



Key Concepts  
In Chinese Thought  
And Culture I



中华思想文化术语

第一辑



《中华思想文化术语》编委会 编

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(按音序)

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Translation and Communication Project

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## 前言

“中华思想文化术语”的定义可以表述为：由中华民族主体所创造或构建，凝聚、浓缩了中华哲学思想、人文精神、思维方式、价值观念，以词或短语形式固化的概念和文化核心词。它们是中华民族几千年来对自然与社会进行探索和理性思索的成果，积淀着中华民族的历史智慧，反映中华民族最深沉的精神追求以及理性思索的深度与广度；其所蕴含的人文思想、思维方式、价值观念已经作为一种“生命基因”深深融于中华子孙的血液，内化为中华民族共同的性格和信仰，并由此支撑起中华数千年的学术传统、思想文化和精神世界。它是当代中国人理解中国古代哲学思想、人文精神、思维方式、价值观念之变化乃至文学艺术、历史等各领域发展的核心关键，也是世界其他国家和民族了解当代中国、中华民族和海外华人之精神世界的钥匙。

当今世界已进入文化多元与话语多极时代。世界不同区域、不同国家、不同民族的文明，其流动融合之快、之广、之深超过历史任何时期。每个国家和民族都有自己独具的思想文化和话语体系，都应在世界文明、世界话语体系中占有一席之地，得到它应有的地位和尊重。而思想文化术语无疑是一个国家和民族话语体系中最核心、最本质的部分，是它的思想之“髓”、文化之“根”、精神之“魂”、学术之“核”。越来越多的有识之士认识到，中华思想文化蕴藏着解决当今人类所面临的许多难题的重要启示，中华民族所倡导的“厚德载物”“道法自然”“天人合一”“和而不同”“民惟邦本”“经世致用”等思想，以及它所追求的“协和万邦”“天下一家”、世界“大同”，代表了当今世界文明的发展趋势，也因此成为国际社会的共识。越来越多的外国学者和友人对中华思想文化及其术语产生浓厚的兴趣，希望有更全面、更进一步的了解。

今天我们整理、诠释、译写、传播中华思想文化术语，目的是立足于中华传统的思想文化，通过全面系统的整理与诠释，深度挖掘其中既能反映中华哲学思想、人文精神、思维方式、价值观念、文化特征，又具跨越时空、超越国度之意义，以及富有永恒魅力与当代价值的含义和内容，并将其译成英语等语言，让世界更客观、更全面地认

识中国，了解中华民族的过去和现在，了解当代中国人及海外华人的精神世界，从而推动国家间的平等对话及不同文明间的交流借鉴。

中华思想文化术语的整理、诠释和英语译写得到了中国教育部、中国国际出版集团、中央编译局、北京大学、中国人民大学、武汉大学、北京外国语大学等单位的大力支持，得到了叶嘉莹、李学勤、张岂之、林茂荪等海内外众多知名学者的支持。需要说明的是，“中华思想文化术语”这个概念是首次提出，其内涵和外延还有待学界更深入的研究；而且，如此大规模地整理、诠释、译写中华思想文化术语，在中国也是首次，无成例可循。因此，我们的诠释与译写一定还有待完善的地方，我们会及时吸纳广大读者的意见，不断提高术语诠释与译写的质量。

2015年4月11日

## Foreword

By “key concepts in Chinese thought and culture” we mean concepts and keywords or phrases the Chinese people have created or come to use that are fundamentally pertinent to Chinese philosophy, humanistic spirit, way of thinking, and values. They represent the Chinese people’s exploration of and rational thinking about nature and society over thousands of years. These concepts and expressions reflect the Chinese people’s wisdom, their profound spiritual pursuit, as well as the depth and width of their thinking. Their way of thinking, values, and philosophy embodied in these concepts have become a kind of “life gene” in Chinese culture, and have long crystallized into common personality and beliefs of the Chinese nation. For the Chinese people today, they serve as a key to a better understanding of the evolutions of their ancient philosophy, humanistic spirit, way of thinking, and values as well as the development of Chinese literature, art, and history. For people in other countries, these concepts open the door to understanding the spiritual world of contemporary China and the Chinese people, including those living overseas.



