius rapped him with his cane, saying, "In your youth, you were neither modest nor deferential. As an adult you had nothing to pass on to others; and now being old you will not die. What a scoundrel!"

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Over his lifetime, Confucius attracted a large group of young and able students, and provided them not only with book learning but with a curriculum that encouraged personal articulation and refinement on several fronts. His “six arts” included propriety and ceremony, music making, archery, charioteering, writing, and mathematics and, in sum, were directed at developing the moral character of his charges rather than any set of practical skills. In the Chinese tradition broadly, proficiency in the “arts” has been seen as the medium through which one reveals quality of one’s person.

Although Confucius enjoyed great popularity as a teacher and many of his students found their way into political office, his enduring frustration was that personally he achieved only marginal influence in the practical politics of the day. He was a *philosophe* rather than a theoretical philosopher; he wanted desperately to hold sway over intellectual and social trends, and to improve the quality of life that was dependent on them. Although there were occasions on which important political figures sought his advice and services, over his years in the state of Lu, he held only minor offices at court. When finally Confucius was appointed as police commissioner of Lu late in his career, his advice was not heeded, and he was not treated by the Lu court with appropriate courtesy. During his lifetime, Confucius had made several trips to neighboring states, and after being mistreated in the performance of court sacrifices at home, he determined to take his message on the road and try to influence the world outside. These were troubled times, and there was great adventure and much danger in offering counsel to the competing political centers of his day. In his early fifties, he traveled abroad as an itinerant counselor, and several times came under the threat of death. Having served briefly in Wei, he moved on to the states of Song and Cai and took up office in the small state of Chen, only later to return to service in the state of Wei. After his return to Wei, he was summoned back to Lu, where he lived out his last few years as a counselor of the lower rank and continued his compilation of the classics.

Confucius as God

The early philosophical literature has a catalog of mostly apocryphal stories that purport to tell the events in the life of a remarkable man. Early on, and certainly by the time of his death, Confucius had risen in reputation to become a model of erudition, attracting attention from all segments of society. Many of the stories that surround his life are intent on demonstrating how special a person Confucius was, and how different he was from the common run. Much of this material is an

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attempt to rationalize the few details that were known of his life. For example, there are several stories describing the peculiar concave shape of his head, an attempt to explain his given name, *qiu*, meaning "mound" or "hill." Elaborate stories emerge out of offhand allusions in the historical records.

Another feature of this literature is Confucius's encounters with important men of his time. The assumption was that any sage worth his salt would certainly have attracted the attention of other sages. For example, in several historical texts and some of the Daoist literature, Confucius visits Laozi, sometimes receiving instruction from him, but more often being discomfited.

As time passes and Confucius's stock rises, the historical records "recall" details about his official career that had supposedly been lost. Over time, his later disciples alter the wording of his biographical record in his favor, effectively promoting him from a minor official to several of the highest positions in the land. He achieves the exalted rank first of acting prime minister of the state of Lu, and then prime minister. The later the record, the higher the position. What drives this exaggeration of Confucius's achievements is the conviction of his later admirers that a person of his extraordinary talent could not possibly have lived in his community and been overlooked by the rulers of his day.

But the story does not end here. As the record moves into the Han dynasty, Confucius is celebrated as the "uncrowned king" of the state of Lu, and by the fourth century C.E., any prefecture wanting to define itself as a political entity is required by imperial decree to erect a temple to Confucius. Confucius is not being treated *like* a god; rather, gods in China are dead people. They are local cultural heroes who are remembered by history as having contributed meaning and value to the tradition. And of these revered ancestors, the god called Confucius has been remembered best.

Confucius: His Influence

Confucius was certainly a flesh-and-blood historical figure, as real as George Washington was or as Jesus is believed to have been. But the received Confucius was and still is a "living corporate person" in the sense that generation after generation of descendants have written commentary on his legacy in an effort to make his teachings appropriate for their own times and places. "Confucianism" is a lineage of scholars who have continued to elaborate on the canonical texts passed on after the life of Confucius came to an end, extending the way of living that Confucius had begun. It is wave after wave of teachers

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who hold Confucius up as an exemplar of what it means to become truly human.

Although the exaltation of Confucius began early in the tradition with the continuation of his work by his many disciples, it was not until Confucianism was established as the state ideology during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) that his school of thought became an unchallenged orthodoxy. By developing his insights into the most basic and enduring aspects of the human experience—family, friendship, education, community, and so on—Confucius had guaranteed their continuing relevance.

One characteristic of Confucianism that began with Confucius himself, and made it so resilient in the Chinese tradition, is its porousness and adaptability. Confucius said of himself that he only transmitted traditional culture, he did not create it—his contribution was simply to take ownership of the tradition and adapt the wisdom of the past to his own present historical moment. Confucius harks back to the duke of Zhou, an idealized ruler who helped to establish the high culture of the Zhou dynasty in its first century, and on a bad day when things are not going well for Confucius, he laments, “It is a long time since I have dreamt of the duke of Zhou.”

Just as Confucius reinvented the culture of the Zhou and earlier dynasties for his own era, Confucianism of the Han dynasty draws into itself many of the ideas owned by competing schools in the earlier centuries, and in so doing, fortifies itself against their challenge. This pattern—absorbing competing ideas and adapting them to the specific conditions of the time—sustained Confucianism across the centuries as the official doctrine of the Chinese empire until the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. In fact, an argument can be made that just as the composite of Buddhism and Confucianism produced neo-Confucianism, the combination of Marxism and Confucianism in the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first, created a kind of neo-neo-Confucianism.

As recently as the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), Jiang Qing, the wife of Mao Zedong, and her associates mounted an anti-Confucius campaign that swept the country. Although the struggle was ostensibly between “legalists” backed by the Gang of Four and the reactionary “Confucians,” the real target was Premier Zhou Enlai—a modern reincarnation of Confucius’s cultural hero, the duke of Zhou. The irony of the anti-Confucius campaign was that during this period one could not buy a copy of the *Analects* for love or money—the entire country had been put to work reading the teachings of Confucius in order to criticize them.

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The *Analects*: Sagely Leftovers

Many sources for the teachings of Confucius have been passed down to us. For the actual teachings of Confucius, the most authoritative among them is the *Analects*. The "analects" is a good translation of *Lun-yu*—literally, "discourses"—because it comes from the Greek *analekta*, which has the root meaning "leftovers after a feast." Probably, the first fifteen books of these literary "leftovers" were assembled and edited by a congress of Confucius's disciples shortly after his death. The disciples seem to have concluded that a very special person had walked among them, and that his way—what he said and did—should be preserved for future generations. Much of this portion of the text is devoted to remembering Confucius; it is a personal narrative of what he had to say, to whom he said it, and how he said it. The middle three chapters are like snapshots of his habits: Confucius never sat down without first straightening his mat; he never slept in the position of a corpse; he never sang on a day that he attended a funeral; he drank freely but never to the point of confusion.

The last five books of the *Analects* appear to have been compiled sometime later, after the most prominent disciples of Confucius had launched their own teaching careers and had undertaken to elaborate on the philosophy of their late master. Confucius is less prominent in these chapters, though he is referred to in more honorific terms, while the now mature disciples are themselves often quoted.

There were many versions of the *Analects*, with three important editions surviving into the Han dynasty: the Lu version from the state of Lu, the Qi version from the state of Qi, and the "ancient" version reportedly recovered from within the walls of Confucius's old home. While the presently extant text is eclectic, having had access to all three versions, its editor had to make choices among them.

There is exciting news on this front. In 1971 a version of the *Analects* was recovered from a tomb dating from 55 B.C.E. in an archaeological dig just outside Peking (Beijing). This *Analects* is a thousand years older than our received text, and it is probably the Lu edition. It is substantially the same as the text in circulation today, containing twenty books and having significant variations in the readings of extant passages. Although badly damaged by fire and only fragmentary, this find holds significant potential for revising our understanding of one of the most canonical texts in human history.

In addition to the *Analects*, the other two most important resources for the life and teachings of Confucius are the Zuo commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and the *Mencius*. The Zuo commentary is a narrative history that purports to interpret the chronicle of the court history of the state of Lu up to the death of Confucius. *Mencius* is a text

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named after a disciple who elaborated the doctrines of Confucius some 150 years after his death; it became one of the Four Books in the Song dynasty—from then on, the core of the Confucian classics.

One thing is clear about the *Analects* and these supplementary texts: they do not purport to lay out a formula that everyone should live by. Rather, they provide an account of one man: how he cultivated his humanity, and how he lived a satisfying life, much to the admiration of those around him.

The Teachings of Confucius

The *dao*—the "way" or Way—of Confucius is nothing more or less than the way in which he as a particular person chose to live his life. The power and lasting value of his ideas lie in the fact that they are intuitively persuasive and readily adaptable. Confucius begins with the insight that the life of every human being is played out in the context of a particular family, for better or for worse. For Confucius and generations of Chinese to come, it is one's family and the complex of relationships that constitute it, rather than the solitary individual, that is the basic unit of humanity. In fact, for Confucius, there is no individual —no "self" or "soul"—that remains once layer after layer of social relations are peeled away. One is one's roles and relationships. The goal of living, then, is to achieve harmony and enjoyment for oneself and others through acting appropriately in those roles and relationships that constitute one.

Given that we all live within the web of family relationships, it is entirely natural that we should project this institution out onto the community, the polity, and the cosmos as an organizing metaphor. The Confucian community is an extension of aunts and uncles, sisters and cousins; the teacher is "teacher-father," and one's senior classmates are "elder-brother students"; "the ruler is father and mother to the people" and is the son of "heaven." "Heaven" itself is a faceless amalgam of ancestors rather than some transcendent creator deity. As Confucius says, "The exemplary person works hard at the root, for where the root has taken firm hold, the way will grow." What then is the root? He continues: "Treating your family members properly—this is the root of becoming a person."

For Confucius, the way to live is not dictated by some power beyond us; it is something we must all participate in constructing. On one occasion, Confucius said, "It is not the way that broadens people, but people who broaden the way." The way is our passage through life, the road we take. Our forebears mapped out their way and built their roads, and in so doing provided a bearing for succeeding generations.

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They have given us the culture and institutions that structure our lives and give them value and meaning. But each new generation must be road builders too, continuing the efforts that have gone before.

Confucius saw living as an art rather than a science. There are no blueprints, no formulas, no replications. He once said, “The exemplary person seeks harmony, not sameness.” In a family, each member has his or her unique role. Harmony is simply getting the most out of these differences. Similarly, Confucius saw harmony in community emerging out of the uninhibited contributions of its diverse people. Communal enjoyment is like Chinese cooking—getting the most out of your ingredients.

Confucius was extraordinarily fond of good music, because making music conduces to harmony, bringing different voices into productive relationships. Music is tolerant in allowing each voice and instrument to have its own place, its own integrity, while at the same time requiring that each ingredient find a complementary role in which it can add the most to the ensemble. And music is always unique in that each performance has a life of its own.

What Confucius calls “authoritative conduct” or “benevolence” (*ren*)—more literally, “becoming a person”—is the recognition that personal character is a consequence of cultivating one’s relationships with others. For Confucius, nothing defines humanity more than the practical consideration of one human being for another. Importantly, benevolence does not precede practical employment—it is not a principle or standard that has some existence beyond the day-to-day lives of the people who realize it in their relationships. Rather, benevolence is fostered in the deepening of relationships that occurs as one takes on the responsibility and obligations of communal living and comes fully to life. Benevolence is human flourishing. It is the achievement of the quality of relationships which, like the lines in calligraphy or landscape painting, collaborate to maximum aesthetic effect.

Wisdom for Confucius is relevant knowledge—not knowing “what” in some abstract or theoretical sense, but knowing “how” to map one’s way through life and get the most happiness out of it. And happiness for oneself and for others is isomorphic, or mutual. In discussing knowledge, Confucius says that being fond of something is better than just knowing it, and finding enjoyment in it is better than just being fond of it. “Authoritative conduct” (*ren*) Confucius associates with mountains—spiritual and enduring, a constant geographical marker from which we can all take our bearings. Wisdom is like water—pure, flowing, nurturing. And the gentleman is both benevolent and wise, both mountain and water.

A good way to think about “the way” is as a passage. On one

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occasion, Confucius was standing on the bank of a river and, waxing philosophical, said, “So it passes, never ceasing day or night.” Life is at its very best a pleasant journey, where the inherited body of cultural institutions and the pattern of roles and relationships that locate us within community—what Confucius calls “propriety” (*li*)—is a code of formal behaviors for stabilizing and disciplining our ever-changing circumstances. “Propriety” covers everything from table manners to the three years of mourning a dead parent, from the institution of parenthood to the appropriate posture for expressing commiseration. It is a social syntax that brings the particular members of community into meaningful relationships. Propriety is a discourse, which, like language, enables people to communicate and to locate themselves appropriately relative to one another.

What distinguishes “propriety” from rules and regulations is that these cultural norms must be personalized and are open to refinement. Only I can be father to *my* sons; only I can be *this* son to *my* mother; only I can sacrifice to *my* ancestors. And if I act properly, performing my roles and cultivating my relationships so that they are rich and fruitful, other people in community will see me as a model of appropriate conduct and will defer to me. It is precisely this power of example that Confucius called “virtue” (*de*). Virtue is the propensity to behave a certain way when provided with an inspiring model.

The other side of what Confucius calls “propriety” is the cultivation of a sense of shame. Shame is community based. It is an awareness of and a concern for how others perceive one’s conduct. Persons with a sense of shame genuinely care about what other people think of them. Self-sufficient individuals, on the other hand, need not be concerned about the judgments of others—and such individuals can thus be capable of acting shamelessly, using any means at all to take what they want when they want it.

The Disciples

Confucius was tolerant of difference. In fact, on six separate occasions in the *Analects*, he is asked what he means by “authoritative conduct” (*ren*), an idea that is at the heart of his teachings. And six times Confucius gives different answers. For Confucius, instructing disciples in “authoritative conduct” requires that the message be tailored to the conditions of the person asking the question. We have seen that, for Confucius, persons are no more than the sum of their specific familial and communal roles and relationships, and that “authoritative conduct” emerges out of the quality that they are able to achieve in cultivating them. It stands to reason, then, that to know Confucius, we do best to

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Tang Yongtong (20th century.) Classmate of Liang Shuming.

Tang Zhongyou (1136–1188.) Sought to integrate the teachings of Wang Anshi and Su Shi.

tango-kazoku Word families.

Tangwu Founder of the ancient Shang dynasty.

tanming Single Chinese character or graph.

Tantai Mieming (Ziyu.) Disciple of Confucius and protégé of Zengzi who emphasized protocol.

Tanxian Chan master.

tanzhu In aid of conversation.

tao See *dao*.

Tao-an (Tao An, 312–388.) Monk who advocated a purer version of *abhidharma*.

Tao-fu See Daofu.

Tao Hongjing (456–536.) Codified the scriptures of Highest Purity Daoism in *Zhengao* (*Declarations of the Perfected*).

Tao Qian (372–427.) Poet, author of *Biography of Teacher Five Willows*.

Tao Xisheng (1893–1988.) Associated with the magazine *New Life* (*Xin sheng ming*).

Taoyu See Daoyu.

tathagata One who knows the truth.

tathagatagarbha (Sanskrit; in Chinese, *ju-lai tsang*.) Embryo or seed of the Buddha; Buddha-nature.

tathata (Sanskrit.) Thusness, suchness, so-ness; translated into Chinese as *ru*, ‘‘naturalness.’’

Tendai Sect founded in Japan by Saicho.

terakoya (Japanese.) Temple school.

thien ly (Vietnamese; in Chinese, *tianli*.) Heavenly principle.

ti (Also *t'i*.) 1. Body, embodiment, substance, form. 2. Metaphysical reality. 3. Part. 4. Obedience; obedience to elder brothers.

Tian Pian Precursor of Laozi and Zhuangzi who studied Huang-Lao doctrines and *daode*.

tian (Also *t'ien*.) 1. Heaven; nature. 2. In Confucius, revered but faceless amalgam of ancestors.

tiandao (Also *tian dao, t'ien tao*.) Heavenly *dao*; the way of heaven.

tiandi Cosmos.

tiandi zhixin Mind of heaven and earth.

tiandi zhixing Nature of heaven and earth.

Tianguanshu ‘‘Treatise on the Celestial Offices’’ in the *Records of the Historian* (*Shiji*) of Sima Qian (Han era).

Tianguan wenda *Recorded Questions and Answers from the Tianguan Academy*, volume of conversations of Zhan Ruoshui.

tianli (Also *t'ien-li*.) Principle of heaven, reason of heaven.

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familiarize ourselves with his community of disciples. The teacher can best be known by his students. Some of these disciples come to life in a careful reading of the *Analects*.

Confucius was reluctant to use the term “authoritative conduct” (*ren*) to describe anyone, but he did use it of his favorite disciple, Yan Hui (or Yanzi), also called Yan Yuan, who lived on a bowl of rice and a ladle of water a day. Yan Hui’s eagerness to learn and his sincerity endeared him to the master. But there was more, much more. Yan Hui was of incomparable character, and he was so intelligent that Confucius said of him, “When he is told one thing he understands ten.” Although Yan Hui was some thirty years younger than Confucius, it was only this one, among his many disciples, that Confucius saw as his equal. It is no surprise, then, that Confucius was devastated when Yan Hui died at age thirty-one.

Min Sun, known as Ziqian, is praised as an exemplary son and was admired by Confucius for the economy and directness of his comments, and for his uncompromising scruples in refusing to serve persons of questionable morals.

Ran Yong, called Zhonggong, like Yan Hui, was three decades younger than Confucius. Although Zhonggong was of humble origins, Confucius thought so highly of him and his refinement that he said, “Zhonggong could be king”—high praise indeed.

Zhong Yu, also known as Zilu, was another of Confucius’s best-known and favorite disciples. He was a person of courage and action who was sometimes upbraided by Confucius for being too bold and impetuous. When he asked Confucius if courage was indeed the highest virtue, Confucius tried to rein him in by replying that a person who has courage without a sense of appropriateness will be a troublemaker, and a lesser person will be a thief.

Confucius’s feelings for Zilu were mixed. On the one hand, he was constantly critical of Zilu’s rashness and immodesty, and impatient with his seeming indifference to book learning. On the other hand, Confucius appreciated Zilu’s unswerving loyalty and directness—Zilu never delayed in fulfilling his commitments.

Being nearer Confucius in age, and having a military temper, Zilu was not one to take criticism without giving it back. On several occasions, especially in the apocryphal literature, Zilu challenges Confucius’s judgment in associating with political figures of questionable character and immodest reputation—the wife of Duke Ling of Wei, for example. Confucius is left defending himself—honestly, I didn’t do anything! At the end of the day, enormous affection for the irrepressible Zilu comes through in the text.

Zai Yu, also called Ziwo, was devoted to Confucius, yet on

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numerous occasions Confucius criticized him roundly for a lack of character. In a metaphorical reference to attempting to educate Ziwo, Confucius said that you cannot carve rotten wood, nor can you whitewash a wall made from dry manure.

Duanmu Si, known as Zigong, excelled as a statesman and as a merchant and was perhaps second only to Yan Hui in Confucius's affections. Confucius was respectful of Zigong's abilities—in particular, his intellect—but was less impressed with Zigong's use of this intellect to amass personal wealth. Putting the many references to Zigong together, it is clear that Confucius was not entirely comfortable with his lack of commitment to the well-being of others, his choosing to increase his own riches rather than take on the responsibilities of government office. Zigong was aloof, and not a generous man. And in his readiness to pass judgment on others, he acted superior. Coming from a wealthy, educated home, Zigong was well-spoken; Confucius's most persistent criticism of him is that his deeds could not keep pace with his words. Even so, much of the flattering profile of Confucius collected in the *Analects* is cast in the words of the eloquent Zigong.

Bu Shang, known as Zixia, was a man of letters and is remembered by tradition as having had an important role in establishing the Confucian canon. He has a major place in the last five chapters, where he underscores the importance of learning. Confucius allows that he himself has gotten a great deal from his conversations with Zixia.

Although Zixia tries to compensate for his image as a pedant by insisting that virtuous conduct in one's personal relationships is what learning is all about, Confucius criticizes him at times for a being petty and narrow in his aspirations.

Ziyu, whose formal name was Tantai Mieming, was a protégé of the Ziyu described below, and as such invested a great deal of importance in protocol.

Zeng Can, known as Ziyu or Zengzi, is best remembered as a proponent of filial piety—devotion and service to one's parents. A natural extension of this affection for one's family is friendship, and Zengzi is portrayed as being able to distinguish between the sincerity of Yan Hui and the rashness of Zizhang.

If Zixia erred on the side of book learning, Yu Ruo—he too is known as Ziyu—went too far in the direction of the other Ziyu, emphasizing the formal side of the Confucian teachings, the rites and rituals, at the expense of warmth and good humor.

Nangong Kuo, called Zirong, was a person whom Confucius praised as a gentleman and a man of virtue. He held office only when the "way" prevailed in the land, and stayed out of range when it did not. It is not surprising that Confucius gave his niece to Zirong in

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marriage.

Gongxi Chi, also known as Zihua, has the image of a diplomat—decorous, and careful and concise in his speech.

These and many other disciples came from the central states of China, gravitating to the state of Lu to study with Confucius. In spite of the sometimes severe opinions which Confucius expressed freely about them—and he admonishes almost every one of them—they were devoted to the master and responded to him with reverence. There is no greater proof of this enduring respect for Confucius than the fact that they had a hand in recording Confucius's criticisms of themselves, and then went on to found branch schools based on these same criticisms to perpetuate his teachings.

See also Mencius.

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Confucianism: Constructs of Classical Thought

Pei-jung Fu

The character *ru* existed before Confucius's time. It consists of two parts: *ren* and *xu*, together implying "the weak people." This understanding gives rise to two kinds of explanations for the origin of the group *ru*. According to one view, *ru* can be traced to the Shang people, whose state had been replaced by the Zhou dynasty. The other view regards *ru* as a legacy of aristocratic families of early Zhou times, who were in decline. These theories have in common the point that the people of *ru* had an affluent cultural background, which would qualify them to serve as assistants in various rituals. Since the special robe of such assistants was called *ru*, it is probable that the group *ru* developed from some such profession. Confucius became a specialist in rituals after a long time of learning and practice. This fact suggests that Confucius himself once worked as an assistant at sacrificial and funeral rites in the early stage of *ru*. Disciples of Confucius seemed to acknowledge this, and Confucius admonished one of them by saying: "Be a *ru* after the style of the superior man (*junzi*), and not after that of the small-minded man" (*Lunyu*, or *Analects*, 6.13).

In any case, it is indisputable that academic Confucianism started as a school and a system of thought because of the acceptance of the teachings of Confucius. Classical Confucianism, which was founded by Confucius and formed into a school of thought, has its own texts, including the *Analects*, *Mencius*, *Xunzi*, *Yizhuan*, *Great Learning*, and *Doctrine of the Mean*. Let us survey the characteristics and the creed of classical Confucianism before considering the content of these texts.

The Characteristics and Creed of Classical Confucianism

Classical Confucianism has three characteristics. First, because they cherished the heritage of tradition, Confucians stressed the importance of learning and education. Their teaching was based on canonical texts.

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This educational tradition allowed Confucians to become the main, powerful preservers and transmitters of the cultural heritage. Second, to put their learning into practice, Confucians participated in politics. They expressed their commitment to promoting virtuous government, with special concern for the moral, social, and political welfare of the people. Third, for Confucians individual social success was based on the practice of moral virtues. They thought that people should not be motivated by success in political and social affairs to the point where their joy in—or the significance of—the practice of virtue was affected. This represents the Confucian attitude toward transcendence: the dignity of human nature would not be restrained by historical contexts, and human beings would be able to make a testament to the transcendent “mandate of heaven” (*tianming*).

In addition, Confucians affirmed three creeds. First, human nature has an inclination toward goodness. All individuals are endowed with a capacity to practice virtue such that they are able to advance their morality toward perfection, as exemplified in the lives of the ancient sages. Second, in real life this capacity manifests itself as a categorical claim. The claim imposes a sort of obligation, urging the person to exert efforts to do what is good. In other words, doing good for the sake of the good is the only right path in human life. The committed individual, if necessary, would devote his whole life to this. Third, if an individual sincerely does what is good, his deed will bring about a virtuous response from those in his circle, and enlighten them. For this reason, Confucianism teaches that the practice of virtue is the responsibility of the individual and emphasizes the significance of human relationships.

The *Analects*

The *Analects* (*Lunyu*) record the words and deeds of Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.). This is the most accessible and reliable source for his thought. Although it consists largely of terse dialogues and comments, we can discern an order. Confucius stressed the primacy of learning. The subjects include the Five Classics (*Book of Documents, Book of Odes, Book of Rituals, Book of Music,* and *Book of Changes*) and six arts of living—ritual, music, archery, driving a chariot, calligraphy, and calculation. Confucius’s learning was always accompanied by careful thought leading to new insights about the significance of tradition. His most important insight is, perhaps, his conception of *ren* (benevolence) as a basis of the *li* (ritual tradition or ritual propriety).

To understand the implications of *ren*, we must examine *li. Li* was cherished in the Three Dynasties of ancient China and mediated

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between state and society; its functions covered all the important realms of human concern, such as family, social interaction, religion, politics, and morality. With the social transformations of the Spring and Autumn period, a situation described as a "collapse of rituals and music" became salient. For Confucius, this situation could not be rectified merely by recovering the traditional *li*, which by then had degenerated into pure formality. Therefore, he proposed the concept of *ren*, which designates, so to speak, the capacity for benevolence inherent in every human being. If *ren* is practiced by the people, their society will attain harmony. This view seems implicit in his remark: "If a man has no benevolence, what has he to do with the rites or propriety? If a man has no benevolence, what has he to do with music?" (*Analects*, 3.3). Confucius's task may be summed up in one sentence: "In transmitting the *li* of the cultural tradition, he opened the path to *ren*."

The character *ren* consists of *ren* (a person) and *er* (two). This combination depicts the human situation. Ideally, if a person reflects, seriously and sincerely, on the possibility of his existence, he will appreciate that it is possible because of interdependent relationships with and affection for others—which constitute his humanity. Confucius expected that all the human virtues, such as filial piety, fraternal love, loyalty, and truthfulness, would be attained as a consequence of performance based on "appropriate relationships between persons." Given this ideal of human relationships, we may say that human nature has a tendency toward goodness and that goodness can be realized in appropriate relationships among individuals.

This was the foundation for the social concern of Confucianism. The Confucian concept of *ren* or benevolence indicates not only the nature of human beings but also the proper way of life. When Confucius was asked about benevolence, he answered in different ways according to the capacity, level of moral attainment, and personality of each student. This practice suggests that Confucius was looking for an answer to the human predicament in the concrete setting of ordinary human life. The realization of Confucian benevolence would imply the perfect realization of human nature; hence, Confucius did not regard himself or any of his contemporaries as embodying benevolence. However, he did not hesitate to declare that a man of *ren*, in appropriate circumstances, is justified in sacrificing his life for its sake (*Analects*, 15.9). In this sense we may see the practice of *ren* as, ideally, leading to the perfection of human nature.

With regard to the proper way of life, Confucius never overlooked the value of *li*. He said that "to master oneself in line with *li* is *ren*" (*Analects*, 12.1). This passage makes *ren* and *li* interdependent; that is, human nature is perfected only through a union of *ren* and *li*. *Ren*

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constitutes the inner aspect and *li* the outer aspect of ideal humanity. This balanced perspective suggests an equal emphasis on cultural education and the cultivation of personal moral character. Odes and music are also characteristic of the Confucian style of life.