In the era of cultural diversity and multipolar discourse today, cultures of different countries and civilizations of different peoples are integrating faster, in greater depth, and on a greater scope than ever before. All countries and peoples have their own systems of thought, culture, and discourse, which should all have their place in the civilization and discourse systems of the world. They all deserve due respect. The concepts in thought and culture of a country and its people are naturally the most essential part of their discourse. They constitute the marrow of a nation's thought, the root of its culture, the soul of its spirit, and the core of its scholarship. More and more people of vision have come to recognize the inspirations Chinese thought and culture might offer to help resolve many difficult problems faced by mankind. The Chinese hold that "A man of virtue accumulates his virtue and embraces all things of creation," "Dao takes naturalness as its law," "Man is an integral part of nature," "Man of virtue seeks harmony but not uniformity," "People are the foundation of the state," and "Ancient classics should be used critically to serve present needs." The Chinese ideals such as "coexistence of all in harmony," "all the people under heaven are one family," and a world of "universal harmony" are drawing increasing attention among the international community. More and more international scholars and friends have become interested in learning and better understanding Chinese thought and culture in general, and the relevant concepts in particular.

In selecting, explaining, translating, and sharing concepts in Chinese thought and culture, we have adopted a comprehensive and systematic approach. Most of them not only reflect the characteristics of Chinese philosophy, humanistic spirit, way of thinking, values, and culture, but also have significance and/or implications that transcend time and national boundaries, and that still fascinate present-day readers and offer them food for thought. It is hoped that the translation of these concepts into English and other languages will

help people in other countries to gain a more objective and more rounded understanding of China, of its people, of its past and present, and of the spiritual world of contemporary Chinese. Such understanding should be conducive to promoting equal dialogue between China and other countries and exchanges between different civilizations.

The selection, explanation, and translation of these concepts have been made possible thanks to the support of the Ministry of Education, China International Publishing Group, the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau, Peking University, Renmin University of China, Wuhan University, and Beijing Foreign Studies University, as well as the support of renowned scholars in China and abroad, including Florence Chia-ying Yeh, Li Xueqin, Zhang Qizhi, and Lin Wusun.

The idea of compiling key concepts in Chinese thought and culture represents an innovation and the project calls much research and effort both in connotation and denotation. Furthermore, an endeavor like this has not been previously attempted on such a large scale. Lack of precedents means there must remain much room for improvement. Therefore, we welcome comments from all readers in the hope of better fulfilling this task.

April 11, 2015

## bēikǎi悲慨

### Melancholy and Resentment

悲伤愤慨。慨，感慨，愤慨。是晚唐诗人司空图所概括的诗歌的二十四种风格之一。主要指诗作中所表现出的悲剧性情结。当诗人命途多舛或身处困境，或面对壮阔景观或大的事件而自觉力量渺小，会产生忧愁、悲哀、感伤、激愤的情绪，投射到诗歌创作中则形成“悲慨”风格。这一术语看似近于西方文学理论的“悲剧”范畴，实质上受道家思想影响较大，而最后往往趋于无奈或趋于旷达。

Melancholy and resentment, which here refers to a sense of helplessness found in poems, is one of the 24 poetic styles summarized by Sikong Tu, a poet in the late Tang Dynasty. Faced with frustrations and tough challenges in life, or overwhelmed by the immensity of nature or major events, poets were often seized by dejection, grief, sadness, and anger, which gave rise to a “melancholy and resentment” style in poetry writing. While the style bears similarity with the genre of tragedy in Western literary tradition, it is more influenced by Daoism, often featuring a sense of resignation or stoic optimism.

### 引例 Citations :

◎大风卷水，林木为摧。适苦欲死，招憩不来。百岁如流，富贵冷灰。大道日丧，若为雄才。壮士拂剑，浩然弥哀。萧萧落叶，漏雨苍苔。

(司空图《二十四诗品·悲慨》)(大风卷起狂澜，树木遭受摧折。心中悲苦痛不欲生，想休憩片刻亦不可得。百年岁月像流水永逝，富贵和繁华都化作冷寂尘埃。世道日益沦丧，谁是当世雄才？壮士拔剑仰天叹，凝望苍穹愈悲哀。好比落叶萧萧下，且听漏雨滴苍苔。)

Winds are howling, waves raging, and tree branches breaking.