As regards Confucius's religious concerns, three aspects are worth noting. First, Confucius respected the ancestor worship and sacrificial rites that were prevalent in his time. When he attended such rituals, he was reverential toward the deities. Second, Confucius did not deny the existence of spirits and ghosts, yet he was critical of an atmosphere that fostered superstition. In particular, he was convinced that performing sacrifices to spirits and ghosts was no excuse for neglecting one's ethical responsibilities. Third, Confucius believed that *tian* (heaven) should be construed as the supreme being. He felt that heaven had given him a distinct mission, was mindful of his conduct, accepted his sacrifices, and could even determine his life and death. Yet he realized that the will of heaven was not always expressed in the will of human beings and felt that human destiny was both mysterious and inconceivable. He describes himself as a man who—independently of the will of heaven—"forgets his food while ardently pursuing knowledge, forgets his sorrows while experiencing joy in its attainment, and does not notice the commencement of old age" (*Analects*, 7.19). Confucius does have a spiritual dimension, but his ethical teachings on the significance of cultural tradition and personal moral cultivation do not depend on the will of heaven or other religious beliefs.

Mencius

Mencius (c. 371–289 B.C.E.) highly esteemed Confucius, whom he called the "sage of timeliness." He thought, indeed, that since the beginning of history there had been no greater person than Confucius. The works of Mencius contain longer and more complete discourses than the *Analects*, systematically expounding and developing Confucius's idea of *ren*.

Mencius extends the scope of *ren* (benevolence) and its intrinsic connection with other virtues such as *yi* (righteousness), *li* (ritual propriety), and *zhi* (wisdom). He focuses on the fundamental role of *xin* (heart and mind) in Confucian ethics. For Mencius, *xin* contains "four germs": (1) compassion, (2) shame and dislike, (3) modesty and compliance, and (4) distinction of right from wrong. These four germs can be developed into the virtues of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*, which define Mencius's conception of goodness (*shan*). Mencius's interpretation of human nature is based on his conception of the human mind, though

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without disregarding the significance of the physical. Mencius distinguishes two aspects of human nature: the "great body" (mind and heart) and the "small body" (the physical body). If a person conducts himself according to the great body and practices goodness, he will become a *junzi* (a gentleman, paragon, or exemplar). But a person who allows himself to be governed by the desires of the "small body" will become a "petty man" (*xiaoren*). Since all individuals have mind and heart, all are capable of becoming *junzi*. In general, Mencius's thesis that human nature is good does not mean that actualized goodness is innate. Rather, human nature has an inherent potential for goodness or excellence (*shan*). Notably, Mencius does not deny the influence of the external social environment. In fact, he advocates that a state should properly establish the political institutions and economic plans which are indispensable to the realization of the Confucian ethical ideal.

For Mencius the people are the most important element in the state; next in importance are the altars of land and grain; last in importance is the sovereign (*Mencius*, 7B.14). Although we cannot plausibly claim that Mencius advocated democracy, he does express his faith that "people are the foundation of a country." This is a matter not of individuals' political rights but rather of individual moral dignity: all humans are equal in their potential to become good. Mencius regarded the relationship between a lord and his subjects as reciprocal responsibility. This meant that subjects should not be required to submit absolutely to their lord. According to Mencius, an individual, in his routine of life and work, should make reasonable, principled decisions. In exigent circumstance, the individual is expected to grasp the situation and exercise discretion. For Mencius, since death is inevitable, if a person gives up his life for the sake of justice, or follows the right way of life, he may be said to have a "proper destiny" endowed by heaven.

Mencius's belief in heaven involves little of religious practice; it has to do with a mission in human life, conferred because the human heart-mind (*xin*) is endowed with the "four germs" that enable humans to do what is good. The proper way to observe the decree of heaven is "to strengthen one's righteousness and to nourish one's vital breath." Once a person attains the state of the "floodlike *qi*" (the vital breath of the flowing state), courage will spring forth in his being so that he can confront even a perverted crowd without fear. Mencius remarked: "All things are already complete within me. There is no greater delight than to be conscious of sincerity on self-examination. If one acts with a vigorous effort at promoting reciprocity (*shu*), no way can be closer than this to the attainment of benevolence" (7A.4). Understanding this aspect of Mencius's thought requires profound personal experience, and for that reason some scholars consider Mencius, in a sense, a

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mystic.

Xunzi

Xunzi (c. 313–238 B.C.E.) professed to be an advocate of Confucianism. However, his view of human nature differs radically from that of Mencius. According to Mencius, human nature is good; Xunzi argued against Mencius and maintained that human nature is evil. Actually, there is no real issue between them on this subject, because their discussions were based on different definitions of human nature (*xing*). For Xunzi, human nature consists of emotions and desire, while for Mencius it is essentially based on his conception of *xin* (mind and heart). Emotion and desire are inborn, and, without proper control, they will inevitably lead human relationships into struggles and violence. Is not this situation "evil"? On the other hand, if human beings are disciplined and educated, they will do what is good. For Xunzi, this reasoning would indicate that goodness cannot be inborn. If we ask why human beings are able to do what is good, Xunzi would reply that the distinction between human beings and other creatures is that human beings are able to distinguish good from evil and do good deeds. This ability renders human morality possible and practicable. His perspective is compatible with the view that human nature has an inclination toward goodness, so that an individual is capable of attaining sagehood.

Xunzi's understanding of *xin* (mind and heart) is not confined to its moral aspect. More fundamentally, the mind is the ruler of the body, including the senses. It exercises its volition with respect to feeling and desires. Further, the mind performs acts of thought and judgment. If the mind attains the states of "emptiness," "stillness," and "unity," it can acquire a quasi-mystical, comprehensive insight into all things (*da qingming*).

Xunzi's *dao*, a moral ideal, is embodied in *li* (ritual, norms, rules of proper conduct). The function of *li* is coextensive with *ren* (benevolence) and *yi* (righteousness). In Xunzi's philosophy, *li* may be construed as the ultimate standard for doing what is good. It was established by the "sage kings," who had examined the rules and regulations of both the human and the natural world. Without *li*, political operations, social organizations, and families cannot be peacefully sustained. However, although *li* clearly comprises indispensable institutions and ceremonies, if they are founded on human nature, what is the basis of its presumed universality? It is difficult to find a clear answer in Xunzi to this question.

The real issue between Mencius and Xunzi lies in their concepts of

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heaven (*tian*). Xunzi's concept implies a "naturalized" heaven, functioning according to unchangeable rules. This heaven has nothing to do with order and disorder in the human world, or with individual virtue and vice. Xunzi would say that humans, not heaven, should be held responsible for practical social problems. For Xunzi, learning, correct perceptions of society and the world, observance of rituals and social norms, and individual efforts to do what is good are the right path to human well-being.

Yizhuan

Yizhuan (*Ten Wings*) is said to have been compiled between the end of the Warring States period and the early Western Han. If so, it overlaps Xunzi's works. It was a commentary on the *Yijing* (*Book of Changes*), one of the earliest Chinese classics. However, its significance comes largely from its position in Confucian tradition. The *Analects* report that Confucius did not expound his views on human nature and the way of heaven. To fill this gap, *Yizhuan* contains extensive discussions on the relationship between the way of heaven and human beings.

The way of heaven is manifest in the unending interaction between *qian* (representing heaven) and *kun* (representing earth), which have common elements. This interaction results in the transformation of all things according to an invariable standard that also influences all auspicious and inauspicious events in the human world. *Yizhuan* mainly elucidates this standard as expressed in the way of heaven and as determining the way of humanity. We find, for instance, the following: "It is *yin* and *yang* that exhibit the Way of Heaven. It is softness and hardness that exhibit the Way of Earth and *ren* and *yi* that exhibit the Way of human beings" (*Shuogua*). If an individual conducts himself in accordance with the principle of *ren* and *yi*, presumably he will encounter only what is auspicious and become a "gentleman" (*junzi*). The Confucian gentleman must learn from the ancient sages. He must aspire to a virtuous life and make persistent efforts to cultivate his moral capabilities and the pursuit of wisdom.

The *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*)

The *Book of the Mean* was originally a chapter of the *Book of Rites* (*Li ji* or *Liji*), the final compilation of which probably took place in the Western Han period. In this treatise, we find a well-organized description of the relationship between heaven and human beings. The opening chapter says: "What Heaven has conferred is called [human] nature; the accordance with this nature is called the way [of human

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beings]; and the cultivation of this way is called education."

The nature of human beings comes from the decree of heaven. All individuals are born with the same potential, but they are able to become "gentlemen" only if they make efforts to know and to practice what is good. Their potential is thus itself an immanent claim, a demand from within. All an individual has to do is to follow his immanent nature and practice what it requires. It is this practice that the *Book of the Mean* designates as the "principal way of humans." In this connection, the purpose of a Confucian education can also be established. There are two clues to a better understanding of this argument: (1) An individual must realize his *cheng* (sincerity, wholeness) so as to perceive his own inner inclination toward goodness. (2) Precisely speaking, "the principal way of humans" is "to choose the good and hold it fast."

The function of *cheng* is not confined to moral sincerity and loyalty; it also enlarges the dimension and scope of human life and breaks through the limitations of time and space. Therefore, a man of *cheng* is able to perceive and communicate with all other people, participates in the providence of heaven and earth, and even removes any barriers between the worlds of humans and spirits. *Cheng* is the right path for human beings to embrace the mandate of heaven. If *cheng* consists in the mind's awareness and openness, then "choosing the good and holding it fast" is the accomplishment of *cheng*. Since human nature has an inborn leaning toward goodness, while one is in the state of *cheng* it should be easy to judge what is good. Two things, then, are required of human beings: the wisdom to choose what is good and the courage to hold to it. The *Book of the Mean* lists "five ethical codes" as the content of goodness; it also designates "wisdom," "benevolence," and "courage" as the "three comprehensive virtues." This point of view forms the mainstream of Confucian thought.

The *Great Learning* (*Daxue*)

The *Daxue* (*Great Learning*), which was also a chapter of the *Book of Rites*, represents the program of Confucian education. It tersely presents the Confucian idea of education, which envisions a path to *chengde* (the perfection of virtue). According to the *Great Learning*, the purpose of a Confucian education is threefold: to illustrate virtue, to renew the people, and to rest in the highest goodness. This purpose is accomplished by eight steps that are more specific: (1) investigate things; (2) complete knowledge; (3) render thoughts sincere; (4) rectify hearts and minds; (5) cultivate persons; (6) regulate families; (7) govern a state rightly; and (8) attain wordly peace and order. The

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purpose of the program is to cultivate personal morality, which will then exert a good influence on others—ultimately, on all people.

The *Great Learning* elucidates the concept of *shu* ("reciprocal consideration with compassion"), which was originally advocated by Confucius and Mencius. The *Great Learning* elaborates this concept and formulates a new phrase: "the way of reciprocal understanding." The substance of this idea can be explained as follows. In human society, whenever a person acts in a specific situation, he has to take others into consideration by putting himself in their position. If he is able to do this, he will find that he should not do to others what he does not want others to do to him. Similarly, Confucius's golden rule is: "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire."

Ever since Confucius, classical Confucianism has proposed important concepts and ideas, including *ren* and *li*, human nature, and the way of heaven. Through centuries of transmission and evolution, it has developed into a complete, highly sophisticated system of philosophical thought. From the Han dynasty on, it has been a dominant influence on Chinese society, helping to shape the personality and attitudes of the Chinese people, and continuing to make Chinese culture what we see today.

See also Confucianism: Confucius; Confucianism: Tradition; Mencius; Xunzi.

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Confucianism: Dialogues

John BERTHRONG

A study of global intellectual history demonstrates that religion and philosophy were always more cross-cultural than has previously been recognized. There has been a constant interchange of ideas and techniques wherever people with different traditions have gathered for the arts of war and peace. The study of Chinese philosophy confirms this fact, through examination of conversations between Confucians, Mohists, Daoists, logicians, and legalists; the medieval incorporation of Buddhism; and finally western modes of thought after the nineteenth century.

However, the term "dialogue" designates something different from a persistent exchange of ideas between different philosophies and religions. Dialogue as a cross-cultural movement refers to a subset of social and cultural exchange marked by some specific characteristics. The most important aims of dialogue are willingness to treat the other tradition as a (1) worthy partner with (2) something positive to contribute to the discussion. For organized religions, a third goal is (3) to encourage social cooperation in charity and social justice. Although quite early on there were individuals such as the Mogul emperor Akbar (r. 1542–1605) and the Qing emperor Kangxi (r. 1662–1723) who were genuinely interested in such exchanges, there was nothing like the organized and global modern religious dialogue movement before the 1960s. It is too early to tell definitively, but many postmodern philosophers have also become committed to dialogue with other traditions, expanding the intellectual range of dialogue beyond theological circles in the late twentieth century.

Confucianism was born in the exchange between the philosophic and religious traditions of classical China and has continued this interaction ever since, expanding its response to include various new movements from outside China such as Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. For instance, Book 18 of the *Analects* contains an apocryphal story of Confucius's own encounter with the quasi-Daoist recluse of Chu, who admonished Confucius to give up his quest to

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restore the virtue that had once been Zhou China. Because Confucius refused to flee the duties of the world, later Confucians were forced to talk to other people about the world and everything that is in it. Confucius rejects reclusiveness but also states: “I have no preconceptions about the permissible and the impermissible” (*Analects*, 7.8). Of course, what Confucius meant is that deliberations about matters of right and wrong must be a result of social interaction and the study of the actions and words of the sage kings.

The more common human response to something new is the polemical attitude that the other person is wrong or needs correction in order to find the right opinion or ritual. More often than not, the standard Confucian view of non-Chinese thinkers was that they came to China in order to become civilized. It has always been hard for any culture to acknowledge the contribution of another; often the recognition is grudging and circumscribed by the argument that such truth was actually present in one’s own tradition.

The history of Confucian dialogue with other traditions can be divided into three major periods: (1) the classical period, (2) the reception of Buddhism, and (3) the arrival of west Asian religions and philosophies. While Confucians, because of their commitment to the world, have always entered into conversation with other traditions, they have done so with mixed emotions. For instance, Mencius stated that he did not like disputation about philosophic issues. The impression Mencius gives is that he is willing to engage in conversation with other thinkers only in order to vindicate his own Confucian position. Consequently, Mencius is the first great disputer among Confucians and identifies such other thinkers as Yang Chu and the Mohists as representatives of mistaken theories that must be refuted in order for the true teachings of Confucius to flourish.

Another classical Confucian response was Xunzi’s arguments against non-Confucian thinkers. He argued that someone like Zhuangzi might well understand the Way as a cosmological ultimate but did not understand the way of ritual action as appropriate to civilized human life. Nonetheless, it is clear from Xunzi’s writings that he was indebted to Daoist thinkers like Zhuangzi for the formulation of his own subtle theory of the mind-heart and to the neo-Mohists for the art of disputation. Nonetheless, Xunzi was a member of the famous Jixia academy and would have debated with thinkers representing the other philosophic options of his day.

The coming of Buddhism marked China’s first encounter with another great religious and philosophic tradition. As is well known, Confucians maintained a long and complicated interaction with Buddhist scholars. Sometimes the reaction was negative, as when Han Yu condemned Buddhist rituals in the Tang dynasty. On the other

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hand, the great Song Confucian Su Shi is famous for incorporating Buddhist ideas and images into his own poetry and thought. In fact, many critics of Song moral philosophy and neo-Confucianism in general charge that the Song philosophers borrowed, without adequate attribution, many Buddhist ideas about the cosmos, including the key notion of principle as well as the practice of meditation known as "quietsitting."

After Buddhism, the next important foreign religion to arrive was Islam. While the origins of Islam in China are shrouded in the mists of legend, it is clear that Muslims quickly made their way along the famous Silk Road of Central Asia into the vibrant, cosmopolitan world of Tang China. The first official contacts took place in 651, and there was even a great battle between a Tang army and an Arab army at the Talas River in 751. Even though the Muslims won the battle, this did not affect the Muslims' lively trade in China; in fact, Muslims even assisted the Tang rulers in defeating An Lu-shan's rebellion.

The second phase of Confucian-Islamic contact took place under the Mongol Yuan dynasty, when many Muslims were employed by the Mongols in their government. Here again the Chinese reaction was generally negative because the Chinese saw the Muslims as agents of an oppressive regime; but as before, with the founding of the Ming in 1366, there was no attempt to outlaw or penalize the Muslim community, and the Ming were tolerant of the Muslims as long as they remained obedient to Chinese law. The Muslims' response was to practice peaceful coexistence with the Chinese state. In fact, the Muslim community continued to grow with new immigration, intermarriage, and conversions of Chinese to Islam.

The Manchu Qing dynasty continued the historic approach to the Muslim community and attempted to promote good working relations with its Muslim subjects. It is also important to remember that the Qing court conquered large parts of Central Asia and hence greatly increased China's Muslim population. Relations were generally good until a series of Muslim insurrections in the nineteenth century.

What is fascinating is the fact that there were no apologetic Muslim writings in Chinese until the seventeenth century, when a series of Chinese Muslim scholars sought to explain their tradition to the larger Chinese world and to their fellow Muslims. For instance, Wang Daiyu (c. 1580–1650) argued that there was no need for any hostility between Islam and Confucianism. In fact, Wang tried to show that all the major Confucian virtues were also Islamic virtues. The main difference between Islam and Confucianism, according to Wang, was that Confucianism was not monotheistic. But even here Wang tried to show, as later Christian missionaries would do, that archaic Chinese notions of heaven were a common theistic ground between Islam and

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Confucianism. Slightly later, Liu Zhi (c. 1662–1736) added material from Buddhism and Daoism to Wang's attempt to show how Islam could be understood within a Confucian framework. However, this kind of interaction was one-way in that Confucian intellectuals were never very interested in learning about Islam.

The next foreign tradition to enter China was the Christian missionary effort from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth. In many respects this was more of a dialogue than the Islamic encounter, though never comparable to the entrance of Buddhism into China. In the early phase, except for a few Chinese intellectuals who actually converted to Christianity, most Chinese interest in western thought was focused on science and technology. This kind of scientific interest parallels the earlier Chinese study of Muslim astronomy. The Chinese astronomers were quick, in terms of both Muslim and western astronomy, to recognize excellence when they saw it and were more than willing to incorporate it into their official intellectual life. In the case of the west, selected Chinese intellectuals became interested in medicine, cartography, and other areas of western science where the Chinese perceived that western scholars had something to teach them.

What is intriguing about the early Jesuit missionaries is that they were able, like the Buddhists before them, to convert a few Chinese Confucians to their faith. One thing that the Jesuits did was base their essential arguments for Christianity on Confucian scholarly grounds. What the Jesuits did, paralleling Muslim arguments about religion as well, was to go back to the early Chinese classics and demonstrate to the Confucians that they actually had an articulated doctrine of God as *tian* (heaven) or *shangdi* (lord on high). The Jesuits' strategy was to show, from this fine monotheistic beginning, that the main line of the Confucian tradition lost its theistic roots. The Jesuits were careful and sincere in giving high praise to the ethical system of Confucianism.

The crux of the dialogue was whether or not a belief in God could be added to Confucian teachings. In the Ming and early Qing, many converts to Christianity agreed with the Jesuits that Christian doctrine did revive the lost theistic part of their Confucian Way that never should have been neglected. Sadly, this promising theological and philosophic dialogue came to grief over the famous "rites controversy." Some missionaries disagreed with the accommodationist stance of the Jesuits on the issue of whether or not the Confucian ancestral rites were a violation of the Christian injunction against idolatry. The Jesuits and the Chinese argued that the ancestor rites represented veneration, not worship. Unfortunately, the pope ruled against the Jesuits' interpretation of the rites, and this ban against their use for Christians ended what had been a compelling dialogue about religion and ultimate worldviews. The ban was not rescinded until 1939.

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The second phase of western engagement came with the great imperial expansion of the mid-nineteenth century. Unfortunately, positive dialogue was not high on anyone's list of cultural priorities during this period. Offended by the exclusive view of the Christian religion on the part of the Protestant missionaries and the overwhelming secular power of science and military technology, the Chinese elite was faced, for the first time in its history, with a classical role reversal in terms of who viewed whom as civilized. If there was to be any philosophic borrowing, the westerners believed it would be by the Chinese from the enlightened science, philosophy, and religion of the west.

The late nineteenth century and the early twentieth were a time of an enforced dialogue for Chinese intellectuals with the west. In a more compressed time than the reception of Buddhism, and motivated by a fear of total cultural domination, Chinese intellectuals (as well as the Japanese and Koreans) grappled with the rapid appropriation of western science, religion, technology, and philosophy. For instance, the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949 marked a selective appropriation and dialogue with western Marxism. What is evident in retrospect is that any such cross-cultural exchange creates something new, and Maoist thought is certainly distinctive compared with its European origins.

By the 1960s the mainline Christian churches, led by the Roman Catholic Church in the great council known as Vatican II, signaled new willingness to engage in what they called dialogue. Rapidly the Buddhist communities of the diaspora and South, Southeast, and East Asia began the dialogue between the two traditions. More recently, Confucians from their own diaspora and from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and even China have become interested in dialogue with Christian intellectuals.

In many ways the renewed dialogue picks up where the great debate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries left off. However, the dialogue has been expanded beyond just Catholic and Protestant religious concerns to include wider cross-cultural philosophic exchange and discussion of pressing issues that affect humanity as a whole, such as the ecological crisis and the nature of human rights. It is evident from the renewed dialogue that Chinese philosophers now have a better general understanding of western thought than do any but a small group of western specialists. One of the tasks of the new dialogue is to educate western intellectuals about the richness of Chinese traditional thought and to demonstrate that East Asian intellectuals have been renewing and modernizing their traditions rapidly over the past century.

In the theological dialogue, two questions tend to become points of contact. The first has to do with the issue of how to understand

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transcendence and immanence in the Confucian tradition. This entire conversation is preceded by an examination of the religious dimensions of the Confucian tradition. On the whole, Confucians find that their way of defending a notion of mutual implication between the transcendent and immanent nature of divine reality wins a sympathetic hearing from modern Christian theologians. The second question raised by the Confucians is what has come to be called multiple religious participation or dual religious citizenship.

Confucian scholars are exploring the option of incorporating a concept of God or ultimate transcendence into their renewed Confucian worldview. Like the first round of Confucian-Christians, they argue that such an understanding of the "transcendent referent" in no way violates essential Confucian patterns of thought and in fact enriches the corporate notion of the Confucian Way. On the western side, such an idea of religious harmony and multiple religious participation, often said to be an East Asian social norm, is both disturbing and intriguing to many western religious intellectuals who recognize that they live in a culturally pluralistic world. One can only expect the dialogue to become more intense, intricate, and philosophically rewarding as it continues into the twenty-first century.

See also Buddhism in China; Buddhism: Zen (Chan); Confucianism: Tradition; Daoism: Religious; Religions.

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Confucianism: Ethics

A. S. CUA

The principal aim of this essay is to present Confucian ethics as an ethics of virtue. The required task involves complex issues on the explication of its conceptual framework. One major obstacle is a lack of definitions of important terms such as *ren*, *li*, and *yi*. William Theodore de Bary remarks that "for the Chinese the idea is not so much to analyze and define concepts precisely as to expand them, to make them suggestive to the widest possible range of meaning" (1970, v). Moreover, many key terms, to borrow an expression from Philip Wheelwright (1968), are plurisignations, suggesting and stimulating different thoughts and interpretations.

This pervasive feature of Confucian discourses, from the point of view of contemporary moral philosophy, may appear to be an anomaly, given the classical Confucian emphasis on the right use of terms (*zheng-ming*). A serious student of the works of Xunzi, the classical Confucian generally considered the most rationalistic and systematic philosopher, will be frustrated in attempting to find definitions, in the sense of necessary and sufficient conditions, for the application of basic Confucian terms. This is all the more surprising in view of Xunzi's recurrent use of certain definitional locutions or quasi-definitional formulas for explaining his theses on human nature and the mind (Cua 1985a, ch. 3). Xunzi, like most major Confucians, has a pragmatic attitude toward the use of language. That is, the uses of terms that require explanation are those that are liable to misunderstanding in the context of a particular discourse. The Confucian explanation of the use of ethical terms is context-dependent, addressed to a particular rather than universal audience (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 31).

Two different assumptions underlying this attitude toward language may account for the lack of interest among Chinese in context-independent explanation of the use of ethical terms. First, there is an assumption of the primacy of practice implicit in the Confucian doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action (Cua 1982). Definition, in the sense of an explanation of meaning, is a matter of practical rather

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than theoretical necessity. This assumption does not depreciate the importance of theoretical inquiry but focuses instead on its relevance to the requirements of practice, particularly those that promote unity and harmony in the community. Such requirements vary from time to time and place to place. In general, their concrete significance is affected by changing circumstances. A viable ethical theory is subject to pragmatic assessment in the light of changing circumstances. Consequently, ethical requirements cannot be stated in terms of absolute principles or rules. It is this assumption that renders plausible Donald Munro's claim:

> The consideration important to the Chinese is the behavioral implications of belief or proposition in question. What effect does adherence to the belief have on people? What implications for social action can be drawn from the statement? … In Confucianism, there was no thought of "knowing" that did not entail some consequence for action. (1969, 55–56).

Related to the primacy of practice is the assumption that reasoned discourse may legitimately appeal to what Nicholas Rescher calls "plausible presumptions," that is, an appeal to shared knowledge, belief, or experience, as well as to the established or operative standards of discourse (1977, 38). For Confucian thinkers most of these presumptions, while defeasible, represent the shared understanding of a common cultural heritage, a living ethical tradition. These presumptions are often suppressed and mainly form the background of practical discourse. Thus, Confucian reasoning and argumentation appear to be highly inexplicit. From the Aristotelian point of view, Confucian argumentation is "rhetorical," as it frequently involves enthymemes and arguments from examples (Kennedy 1991).

Given the primacy of practice and the appeal to plausible presumptions, explication of the conceptual framework of Confucian ethics is a task of philosophical reconstruction, a sort of experiment in conceptual hermeneutics. Such an exploration serves the purposes of reasonable explication and critical development of Confucian ethical thought.

An Ethics of Virtue

While major Confucians (e.g., Mencius and Xunzi) differ in their conceptions of human nature in relation to conduct, most of them adopt Confucius's ideal of a well-ordered society based on good government. Good government is responsive to the basic needs of the people, to issues of wise management of natural and human resources, and to a

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just distribution of burdens and benefits. In this vision of sociopolitical order, special emphasis is placed on harmonious human relationships (*lun*) in accord with *de*, virtues or standards of excellence. This vision is often called *dao*, a term appropriated by different classical schools of Chinese thought—for example, Daoism and legalism. In the *Analects*, *dao* is sometimes used as a verb, meaning "to guide"; sometimes it is used as a concrete noun, meaning literally "road." In the latter sense, it can be rendered as "way." But in distinct Confucian ethical usage, as commonly acknowledged by commentators, it is *dao* as an abstract noun that is meant, and more especially in the evaluative rather than descriptive sense, that is, as referring to the ethical ideal of a good human life as a whole.

Throughout its long history, Confucianism has stressed character formation or personal cultivation of virtues, *de* (Chan 1963, "Great Learning"). Thus it seems appropriate to characterize Confucian ethics as an ethics of virtues. To avoid misunderstanding, two explanations are in order. First, the Confucian focus on the centrality of virtues assumes that *de* can be rendered as "virtue." Second, as we shall see later, this focus does not depreciate the importance of rule-governed conduct or the principled interpretation of basic notions.