Gripped by an agonizing pain at my heart, I yearn for a spell of peace but only in vain. As time slips by, year after year, decade after decade, all the riches, fame, and splendor are but nothing. Facing moral degeneration, who will rise and salvage the world? With sword in hand, I heave a deep sigh and stare intensely at the sky. Overwhelmed with sorrow, all I can do is to watch leaves falling and hear rain beating against the moss. (Sikong Tu: Twenty-Four Styles of Poetry)

◎感叹之余，作诗相属，托物悲慨，阨穷而不怨，泰而不骄。  
(苏轼《和王晋卿 [并叙] 》)

(在感叹之余，蒙其作诗劝慰嘱咐，借景物抒发内心悲伤愤慨的情绪，虽遇困厄而不怨恨，命运通达也不骄狂。)

After a deep sigh, he wrote a poem to admonish and comfort me, in which he expressed his indignation and resentment by making an analogy with imagery. He advised me not to grudge about tough times or be complacent when everything goes well in life. (Su Shi: A Poem in Reply to Wang Jinqing with a Preface)

## běnmò 本末

### Ben and Mo (The Fundamental and the Incidental)

本义指草木的根和梢，引申而为中国哲学的重要概念。其含义可以概括为三个方面：其一，指具有不同价值和重要性的事物，根本的、主要的事物为“本”，非根本的、次要的事物为“末”；其二，世界的本体或本原为“本”，具体的事物或现象为“末”；其三，在道家的政治哲学中，无为之治下的自然状态为“本”，各种具体的道德、纲常为“末”。在“本末”对待的关系中，“本”具有根本性、主导性的作用和意义，“末”由“本”而生，依赖“本”而存在，但“本”的作用的发挥仍需以“末”为载体。二者既相互区别，又相互依赖。

The two characters literally mean the different parts of a plant, namely, its root and its foliage. The extended meaning is an important

concept in Chinese philosophical discourse. The term can be understood in three different ways. 1) Ben (本) refers to what is fundamental or essential, while mo (末) means what is minor or incidental, two qualities that differ in value and importance. 2) Ben refers to the existence of the world in an ontological sense, while mo represents any specific thing or phenomenon. 3) In Daoist political philosophy ben is a state in which rule is exercised by not disrupting the natural order of the world, while mo refers to moral standards and fundamental principles governing social behavior. In any ben-mo relationship, ben is most important and plays a dominant role, while mo exists thanks to ben. On the other hand, it is through the vehicle of mo that ben exerts its influence. Thus the two, though different, are mutually dependent.

### 引例 Citations :

◎子夏之门人小子，当洒扫应对进退，则可矣，抑末也。本之则无，如之何？（《论语·子张》）

（子夏的学生，叫他们做打扫、接待、应对的工作，那是可以的，不过这只是末节罢了。而那些最根本性的学问却没有学习，这怎么行呢？）

Zixia's students can clean, receive guests, and engage in social interaction, but these are trivial things. They have not learned the fundamentals. How can this be sufficient? (The Analects)

◎崇本以举其末。（王弼《老子注》）

（崇尚自然无为之本以统括道德礼法之末。）

One should respect, not interfere with, the natural order of the world, and apply this principle when establishing moral standards, social norms, and laws and regulations. (Wang Bi: Commentaries on Laozi)

# bōrě 般若

## Buddhist Wisdom

梵文 praj.ā的音译（或译为“波若”）。意为“智慧”，指能洞见一切事物本性、认识万物真相的最高的智慧。佛教认为，“般若”是超越一切世俗认识的特殊智慧，是觉悟得道、修成佛或菩萨的所有修行方法的指南或根本。然而，这种智慧本身无形无相，不可言说，仅能依赖各种方便法门而有所领悟。

The term is the transliteration of the Sanskrit word praj.ā, meaning wisdom. It refers to the supreme wisdom with insight into the nature and reality of all things. Buddhism believes that such wisdom surpasses all secular understandings, and therefore is the guide for or essence of the effort aimed at achieving enlightenment and attaining Buddhahood or bodhisattvahood. This wisdom has no form, no appearance, and cannot be expressed in words. It can only be achieved by undertaking a variety of accessible Buddhist practices.