Sinologists differ in their interpretation of the Confucian use of *de*. Some maintain that *de* is functionally equivalent to "power," "force," or "potency," and, in Confucian usage, should be qualified as moral in contrast to physical force. More commonly, *de* is rendered as "virtue" in the distinctively ethical sense, as pertaining to excellence of a character trait or disposition. Interestingly, these two interpretations of *de* are not incompatible in the light of some English uses of "virtue." We find the first sense in the sixth entry of "virtue" in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*: "an active quality or power whether of physical or of moral nature: the capacity or power adequate to the production of a given effect"; and in the fifth entry: "a characteristic, quality, or trait known or felt to be excellent." Both these senses of "virtue" are present in the classical Chinese uses of *de*. Of course, there is, as in English, a value-neutral sense of *de* that leaves open the question whether personal traits or qualities merit ethical approval. This question is reflected in the distinction in familiar Chinese between *meide* and *e'de*. The former pertains to "beautiful" or "commendable" *de* and the latter to its contrary. *Meide* are those traits acquired through personal cultivation. *The Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Chinese Language* offers the following two entries for *de* in the ethical sense, one of them suggested by an interpretation of its homophone, meaning "to get" or "to obtain," found in the *Liji* (*Book of Rites*): (1) "that which is obtained in the *xin* (mind/heart) as a result of personal cultivation," and (2) "the nature that is formed after successful personal cultivation."

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Both these entries involve *meide*, commendable, acquired qualities of character, much in the sense of Hume's "personal merits" (1957).

Also important is the sense of *de* as power or force, in view of the Confucian notion of *junzi* (the ethically paradigmatic individual or paragon). The *junzi* who exercises the virtues possesses the power of attraction or influence indicative of effective agency. Thus the *junzi*, equipped with the various virtues (*de*), has the power or capacity to influence the course of human affairs. This interpretation is suggested by two remarks of Confucius: "Virtue (*de*) never stands alone; it is bound to have neighbors"; and, "The virtue of the *junzi* is like the wind; the virtue of the small man is like grass. Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend" (*Analects*, 4.25 and 12.19; Lau 1979). Even if the *junzi's* power is limited, he has an indispensable educational role, not only in providing models for competence in *li* or following rules, but also in inculcating a "*ren* attitude" or ethical concern and reasonableness in applying rules (Cua 1998, Essay 8). This educational role provides, at least, a partial account for Confucius's emphasis on the necessity of caution in speech and commitment prior to action in the light of his ideal of harmony of words and deeds, or, in the famous words of Wang Yangming, "the unity of knowledge and action" (Cua 1978, ch. 4).

In sum, the Confucian notion of *de* can be properly rendered as a conception of ethical virtues that has dual aspects: (1) an achieved condition of an ethically well-cultivated person, with commendable character traits in accord with the ideal of *dao*; and (2) a condition that is deemed to have a peculiar potency or power of efficacy in influencing the course of human life. The difficult problem is to present the Confucian *dao* and *de* as an ethics of virtue with a coherent conceptual scheme.

Basic Notions and the Problem of Conceptual Unity

The *Lunyu* (*Analects*), commonly considered the main and most reliable source of Confucius's teachings, bequeathed to the Chinese a large and complex ethical vocabulary. This vocabulary contains a significant number of virtue (*de*) terms with implicit reference to the Confucian ideal of *dao*. Terms such as *ren*, *yi*, and *li* seem to occupy a central position both in the *Lunyu* and throughout the history of Confucian discourse. Until recent times, few philosophical scholars of Confucianism attended to the problem of conceptual explication and the unity of these basic notions, that is, their presumed interconnection or interdependence in the light of *dao* as an ideal, unifying perspective. While most Confucian terms for particular virtues can be rendered into

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English without elaborate explanation (e.g., filiality, courage, dignity, fidelity, kindness, respectfulness), the apparently basic notions (*ren*, *li*, and *yi*) are not amenable to simple translation and thus pose a problem for conceptual analysis and interpretation. Moreover, existing translations of these terms embody the writer's interpretation, a sort of compendious statement of an implicit commentary, representing the writer's preunderstanding of the translated texts.

Likewise, an explication of basic Confucian notions involves philosophical commentary, a familiar feature in the development of the history of Chinese thought. However, the attempt is beset by a formidable difficulty, especially in explicating the basic concepts of the Confucian framework. To my knowledge, the pioneering study of the conceptual aspect of Confucian ethics is Chen Daqi's *Kongzi xueshuo* (*Doctrines of Confucius*). Chen maintains that before interpreting the ideas of Confucius, it is essential to inquire into the conceptual status of some recurrent terms in the text. For determining the centrality or basic status of notions or concepts, Chen proposes four criteria. Basic concepts are (1) fundamental, (2) leading or guiding, (3) the most important, and (4) the most comprehensive (1976, 98).

Fundamental concepts. Feature 1 suggests the distinction between basic and derivative concepts. However, it is more plausible and accords better with Chen's discussion to construe his distinction as one between basic and dependent concepts. Given our characterization of Confucian ethics as an ethics of virtues, it is a conceptual distinction between basic and dependent virtues. A concept may depend on another for its ethical significance without being a logical derivation. For instance, one cannot derive the concept of love from *ren*, yet its ethical significance depends on its connection with *ren*. This is perhaps the principal basis of Zhu Xi's famous contention that *ren* cannot be equated with love, for it is the rationale of love (*ai zhi li*) (Chan 1963, 595; Qian 1982, 2:55–56).

Leading or guiding concepts. Feature 2 recalls the purport of ethical terms as action guides and informs the Confucian agent that the enduring significance of ethical endeavors lies in *dao* or the ideal of the good human life as a whole, an ideal to be pursued and rendered concrete in particular circumstances.

Cardinal and comprehensive concepts. Feature 3 is the chief mark of basic ethical concepts as cardinal concepts. Feature 4 raises an issue in Confucian scholarship. It seems unproblematic if comprehensiveness is ascribed to *dao* or *ren* in the broad sense as signifying the holistic, ideal unifying perspective of Confucian discourse. Again, consider Zhu Xi's thesis that *ren* (in the broad sense) embraces the four: *ren* (in the narrow sense), *yi*, *li*, and wisdom. In terms of an ethics of virtue, the fundamental distinction is the distinction between cardinal and

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dependent virtues. Accordingly, Chen proposes that in addition to *dao* and *de*, the Confucian scheme consists of *ren*, *li*, and *yi* as the basic, cardinal concepts. This thesis is well supported by the recurrence of such concepts and their fundamental importance throughout the history of Confucianism.

The foregoing remarks pertain to the question of identifying basic, cardinal concepts as contrasted with dependent concepts. It is important to note that this is an ethical distinction, not a general nonethical distinction between general and subordinate virtues. The ethically dependent virtues are not mere means to the realizations of the basic virtues. In nonethical contexts, dependent virtues such as trustworthiness, compliance with ritual, and honesty are properly considered virtues that promote human welfare. One may even claim that these virtues are intrinsically valuable with no connection to any particular ethical outlook. However, in the context of an ethical ideal that recognizes their value, they may be embraced as dependent ethical virtues. When this is done, their nonethical worth increases their worth, so to speak, particularly when they contribute to the realization of the ethical ideal of the good human life or *ren* in the broad sense. Virtues or values that contribute to such realization are plausibly considered as *constitutive means* of *dao* (Lau 1970, app. 5). A more difficult problem remains: how are these basic concepts related to one another? The following discussion presents a sketch of a philosophical reconstruction. The sketch offers a general characterization of Confucian ethics as a form of virtue ethics and provides a sample of how such basic notions as *li* and *yi* can be shaped in response to questions deemed important for the development of a Confucian moral philosophy.

The Confucian ethical framework comprises five basic concepts: *dao, de*, *ren*, *yi*, and *li*. Perhaps the best approach is to regard them initially, with a minimum of interpretation, as “focal notions,” that is, terms which function like lenses to convey distinct though not unrelated centers of ethical concern. As generic terms, focal notions are amenable to specification in particular contexts, thus acquiring specific or narrower senses. This is an adaptation of Xunzi’s distinction between generic (*gongming*) and specific terms (*bieming*). However, in general, a term used as a specific term in one context may in another context be used as a generic term subject to further specification. In other words, the use of a term in either the generic or the specific sense is entirely relative to the speaker’s purpose on a particular occasion, rather than to any theory concerning the intrinsic characters of terms or the essential attributes of things.

As noted earlier, *dao* is an evaluative term. Its focal point lies in the Confucian vision of the good human life as a whole or the ideal of

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human excellence. Commonly rendered as the "way" or "Way," *dao* is functionally equivalent to the ideal "way of life," an ideal theme that admits of diverse specifications of its concrete significance as befitting individual human life (Cua 1978, ch. 8). Unlike other basic terms, *dao* is most distinctive as an abstract, formal term in the highest generic sense, that is, subject to general specification by way of such virtue (*de*) words as *ren, li,* and *yi*. Recall that *de* (virtue, power) is an individual achievement through personal cultivation. When a person succeeds in realizing *dao,* he or she has attained such basic *de* as *ren, li,* and *yi*. The specification of *de*, apart from *ren, li,* and *yi*, can take a variety of forms or dependent virtues such as filiality, respectfulness, or fidelity. In this sense, *de* is an abstract noun like *dao*, but it depends on *dao* for its distinctive character. *De* is thus functionally equivalent to ethical virtue. Thus, the opening remark in *Daxue* (*Great Learning*) points out that the way of great learning or adult ethical education lies in the clear exemplification of the virtues (*ming mingde*). With its emphasis on *dao* and *de*, Confucian ethics is properly characterized as an ethics of virtue, but more informatively as an ethics of *ren, li,* and *yi*, relative to their concrete specification or particularization by terms of dependent virtues (e.g., filiality, respectfulness, integrity). As generic, focal terms *ren, li,* and *yi* are specific terms relative to *dao* as a generic term. To put this differently, implicit in Chen's account is a distinction between basic, interdependent virtues (*ren, li,* and *yi*) and dependent virtues (e.g., filiality, respectfulness). As indicated earlier, the latter are dependent in the sense that their ethical import depends on direct or indirect reference to one or more of the basic, interdependent virtues of *ren, li,* and *yi*, respectively. It must be noted that ethically dependent virtues may be valuable character traits independently of their connection with basic virtues.

While *ren* has a long history of conceptual evolution and interpretation, as a focal notion it suggests an ethical interest centered on love and care for one's fellows, that is, an affectionate concern for the well-being of others—the one persistent idea in the Confucian tradition (Cua 1978, ch. 4). Thus *ren* has been felicitously rendered as "human-heartedness," "humanity," or benevolence—a concrete specification of the abstract ideal of *dao*. This core meaning of *ren* as fellow feeling is found in *Lunyu* (12.22). It is reported that Confucius once said to his disciple Zengzi, "My *dao* has one thread that runs through it" (4.15). Zengzi construed this *dao* as consisting of *zhong* and *shu*, an interpretation widely acknowledged as a method for pursuing *ren*. While the relation between *zhong* and *shu* has divergent interpretations, *zhong* may be rendered as "doing one's best" (Lau 1979, 16) and *shu* as "consideration of other people's feelings and desires." In this light, Confucian ethics displays a concern for both self-

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regarding and other-regarding virtues.

However, the acquisition of these particular, dependent virtues presupposes a locus in which they are exercised. Thus among dependent virtues, filiality and fraternity are considered primary, for the family is the natural home and the foundation for the extension of *ren*-affection. In Song and Ming Confucianism (e.g., Cheng Hao, Wang Yangming), *dao* is sometimes used interchangeably with *ren*. In this manner, *ren* has attained the status of a supreme, all-embracing ethical ideal of the well-being of every existent thing, human or nonhuman, animate or inanimate. Confucius's vision of a well-ordered human society is transformed into a vision of the universe as a moral community (Cua 1993; 1998, Essays 7 and 9). In this conception anything that is an actual or potential object of human attention is considered an object of human concern. Exploitation of human and natural resources must be subject to evaluation in terms of *dao* as an all-embracing ethical ideal of excellence. This ideal of *dao* makes no specific demands on ordinary humans. For the most part, conflict of values is left to individual determination, though the welfare of parents is always the first consideration. Thus, the concrete significance of *dao* is open to the exercise of *yi*, alternatively moral discretion (*quan*) or the agent's sense of rightness.

The exercise of *yi* depends on ethical education based on *daotong* or the tradition of the community of interpretation. That is, reasoned interpretation by the educated members of the community is informed by *sensus communis*, a sense of common interest, a regard for *dao* as the ideal unifying perspective. Disagreement or dispute on the pragmatic import of *dao* is expected, as members of the community of interpretation have their own conceptions of human excellence (*shan*) and possibilities of fulfillment. The ethical solution of interpretive conflicts lies in transforming the disagreement into agreement in the light of *sensus communis*, not in a solution defined by agonistic debate, which presumes that there are impartial judges who can render their corporate decision in terms of majority vote. Unlike contemporary democratic polity, the majority rule cannot be reasonably accepted as a standard for settling ethical disagreements. Sound ethical decision, contrary to the claim of a recent utilitarian, is not a matter of subjectivity and statistical evaluation (Shiang 1991). It is the ethical tradition that provides the background and guidelines to ethical conduct. Normative ethical theories have value because they provide different ways of assessing the significance of tradition. Like the basic concepts of Confucian ethics, they are focal notions for important centers of ethical concern, e.g., duty and interest (private or public) or, in recent terminology, agent-relative and agent-neutral reasons for action.

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The notion of *li* focuses on the ritual code. For this reason, it is commonly rendered as "rites," "ritual," "propriety," or "ceremonials." The ritual code is essentially a set of rules of proper conduct pertaining to the manner or style of performance (Cua 1978; 2002). As *yi* is incompatible with exclusive regard for personal gain, the *li* set forth the rules of ethical responsibility. For Confucius and his followers, the *li* represent an enlightened tradition. As D. C. Lau put it:

> The rites (*li*) were a body of rules governing action in every aspect of life and they were the repository of past insights into morality. It is, therefore, important that one should, unless there are strong reasons to the contrary, observe them. Though there is no guarantee that observance of the rites necessarily leads, in every case, to behaviour that is right, the chances are it will, in fact do so. (1979, 20)

Yet the ethical significance of *li* is determined by the presence of the spirit of *ren*. As Confucius once said, "If a man has no *ren*, what has he to do with *li*?" (*Analects*, 3.3).

Since the ritual code represents a customary practice, the early Confucians, particularly Xunzi and the writers of some chapters in *Record of Rites* (or *Book of Rites*, *Liji*) were concerned with providing a reasoned justification for compliance with *li* or traditional rules of proper conduct. Arthur Waley remarks: "It was with the relation of ritual [*li*] as a whole to morality and not with the details of etiquette and precedence that the early Confucianists were chiefly concerned" (1938, 67; Cua 1983). The same concern with reasoned justification is evident in Song and Ming Confucianists (e.g., Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming) who maintain that the significance of *li* (ritual) lies in its rationale (*li zhi li*).

The ethical significance of *yi*, in part, has to do with an attempt to provide a rationale for the acceptance of *li*. *Yi* focuses principally on what is right or fitting. The equation of *yi* with its homophone meaning "appropriateness" is explicit in the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* or *Zhong Yong*, sec. 20), and is generally accepted by Confucian thinkers, e.g., Xunzi, Li Gou, and Zhu Xi. However, what is right or fitting depends on reasoned judgment. As Xunzi puts it: "The person concerned with *yi* follows reason" (Li 1979, 605). Thus, *yi* may be construed as reasoned judgment concerning the right thing to do in particular exigencies. As Li Gou, a Song Confucian, put it, *yi* is "decisive judgment" that is appropriate to the situation at hand (Cua 1989).

In light of the foregoing, we may state the interdependence of basic notions in this way. Given *dao* as the ideal of the good human life as a whole, *ren*, *li*, and *yi*, the basic Confucian virtues (*de*), are constitutive rather than mere instrumental means to its actualization. In other words,

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the actualization of *dao* requires the concurrent satisfaction of the standards expressed in *ren*, *li*, and *yi*. Since these focal notions pertain to different foci of ethical interest, we may also say that the actualization of *dao* requires a coordination of three equally important centers of ethical interest and endeavor. The connection between these foci involves interdependence rather than subordination. Thus, in the ideal case, *ren*, *li*, and *yi* are mutually supportive and adhere to the same ideal of *dao*. When *dao* is in fact realized, *ren*, *li*, and *yi* would be deemed constituents of this condition of achievement. When, on the other hand, one attends to the prospect of *dao*-realization, *ren*, *li*, and *yi* would be regarded as complementary foci and means to *dao* as an end. In sum, *ren*, *li*, and *yi* are complementary foci of human interest.

The Scope and Functions of *Li*

Because of its distinctive character and role in Confucian ethics and its pervasive influence in traditional China and contemporary critique, the notion of *li* requires special attention. Implicit in *li* is an idea of rule-governed conduct. In the *Liji* (*Book of Rites*), the subject matter ranges from formal prescriptions (henceforth, ritual rules) concerning mourning, sacrifices, marriage, and communal festivities to the more ordinary occasions relating to conduct toward ruler, superior, parent, elder, teacher, and guest. Because of its emphasis on the form of behavior, *li* is often translated as religion, ceremony, deportment, decorum, propriety, formality, politeness, courtesy, etiquette, good form, or good behavior. These renderings are misleading without an understanding of the different functions of *li*. At the outset, it is important to note that for Confucians the *li* embody a living cultural tradition, that is, they are subject to modification in response to changing circumstances of society. Thus some writers of the *Liji* point out that the *li* are the prescriptions of reason, that any ritual rule that is deemed right and reasonable can be considered a part of *li*. On one plausible interpretation, the traditional ritual code represents no more than a codification of ethical experiences based on the concern with *ren* and *yi*. In this light, the *li* are in principle subject to revision or replacement. In the spirit of Zhu Xi, we may say that a Confucian must reject ritual rules that are burdensome and superfluous and accept those that are practicable and essential to the maintenance of a harmonious social order. However, any reasoned attempt to revise or replace *li* presupposes an understanding of their functions. It is this understanding that distinguishes the Confucian scholar from a pedant, who may have a mastery of rules without understanding their underlying rationale. For elucidation, we rely mainly on a reconstruction of Xunzi’s view, since we find in some of his essays the most articulate concern for and

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defense of *li* as an embodiment of a living, cultural tradition (Cua 1979; 1998, Essay 13).

With any system of rules governing human conduct, one can always raise questions concerning its purpose. In Confucian ethics, the *li*, as a set of formal prescriptions for proper behavior, have a threefold function: delimiting, supportive, and ennobling. The delimiting function is primary, in that the *li* are fundamentally directed to the prevention of human conflict. They comprise a set of constraints that delineate the boundaries of pursuit of individual needs, desires, and interests. The *li* purport to set forth rules of proceeding in an orderly fashion, ultimately to promote the unity and harmony of human association in a state ruled by a sage king imbued with the spirit of *ren* and *yi*. This orderliness consists of social distinctions or divisions in various kinds of human relationships (*lun*)—distinctions between ruler and minister, father and son, the eminent and the humble, the elder and the younger, the rich and the poor, and the important and unimportant members of society. In abstraction from the connection with *ren* and *yi*, the delimiting function of *li* may be compared with that of negative moral rules or criminal laws. Like rules against killing, stealing, or lying, the *li* impose constraints on conduct. They create, so to speak, paths of obstruction, thus blocking certain moves of agents in the pursuit of their desires or interests. The *li*, in effect, stipulate the conditions of the eligibility or permissibility of actions. They do not prejudge the substantive character or value of individual pursuit. They provide information on the limiting conditions of action but no positive guidance as to how one's desires may be properly satisfied. In other words, the *li* tell agents what goals *not* to pursue, but they do not tell agents how to go about pursuing goals within the prescribed limits of action.

Apart from their delimiting function, the *li* have also a supportive function; that is, they provide conditions or opportunities for satisfaction of desires within the prescribed limits of action. Instead of suppressing desires, the *li* provide acceptable channels or outlets for their fulfillment. In an important sense, the supportive function of *li* acknowledges the integrity of our natural desires. So long as they are satisfied within the bounds of propriety, we accept them for what they are, whether reasonable or unreasonable, wise or foolish, good or bad. The main supportive function of *li* is the redirection of the course of individual self-seeking activities, not the suppression of the motivating desires. Just as the delimiting function of *li* may be compared with that of criminal law, their supportive function may be compared with that of procedural law, which contains rules that *enable* us to carry out our wishes and desires (e.g., the law of contracts). The *li*, like these procedural rules, aid the realization of desires without pronouncing

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value judgments.

The focus on the ennobling function of *li* is a distinctive feature of Confucian ethics and traditional Chinese culture. The keynote of the ennobling function is "cultural refinement," the education and nourishment (*yang*) of emotions or their transformation in accord with the spirit of *ren* and *yi*. The characteristic concern with the *form* of proper behavior is still present. However, the form stressed is not just a matter of fitting into an established social structure or set of distinctions, nor is it a matter of methodic procedure that facilitates the satisfaction of the agent's desires and wishes; rather, it involves the elegant form (*wen*) for the expression of ethical character. In other words, the ennobling function of *li* is directed primarily to the development of commendable or beautiful virtues (*meide*). The "beauty" (*mei*) of the expression of an ethical character lies in the balance between emotions and forms. Thus, what is deemed admirable in the virtuous conduct of an ethically superior person (*junzi*) is the harmonious fusion of elegant form and feelings. In the ideal case, a *li*-performance may be said to have an aesthetic dimension. In two different and related ways, a *li*-performance may be said to be an object of delight. In the first place, the elegant form is something that delights our senses. It can be contemplated with delight quite apart from the expressed emotional quality. In the second place, when we attend to the emotion or emotional quality expressed by the action, which we perceive as a sign of an ethical virtue or character, the mind is delighted and exalted, provided, of course, that we are also agents interested in the promotion of ethical virtues in general. Doing justice to the ennobling function of *li* requires a complex characterization and evaluation, well beyond the scope of this article. The general idea is stated by Thomé H. Fang. *Li* is:

> cultural refinement, bodying forth either in the prudence of conduct, or the balance of emotion, or the rationality of knowledge, or the intelligent working of order. Especially, it is blended with the excellent spirit of fine arts such as poetry and music. In short, what is called *Li* in Chinese is a standard of measurement for the general cultural values, according to which we can enjoy the beauties of life in the rational order of political societies. (1980, 159)

Problems of rules and exceptions and justification. Appreciating the rationale of the *li* in terms of delimiting, supportive, and ennobling functions does not entail that the *li* provide sufficient guidance in resolving ethical perplexities. The problem of rules and exceptions is not a genuine problem in Confucian ethics, for the notions of *yi* and *quan* can be used in dealing with perplexities concerning what one ought to do in a particular situation. For classical Confucians like

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Mencius and Xunzi, ethical perplexities arise largely from unanticipated, changing circumstances of human life. As Xunzi succinctly reminds his readers, one must use *yi* to respond to exigent or changing circumstances (*yiyi bianying*). Hard cases for deliberation are those that can be resolved by an appeal, not to an established rule of *li*, but to one's reasoned judgment of what is the right or fitting thing to do. Mencius particularly emphasizes *quan* (weighing of circumstances) in coping with exigent situations. When asked what a person ought to do when his sister-in-law is drowning, given the *li*-requirement that male and female are not to touch one another in giving or receiving anything, Mencius appeals to *quan* rather than to compliance with rules. This appeal has nothing to do with building an exception to a rule of proper conduct but has to do instead with one's sense of rightness in exigent situations. In the light of the crucial function of *yi*, a rule may be judged to be irrelevant to an ethical perplexity, not because it has no authoritative status but rather because the *li* as a set of formal prescriptions for proper behavior are not intended to cover all situations of human life. It is *yi* that responds to ethical perplexities. More explicitly, Zhu Xi, perhaps following Li Gou, considers *yi* a decisive judgment as to what is appropriate (to the situation at hand) and the courage to carry it out (*Zhuzi yulei*, ch. 6, 19a). In view of its emphasis on *yi*, the characterization of Confucian ethics as an ethics of flexibility is apt. Moreover, there are grounds in the *Analects* for this flexible attitude toward changing circumstances. It is recorded, for example, that Confucius once said of himself, "I have no preconception about the permissible and the impermissible" (*Analects*, 18.8).

Quite naturally, one may raise the question of justification for such judgments in exigent circumstances. In normal situations, the *li* are quite sufficient to guide action insofar as they are informed by a concern for *ren*. The problem of reasoned justification for such judgments has not received attention from most Confucian thinkers, except Xunzi. However, even in the works of Xunzi we do not find any articulate answer to this problem, though they provide materials for constructing a response. In the first place, Xunzi is explicit that any discussion is valuable because there exist certain standards for assessment, and these standards pertain principally to conceptual clarity, respect for linguistic practices and evidence, and the requirement of consistency and coherence in discourse. A philosophical reconstruction along the lines of the theory of argumentation presents an interesting Confucian view of justification in terms of rational and empirical standards of competence, along with certain desirable qualities of participants in ethical discourse. In this reconstruction of Xunzi's works, ethical justification is a phase of discourse, preceded by explanatory efforts in the clarification of normative claims responsive

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to a problem of common concern among participants, which in turn presupposes that queries concerning the proper uses of terms are understood by participants in ethical argumentation (Cua 1985a, b). As widely noted by contemporary writers on Confucian ethics, the Confucians are fond of appeal to historical events and paradigmatic individuals. This ethical use of historical knowledge and beliefs is a pervasive feature of early Confucianism.

In closing, it may be noted that Confucian ethics, like any normative system, presents conceptual problems of interpretation and reconstruction. In this essay, in order to characterize some of the distinctive concerns of classical Confucianism, I have focused on the Confucian framework of basic notions and their interdependence. Complex issues regarding the justification of *li* are elaborated elsewhere (Cua 1998, Essay 13).

See also Confucianism: Confucius; Confucianism: Tradition; *Dao*: The Way; *De*; *Junzi*: The Moral Person; *Quan*; *Ren*; *Yi* and *Li*; *Zhong* and *Shu*: Loyalty and Reciprocity.

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Confucianism: Ethics and Law

Fuldien Li

Chinese legal philosophy essentially follows the teaching of Confucius. The basic ideas of Confucianism, such as *de* (virtue) and *li* (variously rendered as rules of proper conduct, rites, ceremonies, etc.), have important implications for Chinese legal philosophy.

The "rectification of names" (*zhengming*), to which Confucius gave a high priority, involved not only clear terminology but the acceptance by each level and member of society, from "common people" to king, of its place and proper function (Joblin 1974, 35). Fundamentally, Confucians believe in a society in which each person conducts himself according to his position and status in the family and in the society (Ma 1971, 444). According to the idea of "rectification of names," each level and member of society should know what to do and how to behave. In light of this, self-cultivation is considered the foundation. "From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides" (*Daxue*, sec. 6; Legge 1893, 1: 359). The roles each individual must assume in a particular relationship are called the *li*, or rules of proper conduct. The dominant role of the *li* is evident in the maintenance of the traditional Chinese duty-oriented social structure. The rules of *li* are not arbitrary; major Confucian thinkers—e.g., Xunzi and Zhu Xi—considered these rules to be in harmony with *ren* (benevolence, humanity) and *yi* (rightness). Moreover, *li* has a homophone that may be rendered as "reason." Ideally, for the Confucian, the *li* provide the principal guidance to a person's ethical thought and conduct in conformity with traditional social norms, which are presumed to be reasonable. As one writer of a chapter in *Liji* points out, what is reasonable may be considered part of *li* (Legge, 2:275).