### 引例 Citation :

◎般若无所知，无所见。（僧肇《肇论》引《道行般若经》）

（般若这种智慧不是普通的知识，也超越一切具体的见闻。）

Praj. is the wisdom that surpasses all common or ordinary knowledge and specific understandings. (Sengzhao: Treatises of Sengzhao)

## bù xué shī, wú yǐ yán 不学《诗》，无以言

**You Won't Be Able to Talk Properly with Others Without Studying The Book of Songs.**

不学习《诗经》，就不能提高与人交流和表达的能力。孔子时

代,《诗经》象征着一个人的社会身份与文化修养。不学习《诗经》,就无法参与君子间的各种交往,就不能提高语言表达能力。孔子对《诗经》与社会交往关系的论述,实际阐明了文学的教育功能或者说文学在教育中的重要地位。

In Confucius' time, how well one understood The Book of Songs was a sign of his social status and cultural attainment. If one did not study it, one would find it difficult to improve one's ability to express oneself and to converse with people of high social status. Confucius' elaboration on the relationship between studying The Book of Songs and social interaction actually expounds on the importance of literature in education.

### 引例 Citation :

◎尝独立,鲤过于庭。曰:“学《诗》乎?”对曰:“未也。”“不学《诗》,无以言。”(《论语·季氏》)

(孔子曾独自站在堂上,儿子伯鱼从堂下庭院经过,孔子问他:“学习《诗经》了吗?”伯鱼回答:“没有。”孔子说:“不学习《诗经》,就不会交流与表达。”)

Confucius was standing alone in the central hall when his son Boyu walked across the front yard. Confucius asked, “Have you studied The Book of Songs?” “Not yet,” was the reply. Confucius then said, “If you do not study it, you will not be able to express yourself properly.” (The Analects)

## chéng 诚

### Sincerity

“诚”是儒家思想的核心概念之一,其基本含义是真实无妄。儒家认为,“诚”是“天道”或“天理”的本质,是万物得以存在的根据。同时,“诚”也是道德的本原和基础,一切道德的行为必须建立在内心真

实无妄之上，否则便是虚妄，《中庸》称之为“不诚无物”。圣人以“诚”为本性，其言行自然与“天道”“天理”相合；君子则以“诚”作为道德修养的目标以及达于“天道”“天理”的途径。

Sincerity is among the core concepts of the Confucian school of thought. Basically, it means truthfulness without deceit. Confucians believed that sincerity is the essence of the “way of heaven” or “principles of heaven,” a basis on which everything else is built. At the same time, sincerity is also the root and foundation of morality. All moral deeds must be conducted on the basis of sincerity from the bottom of the heart. Otherwise, they are nothing but pretensions. The Doctrine of the Mean maintains, “Nothing can be achieved without sincerity.” Sages are sincere by nature. Therefore, their words and deeds are naturally consistent with the “way of heaven” and the “principles of heaven.” Junzi (a man of virtue) upholds sincerity as his goal for moral attainment and an approach to achieving the “way of heaven” and the “principles of heaven.”

### 引例 Citations :

◎诚者，天之道也；诚之者，人之道也。（《礼记·中庸》）

（“诚”，是天的法则；达到“诚”，是人的修养路径。）

Being as it is is the way of nature; being true to human nature is the way to achieve self-refinement. (The Book of Rites)

◎诚者，真实无妄之谓，天理之本然也。（朱熹《中庸章句》）

（“诚”就是真实不伪，是天理本来的状态。）

Sincerity means utter truthfulness without any pretensions or deceit. It is the natural state of the principles of heaven. (Zhu Xi: Annotations on The Doctrine of the Mean)



# dàtóng 大同

## Universal Harmony

儒家理想中的天下一家、人人平等、友爱互助的太平盛世（与“小康”相对）。儒家认为它是人类社会发展的最高阶段，类似于西方的乌托邦。其主要特征是：权力和财富归社会公有；社会平等，安居乐业；人人能得到社会的关爱；货尽其用，人尽其力。清末民初，“大同”又被用来指称西方传来的社会主义、共产主义、世界主义等概念。

This term refers to the time of peace and prosperity envisioned by Confucian scholars when all the people under heaven are one family, equal, friendly, and helpful to each other (as opposed to xiaokang [小康] – minor or moderate prosperity). Confucianism takes universal harmony as the supreme stage of the development of the human society, somewhat similar to the idea of utopia in the West. Its main features are: All power and wealth belong to the whole of society; all people are equal and live and work in peace and contentment; everyone is cared for by society; everything is used to its fullest and everyone works to his maximum potential. In the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, the term referred to the concepts of socialism, communism, or cosmopolitanism that had been introduced to China from the West.