According to Confucius's conception, there are two major elements of law: (1) *li* (rules of proper conduct), or rules that inspire positive orderly conduct; (2) *xing* (penalties), or rules that discourage

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and punish disorderly or destructive conduct. To Confucius, government and moral culture are one and the same thing (Wu 1968, 351). Ideally, laws and morals have the same foundation. People who violate the *li*, depending on the gravity of the offense, may be subject to penalties (*xing*). From this point of view, moral duties are ipso facto legal duties in the sense that there are laws providing penalties for violations and breaches. Whatever is immoral is not only illegal but a criminal offense (Wu 1968, 324). For the same reason, civil law in China is not obvious. The *li* are the normative bases for distinguishing right and wrong conduct, determining the nearness and distance of relatives, and resolving doubts about guilt and innocence. More generally, without respect for *li*, the requirements of morality (*daode*), *ren*, and *yi* cannot be completely satisfied.

The subordination of law (*fa*) to *li* is not just a matter of theoretical interest. It has had a tremendous impact on the development of the traditional conception of law and the legal system in China. First, legal codes of the dynasties after the Han were almost invariably formulated by Confucian statesmen. The influence of Confucian ethics, particularly its focus on *li*, therefore, permeated all legislation. Second, the administration of justice was much influenced by the Confucian classics of *li*, such as *Liji*. Not only did the interpretation of legal codes appeal to the teachings of *li*, but judicial officials also referred to Confucian classics as standards for adjudication. We have noted before that traditionally Chinese law and legal processes focused mainly on criminality. As a result, Confucius's moral teaching became entrenched in an official system upheld by laws and punishments. This is what some scholars have called the Confucianization of law or the legalization of Confucianism (Ch'u 1984, 267; Wu 1968, 394). Since the code of the Qin, the stipulations can be roughly divided into criminal law and administrative law. Civil law is not included, but it was not completely neglected—for example, there were cases of litigation involving property (*song*). Civil law is stipulated in the realm of *li* or propriety, an autonomous part of the moral norm (*defa*). A party who disobeys the terms conveyed by an authority in the settlement of a civil dispute will be regarded as a rebel and will be punished by the authority according to the criminal law.

Law and morals are, so to speak, the two wings of a bird (Wu 1968, 351). Confucius saw the source of all the evils of his day in a decay of morals, especially among the ruling classes. He said:

> If you lead the people by political measures and keep them in order by penal law, they will avoid transgressing them but they will lose their sense of honor. If you lead them by virtue (*de*) and keep them in order by ritual and morals (*li*), they will not only preserve their sense of

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> honor but also become thoroughly transformed. (*Analects*, 2.3; Wu 1968, 324)

Thus Confucius declared: "In legal proceedings, I am like others. The most important thing was to avoid litigation" (*Analects*, 12.13). Confucius did not exactly despise the penal law, nor did he refuse to hear litigation. However, his main concern was the observance of *li* and music, and the cultivation of personal virtues in promoting good and humane government (*ren-zheng*). "If ritual and music are not promoted," he said, "then punishments cannot attain the just measure. If punishments do not attain the just measure, then the people would not know where to put their hands and feet" (*Analects*, 13.3; Wu 1968, 325).

Of the six schools of thought classified by Sima Qian, only Confucianism (*Ru jia*) has been accepted by Chinese historians as orthodox. The doctrines of legalists were perhaps those most mercilessly attacked (Ma 1971, 445). When the legalists took up the idea of *fa* or law, they gave it a new interpretation. Instead of being an intuitive notion applied ad hoc, *fa*, in their view, should be promulgated and apply to all people equally—to both the ruler and the ruled irrespective of personal relationships. The *fa* is absolutely compulsory. If it is to be effective, severe punishments must be imposed. The legalists Shang Yang and Han Fei stressed the strict rule of law, supplemented by a system of rewards and punishments. They considered all the moral doctrines irrelevant, dangerous, and harmful to the administration of the state.

In the Han dynasty, Confucian scholars gradually but steadily acquired political power. During the reign of Emperor Wu Di (140–87 B.C.E.), Confucianism was advocated as the authoritative doctrine of the state. By that time, *fa* as an effective instrument for maintaining order and administering justice was generally recognized. The new situation, however, brought about a new relationship between the two concepts, that is, the subordination of *fa* to *li*. Dong Zhongshu, a major Han Confucian thinker, set forth the doctrine that "*De* (virtue) is the master and punishment the assistant (*de zhu xing fu*)."

As is well known, Confucius laid the greatest emphasis on filial piety. This idea has a legitimate place in any system of law. Since the Tang dynasty, family relationships have been an index to degrees of punishment in criminal codes.

Cruel punishments have been common in judicial history worldwide, but in Chinese institutions and administration of justice—in accordance with the Confucian teaching of love and goodness (*ren*)—much emphasis was placed on mercy and pardon. Repeatedly applied are the doctrines of forgiveness for ignorance; pardons for the young,

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the weak, the old, and the stupid; suspension of execution; reduction of punishment because of extremely hot or cold weather; and probation in order to serve parents.

After the revolution of 1911, a comprehensive judicial reform was established. Civil law was accepted in the modern Chinese legal system, and parts of traditional Chinese legal philosophy were absorbed into the modern legal institutions of the Republic of China.

See also Confucianism: Ethics; Han Feizi; Legalism; Shang Yang; Shen Buhai.

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Confucianism: Han

Chi-yun CHEN

I

The era of the Han dynasty (Former or Western Han, 202 B.C.E.–2 C.E.; Wang Mang interregnum, 2–25 C.E.; Later or Eastern Han, 25–220 C.E.) poses some perplexing problems for students of Chinese thought and philosophy. (In this essay, Han thought and thinkers, Han Confucian thought and scholars, and Han Confucianism and Confucians are referred to somewhat interchangeably, depending on the context. The reason for this will become clear as the discussion unfolds.)

On the one hand, the Han era is no doubt one of the most important periods in the history of China. It was during this era that many of the political, social, economic, and other cultural developments of the preceding millennium came to fruition and became crystallized in the high civilization of the Han Chinese. In fact, the names of many "schools" of thought of the classical age (sixth to third centuries B.C.E.)—such as Daoism and legalism—were coined by scholars of the Han era; the definitive texts ascribed to these schools were also recompiled or edited by Han scholars. The classification of ancient Chinese thought into "schools" was itself devised by the Han scholars in an effort to define the issues and tenets of diverse ancient traditions and to reorganize them into a unified intellectual legacy. Long after the end of the Han dynasty, the cultural tradition formed during the Han era continues to mold the civilization of China, so much so that the very name Han has become synonymous with "culturally Chinese," and "Han learning" (*Hanxue*) has come to mean Chinese studies or sinology.

On the other hand, many modern Chinese students of philosophy tend to treat the Han era with some contempt. Han thought has been denounced as shallow, confused, superstitious, or downright irrational, representing at best a vulgarization and at worst the death of classical Chinese philosophy of the preceding golden age. The reason for this attitude lies in the fact that most of these students have been strongly

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influenced by the “Song learning” (*Songxue*) or neo-Confucian legacy, which was historically and intellectually antithetic to the legacy of *Hanxue*.

Historically, the basic tenor of Chinese thought has gone through five epochal changes:

- *Period I*. Classical era (fifth to third centuries B.C.E.), which established the mode and the basic vocabulary of philosophical-ideological discourse in traditional China (classical Confucianism).
- *Period II*. The Han (through Tang) era (third century B.C.E. to ninth century C.E.), during which time the pragmatic, historical, culturally focused mode of Han thought evolved as a reaction to the philosophical, theoretically focused legacy of period I.
- *Period III*. Song (through Ming) era (tenth to seventeenth centuries), during which the tradition of Song learning (neo-Confucianism) developed—returning to the legacy of period I (classical Confucianism) in a reaction against the Han tradition of period II.
- *Period IV*. Qing era (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries), which reverted back to the mode of Han thought of period II, in a reaction against the legacy of period III.
- *Period V*. Protomodern to modern era (late nineteenth century and twentieth century), which witnessed China’s rapid opening to the outside world, including the introduction of western philosophy, and, in response to this western challenge, the rise of a nativistic movement to revitalize a countervailing Chinese philosophic tradition. That effort was dominated by but not limited to the so-called modern neo-Confucianists, who, reacting to both the western philosophic challenge and the discredited Han-learning tradition of period IV, espoused a modernized and westernized form of the Song-learning tradition of period III and through it the classical legacy of period I.

This brief survey indicates that Chinese thinkers of period I (classical Confucians), period III (Song neo-Confucians), and period V (modern neo-Confucians) predominate in China’s philosophic tradition, not only because they are more philosophically inclined but also because they set the mode and the basic vocabulary of nativistic Chinese philosophic discourses in modern times. Against this, the Han and Han-learning thinkers and scholars (loosely called *ru* Confucians) of periods II and IV tend to lose out in the modernized-westernized enterprise, with only their aphilosophic or antiphilosophic credentials to offer.

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To interpret the meaning of Han thought, modern scholars have made use of at least five approaches:

1. The "ideology" approach, taken by Feng Youlan (Fung Yu-lan) and other Marxist scholars, who discuss Han Confucianism in terms of the Marxian superstructure as the ideology of an emerging Han empire or unitary feudal regime.
2. The "mentality" approach, exemplified by Xu Fuguan, who discusses works of major Han thinkers, such as Dong Zhongshu, Yang Xiong, and Wang Chong, mainly in terms of the tension between ideal and reality—i.e., between the legacy of free and independent thinking of the classical era (period I) and the restrictive reality of the expanding Han imperium.
3. The "zeitgeist" approach, attempted by Qian Mu, emphasizing reason, ideals, a value system, or a sense of mission underlying the intellectual, cultural, and political agenda of the Han Confucians.
4. A new effort to get rid of the Marxist straitjacket of approach 1 and treat Han thought on its own terms; this effort, represented by the work of Jin Qunfeng, is still at the level of simple description and narrative, with little in-depth analysis.
5. The syncretic studies, among others, made by Chen Qiyun (Chi-yun Chen, the present author), combining approaches 1–4. This syncretic approach will be taken in the discussion here.

II

The most important feature of Han Confucianism is that, whereas in pre-Han times Confucianism was but one of the competing schools of thought, in Han times it became not only the dominant school of thought and learning but also the only one officially and publicly recognized. Hence its name becomes synonymous with Han thought and scholarship in general. Also for this reason, Han Confucianism is often treated as an official ideology of the Han imperium and blamed for the lamentable demise of the other schools of thought (Daoism, legalism, Mohism, etc.).

Classical Chinese thought, evolving in the preceding Warring States era (fifth to third centuries B.C.E.), revealed a strong tendency toward pragmatism and syncretism, with an urgent agenda of saving the Chinese world from destructive civil war. This imposed a certain limitation on the freedom of the speculative and imaginative mind in its philosophic journey. The tendency culminated in the legalist writing of Han Fei (d. 233 B.C.E.), whose teachings became the guiding principles of the emerging imperial regime of Qin, which unified China in 221

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B.C.E., thus ending the divided Warring States and their rampaging warfare. The ensuing legalist undertakings soon plunged the newly unified China into a widespread revolution that destroyed the Qin regime in 206 B.C.E. (barely fifteen years after its founding). As a result of this traumatic experience, philosophical-ideological thinking became discredited in the Chinese mind, which—being pragmatic—was inclined to judge a doctrine or a mode of thought by its practical consequences. In the Han dynastic regime that followed, a much more somber mood and a more practical bent of mind set in.

In reaction to Qin legalism, the early Han regime, from about 202 to about 140 B.C.E., adopted the Daoist teaching of nonaction (*wuwei*) as its guiding ideology. This doctrine of quietism and passivity, as an antidote to the inclination toward excessive governmental action of Qin legalism, carried with it a strongly anti-ideological, anti-intellectualist, or even antirational bent. As an anti-ideological ideology and an anti-intellectual intellectual current, early Han Daoism further strengthened the tendency of Chinese thought toward pragmatism, syncretism, and the concern of salvaging the world. In the long run, its attitude of live and let live, "all-moderating and balancing-all," had the inadvertent effect of discouraging free, untrammeled thinking.

Confucianism, as represented by Xunzi (fl. 298–238 B.C.E.), had become broadly syncretistic as a leading school of thought in the late Warring States period, but it suffered a considerable setback under the Qin regime, especially when the Qin court proscribed learning in 213 B.C.E. It suffered a further setback as a result of the early Han reaction against legalism, because the major champions of legalism, Han Fei and Li Si (the prime minister of Qin, d. 208 B.C.E.), had both been Xunzi's disciples. Han Fei's legalist concepts—such as the evil nature of humans and the importance of external authority and control—were derived directly from Xunzi's teaching. Disfavored and sometimes even strongly disliked by the early Han rulers, Confucianism had to find its own means and depend on its own merits to survive. And it not only survived but developed vigorously in early Han times, thanks to strong currents of reaction against Qin legalism.

The Qin court was notorious for its proscription of learning and its burning of books—it was especially harsh to "ancient traditions" and "records of history" (such as *Shi*, or *Book of Odes*; and *Shu*, or *Book of History*)—as well as for its disdain of moral teaching. In reaction, there was during the early Han a popular yearning for works of these kinds. The Confucians, from Confucius to Mencius to Xunzi, had all emphasized the importance of learning, particularly the moral traditions of ancient times, and the preservation and teaching of these traditions were considered the primary calling of all Confucians. As preservers and teachers of the ancient traditions, the early Han Confucians found

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themselves winning increasing support among the general public, despite the express wishes of the Han rulers, who favored Daoism. As for other schools of classical thought, they were not severely persecuted in the Qin period, nor were they vigorously supported in the early Han era; they merely survived.

III

The first corpus of the ancient traditions, the canon later known as the Five Confucian Classics (*Wujing*) by the Han court, was recovered by Confucian masters (most of them disciples or disciples of the disciples of Xunzi) who had lived in Qin times and learned these traditions by heart before they were proscribed. These old masters were invited by the early Han court to recite the traditions orally from memory; the traditions were then written down by their students in the prevailing Han script, the *li* (clerical) style. Hence this corpus came to be called the "modern (i.e., Han) texts" of the canonical classics. Some of these masters, or their principal disciples (most likely the ones who wrote down the texts), were appointed official "erudites" (*boshi*) at the Han court.