### 引例 Citation :

◎大道之行也，天下为公，选贤与能，讲信修睦。故人不独亲其亲，不独子其子，使老有所终，壮有所用，幼有所长，矜寡孤独废疾者，皆有所养 .....是谓大同。（《礼记·礼运》）

（大道实行的时代，天下为百姓所共有，品德高尚、才能突出的人被选拔出来管理社会，人与人之间讲究诚实与和睦。所以人们不仅仅爱自己的双亲，不仅仅抚养自己的子女，而是使老年人都能终其天年，壮年人都有用武之地，幼童都能得到抚育，无妻或丧妻的年老男

子、无夫或丧夫的年老女子、丧父的儿童、无子女的老人以及残障者都能得到照顾和供养 .....这就叫做大同社会。)

When great Dao prevails, the whole world is owned by all the people. Those who are virtuous and competent are selected as administrators. People treat each other with sincerity and live in harmony. People not only love their parents, bring up their children, but also take care of the aged. The middle-aged are able to put their talents and abilities to best use, children are well nurtured, and old widows and widowers, unmarried old people, orphans, childless old people, and the disabled are all provided for... This is universal harmony. (The Book of Rites)

## dào 道

### Dao (Way)

本义指人所行之路，引申而有三重含义：其一，指不同领域的事物所遵循的法则，如日月星辰运行的规律称为天道，人事活动所遵循的规律称为人道；其二，指万事万物所遵循的普遍法则；其三，指事物的本原或本体，超越于有形的具体事物，是万物生成的基始，又是万物存在和人类行为的根据。儒家、道家、佛教等都谈论道，其内涵差异甚大。儒家之道以仁义礼乐为基本内容，佛教和道家之道偏重“空”“无”方面的意义。

In its original meaning, dao (道) is the way or path taken by people. It has three extended meanings: 1) the general laws followed by things in different spheres,

e.g. the natural order by which the sun, moon and stars move is called the way of heaven; the rules that govern human activities are the way of man; 2) the universal patterns followed by all things and beings; and 3) the original source or ontological existence of things, which transcends form and constitutes the basis for the birth and

众的人“选举”到政权体系中来，授以官职，治理国家，以达成理想的统治状态。这种制度，虽因朝代和时势变迁而不尽相同，但大都注重品德、才智及门第出身等条件，基本保障了政权体系和社会精英之间的纵向贯通。它是“人治”“德政”理念的体现。

This term refers to the traditional way through which men were selected and appointed to government offices. Designed to achieve an ideal state of rule, the method worked to select and recommend people with outstanding virtue and talent into the system of political power and put them to official posts, where they took charge of the governance of the country. Although the mechanism varied from dynasty to dynasty, it always emphasized a person's moral integrity, ability, wisdom, and family background. It basically ensured that social elites had vertical mobility in the system of political power, and reflected the concepts of “rule of man” and “rule of virtue.”

### **引例 Citation:**

◎选举之法，大略有四：曰学校，曰科目，曰荐举，曰铨选。学校以教育之，科目以登进之，荐举以旁招之，铨选以布列之，天下人才尽于是矣。（《明史·选举志一》）

（选举官吏的方法，大体有四种：官学推荐，科举录用，举荐产生，选材授官。官学用来培育人才，科举用来录取人才，举荐作为佐助手段招揽人才，吏部选材授官，使人才遍布各处，天下的人才全都收揽进来了。）

Officials were chosen mainly through four channels: recommendations by government-run schools, imperial civil examinations, recommendations, and selection according to ability. Schools trained talent, imperial civil examinations recruited talent, recommendations served as a supplementary means to seek talent, and the Ministry of Civil Appointment selected officials according to their ability. In this way, all talent in the country could be recruited.