Later, when some old manuscripts of these classics, written in pre-Han scripts and supposedly having survived the Qin book burning, were discovered, they were called the "ancient" (i.e., pre-Han) texts" of the classics. These "ancient texts" did not have the same pedigree as the "modern texts"—the ancient texts, not having been transmitted from "erudite" master to disciple, were suspected of being spurious and were rejected by the erudites of the "modern texts" school, which in 136 B.C.E. had become the official teaching of the Han court. This remained so, in spite of several attempts by the court to include the "ancient texts" traditions as part of the official teaching. Thus throughout the rest of the Han era, the "modern texts" school represented the official Confucian teaching of the court and the "ancient texts" school represented unofficial teaching.

Actually, the differences between the "modern texts" school and the "ancient texts" school tended to be minor and technical. A more significant distinction between these two Confucian schools is that the former, being officially championed, became more strongly influenced by the political and ideological interests of the Han regime, and since its teaching was originally orally transmitted—without fixed texts—it could be more easily swayed or adjusted to suit the political or mental perspectives of the emerging Han imperium. The most outrageous example was the reinterpretation of the *Classic of Spring-and-Autumn* (or *Annals of the Chaotic Spring-and-Autumn Era,* 721–482 B.C.E.) by

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Gongyang scholars of the “modern texts” school as a canon morally and spiritually sanctifying the ideal of political “grand unity” and “public-mindedness,” or even presaging the rise of the unified Han empire. In general, scholars of “modern texts” Confucianism tended to interpret the classics as recording or preserving the morally superlative traditions of the Western Zhou dynasty (c. 1111–771 B.C.E.) to serve as an exemplar for the fledgling Han world. The “ancient texts” school, with its fixed texts supposedly from pre-Han times, tended to be more faithful to historical reality, especially the feudalistic, kinship-focused Zhou traditions emphasizing filial piety. In a sense, one may compare the “modern texts” Confucians with moral idealists and the “ancient texts” Confucians with historicists.

Beyond their primary calling of preserving (salvaging, re-collecting, compiling, and reediting) and teaching the “morally superlative” ancient traditions, the early Han Confucians were ardent advocates of political, social, and cultural reform. Taking advantage of the general resentment of Qin legalism, these Confucians argued that the Zhou dynasty (including the Eastern Zhou era, 770–249 B.C.E.) had enjoyed a reign of some eight hundred years because of its superior moral culture, whereas the Qin had perished in a mere fifteen years because of its disdain of moral and cultural values—this became the core of moral interpretation of history in traditional China. The fledgling Han regime, these Confucians counseled, must learn this solemn lesson of history in order to avoid the fate of the Qin.

IV

The reform agenda of the early Han Confucians included, most importantly, the promotion of education, especially learning the ancient traditions by studying the transmitted canonical classics. This means that emphasis was now placed on understanding history as “accomplished facts” and “actualized reality” rather than on manipulating “empty words” in abstract theorizing and conceptual analysis, as during the preceding Warring States era. This attitude is exemplified by the saying “Let the facts tell the truth.” One reason for this change of mind may be that excessive philosophic reasoning in the Warring States had produced the legalism of Han Fei, which had led China to the disastrous Qin rule. Human reasoning had failed to anticipate its own outcomes or to chart the course of history; it presumed to guide history but was more comfortable being a postmortem judge (i.e., rendering historical verdicts). Another reason may be that most of the thinkers of the Warring States era, beginning with Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.), had been hoping for, contemplating,

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and reasoning about something that did not yet exist—a mere idea or ideal of a “grand peace” (*taiping*) in a world (“all-under-heaven”) of “grand union” (*datong*). The Han thinkers now had to deal with an actual “grand union” in the form of an awesome imperium and had to turn their attention to considering how to handle it, how to bring peace to it, and how to understand its meaning.

With this came another item on the Han Confucian agenda: pragmatic moralization of the conceptualized “will of heaven” or “mandate of heaven.” Belief in the mandate of heaven had constituted the core of religious-political tradition in the Western Zhou and had become a sustaining force in Confucian and Mohist idealistic teaching during the Warring States era. Now, with the idealization of the ancient Zhou tradition by the Han Confucians, the will of heaven and mandate of heaven were greatly elaborated and urbanized. The will of heaven was now manifested not only singularly in an ultimate “mandate” founding or dooming a dynasty but also continuously revealed in numerous signs favorable or unfavorable to man. Unfavorable signs included natural disasters such as eclipses of the sun, earthquakes, floods, and droughts, as well as human oddities or mishaps such as bodily abnormalities or horrendous behavior—these indicated heaven’s anger at human misconduct. Favorable signs, which tended to be rare, included felicitous natural or human occurrences, such as sweet dews, timely rains, the appearance of fabulous animals like the unicorn, or remarkable human acts of filial piety—these showed heaven’s satisfaction with human conduct. Since the emperor was an epitome of the human world and his actions had fateful consequences, heaven’s pleasure or displeasure was mostly incurred by, and concerned with, his proper or improper conduct.

The Han Confucians made great efforts to study and interpret such omens, hoping thereby to understand empirically and pragmatically the working of the cosmos, and to guide as well as restrain the reigning emperor in conducting affairs of state. With this effort, the Han Confucians hoped to bring about a genuine harmonious grand union (*datong*) and great peace (*taiping*), realizing the ideal of their predecessors.

V

In their criticism of Qin legalism and their idealization of Zhou moralism, the Han Confucians could not fail to notice, in their own time, the suffering of the poor and lowly, the exploited, the oppressed, and the persecuted. They blamed corrupt government, cruelty, economic inequality, and social injustice on the evil practices left over

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from Qin legalism, which the nonaction taught by the Daoists—who were favored by the court—had done nothing to change. In advocating reform, the Han Confucians thus assumed the role of champions of the downtrodden, so much so that their ideal of *taiping*—the great peace—was construed to mean "great equality."

The contrast between the reform- or revolution-minded Confucians and the court-supported conservative Daoists becomes clear in the following episode:

> In the reign of Emperor Ching [Jing] (r. 158–141 B.C.E.), the Confucian Master Yuan-ku [Yuangu] and the Taoist Master Huang debated [about political revolution] in front of the Emperor… .
>
> Master Yuan-ku said: "… The wicked rulers Chieh [Jie] (last ruler of the Hsia [Xia] dynasty) and Tsou [Zou] (last ruler of the Shang dynasty) were cruel and unruly. The mind of all the people turned to T'ang [Tang] and Wu [for help]. T'ang and Wu accorded with the wishes of the people by killing King Chieh and King Tsou … thus becoming kings themselves. If this is not the case of [justified revolution] with receipt of the Mandate [of Heaven], what would it be?"
>
> Master Huang said: "A cap, although old and worn, should be put on the head; shoes, though new, should be put under the feet. Why is this so? This is due to the discrimination between the high and the low. King Chieh and King Tsou, though they had lost the Way, were rulers in high positions; T'ang and Wu, though they were sagely, were servitors in lower positions. Although the rulers misbehaved, [it is not right] for the servitors to murder their masters and take over their throne. If this was not regicide, what would it be?"

Jia Yi, an eminent Confucian in the reign of Emperor Wen (r. 180–157 B.C.E.), using the "faults of the Qin" as a lesson of history, persuaded the emperor to employ good Confucians as royal tutors, so that his heirs would become good rulers. Among these heirs, Wu (r. 141–87 B.C.E.) became the first Han emperor with a good Confucian education. Under Emperor Wu, Gongsun Hong, a self-made scholar, was the first Confucian to rise from the status of commoner to be prime minister at the Han court. On his advice, the five Confucian classics were made the official teaching of the court, and the official erudites (*boshi*) were put in charge of this instruction, forming the Grand Imperial Academy (*Taixue*). In 124 B.C.E. fifty official disciples of the erudites were enrolled; these increased to 3,000 in 33–7 B.C.E. By the late first century C.E., there were about 30,000 students at the academy, although some of them may have been only visitors.

Disciples were enrolled in the Grand Imperial Academy on the recommendation of high officials in central and local government.

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After one year of study, they might take an examination in one of the Five Classics. If they passed, they would be appointed to middle to lower central or local government posts. Thereafter, they would be evaluated and promoted according to a set of standards and criteria inspired by Confucian values. Government schools were later established at the local level. The system of filling government positions by special selection or recommendations was Confucianized, stressing cherished Confucian qualities such as “morally worthy and upright,” “filially pious and incorruptible,” and “talented in literary learning”; those who had these qualities are called Confucian “worthies.” From this time on, the composite label “Confucian scholar-officials” denotes the majority of government administrators in traditional China. Through such mechanisms, numerous former followers of other classical schools of thought (Daoists, legalists, eclectics, etc.) were attracted and converted to Confucianism. As we have seen, Han Confucianism tended to become a generic name for Han scholars and thinkers, and its tenets evolved as a grand synthesis of various ideas from many classical schools of thought of pre-Han times.

VI

Emperor Wu launched many other reform programs aimed at strengthening the imperial government administratively, militarily, and financially by crushing any opponents, especially those from the rank of semi-independent princes of blood (other members of the imperial clan) or excessively wealthy merchants and industrialists. These measures were later considered oppressive, exploitive, and hence legalistic and un-Confucian. But initially the programs tended to accord well with the Han Confucian ideal of a “grand union” (e.g., a strong and expansive central authority) and a “great equality” (e.g., social and economic leveling aimed at the rich and powerful).

Wu’s programs proceeded successfully but brought about many unexpected and unwelcome consequences. The emperor’s military campaigns against the barbarian hordes that threatened the imperial frontiers in the north were expensive and ineffective. His efforts to crush the local power of the landed interests were stalled because the landowners’ strength continued to grow (they would became the all-influential great “gentry” and the cultural elite of post-Han China). One reason why local landed interests not only could survive but challenge Wu’s attempts to crush them was the sympathy and support they received from the Confucian scholar-officials. This was so because the Confucian systems of education and selection of civil servants had

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recruited many members of the local elite into the government service, to the point where even the more unruly local magnates began to style themselves after the Confucian model gentlemen. Besides, it was a basic Confucian belief that a ruler should serve as a moral example and be a kindhearted father figure to the people, and that government should not compete with the general population for profit, much less exploit them through oppressive measures. Since the emperor must rely on officials to execute his orders, the latter were in a position to stall or forestall imperial orders that went against their basic interests or convictions.

The inclination and the courage of the Han Confucians, for better or for worse, to challenge imperial authority also owed much to the fact that Confucianism had survived and prospered on its own in early Han times in spite of the ruler's ill will. The Confucians' open challenge to Emperor Wu's "cruel" measures came in a court conference in 81 B.C.E., in which all the high officials including the prime minister and a number of locally selected Confucian "worthies" took part, reviewing the late emperor's policies. At this conference—as we learn in the preserved records, titled *Discourses on Salt and Iron*—the Confucian worthies severely criticized many of those policies as having been oppressive, exploitative, profiteering, or frankly immoral, and they denounced as wicked and doomed to a bad end the deputy prime minister who had helped formulate and perpetuate these policies. Not long thereafter, this deputy prime minister was accused of high treason and sentenced to death, and many of the measures criticized by the Confucian worthies were nullified or modified by the court.

VII

The Confucians in the third quarter of the first century B.C.E. had every reason to believe that they had done all they could with regard to their reform agenda. The reigning emperor, Yuan (r. 49–33 B.C.E.), was a devoted and accomplished Confucian; most members of government officialdom, from the prime minister down to the clerks, had—like the emperors—received a Confucian education and were selected and promoted in accordance with the Confucian criteria of merits; even the previously unruly local magnates, as we have noted, now modeled themselves on the Confucian gentlemen. But somehow the Confucians were aware that their world was far from a perfect state of "grand union," "great peace," or "great equality."

Modern scholars would explain this by saying that education has limits; it is unrealistic to expect education to perfect the world by perfecting human nature. In fact, we might now conclude that the most

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important consequences of the Confucian reform were its moderating or undermining of the imperial power of the ruling house, and the formation of the triangular establishment of scholar-official-landlord (the alliance of the cultural, political, and economic elites) as the forebear of the "great gentry" in medieval China. The victorious Confucians, however, were more optimistic; they would not admit such limitations on their cherished reformist doctrines, and indeed they were by then in a position to demand greater perfection through more fundamentalist reforms.

A basic tenet of Confucianism was that the world would reach a state of perfection when each person in it acquired his standing (economic, social, and political stations) not by birthright but by his own accomplishments: his own moral character, knowledge, and ability, developed through education. So far this tenet had worked out rather well in the Han society and state—except where the position of the emperor was concerned. Despite the emperors' Confucian education, their occupation of the throne was due not to that education or to any accomplishments resulting from it but simply to their birth. Thus the Confucians argued that the world had not yet attained perfection because the Han emperor, who, being at the summit of the society and the state, should be the embodiment of consummate Confucian cultivation, fell far short of this ideal. These Confucians became increasingly dissatisfied with the existing reforms, and with the ruling dynasty. They urged the Han emperor to reform himself and the ruling family more thoroughly, or abdicate in favor of someone more truly deserving—e.g., a sage—so as to truly accord with the requirements of the mandate of heaven.

As early as the reign of Emperor Xuan (r. 74–49 B.C.E.), the Confucian scholar-official Gai Kuanrao submitted a memorial to the throne, reading:

> The Five Emperors [in remote antiquity] treated the realm as belonging to the public; the kings of [the more recent] Three Dynasties treated the realm as their family possession. Family possession was passed on to the sons. What belonged to the public should be handed over to the worthiest. This is like the rotation of the four seasons. The one having completed his work should retire from his post. A person unworthy of the position ought not occupy that position.

Gai was accused of high treason for advising the Han emperor to abdicate, and he committed suicide. But severe criticism and reformist demands continued, until a sage acclaimed by the Confucians, Wang Mang, took the throne, ending the Former Han dynasty and founding his New Dynasty (9–23 C.E.).

The triumph of Wang Mang seemed to fulfill the Han Confucian

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