Confucius said, “I detest replacing red with purple and interfering refined classical music with the music of the State of Zheng. I loathe those who overthrow the state with their glib tongues.” (The Analects)

◎是以绘事图色，文辞尽情，色糅而犬马殊形，情交而雅俗异势。（刘勰《文心雕龙·定势》）

（因此绘画要讲究色彩，写文章要尽力表现思想感情。调配不同的色彩，所画出的狗和马形状才有区别；思想感情有了交错融合，文章的雅俗才显出不同的体势。）

The art of painting requires masterful use of colors, while the art of writing entails effective expression of thoughts and emotions. One needs to blend different colors in order to depict the different shapes of dogs and horses. Only writings that integrate thoughts and emotions demonstrate their highbrow or lowbrow qualities. (Liu Xie: The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons)

## yǎngqì 养气

### Cultivating Qi

涵养道德精神、调养身心健康以达到良好的文艺创作心态，从而创作出优秀的文艺作品。这一术语具有多重蕴涵：其一，先秦孟子强调君子应善于培养道德精神的“浩然之气”。其二，东汉王充在《论衡》中有《养气篇》，专门从养生角度提倡“养气”。其三，南朝刘勰《文心雕龙·养气》，汲取上述思想，主张在从事文艺创作的初始阶段，要保持良好的身体状态和从容自由的心态，不应过度消耗精神。后来“养气”成为文艺心理学的重要术语。

This term suggests cultivating one's moral spirit and improving one's physical and mental well-being to achieve the best state of mind during literary creation in order to write excellent works. “Cultivating qi (气)” has three implications: 1) in the pre-Qin period Mencius emphasized that the virtuous and the capable should foster a

“righteous qi” conducive to moral cultivation; 2) A Comparative Study of Different Schools of Learning by Wang Chong of the Eastern Han Dynasty has a chapter entitled “Treatise on Cultivating Qi,” which emphasizes qi cultivation primarily in regards to maintaining good health; 3) Liu Xie of the Southern Dynasties, in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, drew upon the foregoing ideas and suggested maintaining good physical condition and a free, composed mental state in the initial phase of literary creation, while opposing excessive mental exertion. “Cultivating qi” subsequently became an important term in the lexicon of literary psychology.

### 引例 Citations :

◎我知言，我善养吾浩然之气。（《孟子·公孙丑上》）

（我能够识别各种言论中的思想感情倾向，这是因为 I 懂得如何培养自己正大刚强的“气”。）

I am capable of differentiating between the thoughts and sentiments people convey in their words because I know how to cultivate my qi, and keep it strong. (Mencius)

◎是以吐纳文艺，务在节宣，清和其心，调畅其气；烦而即舍，勿使壅滞。（刘勰《文心雕龙·养气》）

（因此从事写作必须学会节制和疏导，让内心纯净平和，将气调理顺畅，内心烦乱时就应停止，不要让思路滞涩。）

Hence, when engaging in writing one must learn how to constrain and regulate oneself, keep one’s mind pure and peaceful, and modulate one’s mental vitality and activities. One should stop writing when upset so as not to disrupt one’s train of thinking. (Liu Xie: *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*)

# yī 一

## The One

“一”有三种不同含义：其一，指万物的本体或本原，即“道”的别称，或称“太一”。其二，指天地未分之时的混沌状态。“一”分化形成天地，天地万物都产生于这样一个混沌的统一体。其三，指事物的统一性，与“多”“两”相对，意在强调有差异或对立的事物之间的统一性。

The term has three meanings. First, it indicates the original essence of all things. It is another name for dao (way). It is also referred to as taiyi (the supreme one). Second, it refers to the state of chaos before the separation of heaven and earth. The one was divided and transformed into heaven and earth. All things in heaven and on earth were produced from this Chaotic entity. Third, it indicates the unity of things, as opposed to “many” or “two.” The idea is to emphasize the unity among things which are different or opposite.

### 引例 Citations :

◎一者，万物之所从始也。（董仲舒《举贤良对策》）

（“一”是万物产生的端始。）

The one is the origin of everything. (Dong Zhongshu: Replies to the Emperor's Questions After Being Recommended)

◎两不立则一不可见，一不可见则两之用息。（张载《正蒙·太和》）

（没有相反两方的对立则统一体不可得见，统一体不可得见则相反两方的对立也就消失了。）

Unity cannot be seen without the contradiction between two