

Lai Chen

# The Core Values of Chinese Civilization



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# Preface

In the spring of 2007, I gave a talk at Tufts University on “Confucianism and the Transformations of Contemporary China.” I discussed two issues. One was the characteristics of Confucian values, and the other was the changes of contemporary China. As the audience of American students had no familiarity with the Chinese language, I could not quote from the Chinese classics in the way I do when speaking in China. Therefore, I declared openly at the beginning of the talk that I would not discuss classical texts and instead attempted a comparative approach to elucidating the characteristics of Chinese thought and values. I identified eight total points: Morality is more important than law, this life more important than the afterlife, the community more important than the individual, the spiritual more important than the material, responsibility more important than rights, the well-being of the people more important than democracy, order more important than freedom, and harmony more valuable than struggle.

In the summer of 2010, I gave a report on “Confucian Thought and Contemporary Society” for a forum on reading held by China’s central government at the headquarters of the General Administration of Press and Publication. I discussed four issues: The first was Confucian culture, the second was Confucian thought on governance and political administration, the third was the Confucian perspective on human life, and the fourth was Confucianism and contemporary China. In this fourth part on the question of Confucianism and contemporary China, I adopted a comparative method and modern perspective in looking at the characteristics of Confucian values. In total, I discussed ten points: Morality is more important than law, the community more important than the individual, the spiritual more important than the material, responsibility more important than rights, the well-being of the people more important than democracy, order more important than freedom, this life more important than the afterlife, harmony more valuable than struggle, civilization more valuable than impoverishment, and family more valuable than social class. This time, I discussed two points in addition to those described at Tufts and slightly adjusted their order.

In the fall of 2012, at the invitation of the Korean Academic Research Council, I served as a speaker for the 14th series of “Special Lectures by Distinguished

Scholars,” carrying out academic exchange with Korea and giving a series of talks. I spoke twice in Korea, on the topics of “The Foundations of the Philosophic Thought of Chinese Civilization” and “The Values and Worldview of Chinese Civilization,” respectively. The latter concentrated on the values of Chinese civilization, while the former, although it was devoted to the discussion of philosophical thought and cosmology, could serve as an explanation of the cosmological and philosophical background of Chinese values. The topics of these two talks were set in accordance with the requirements of the Korean Academic Research Council. The Koreans had mentioned in particular that they hoped the talks would be oriented at problems that had become apparent in Western civilization and Western modernity and seek in Chinese civilization potential alternative universalist principles. Therefore, my talk took ancient Confucianism as a prominent representative of the values of humane love, ritual, responsibility, and community emphasized in Chinese civilization. Through later philosophical explication, these values further came to express universal meaning. The principle of humane love, spirit of ritual, consciousness of responsibility, and fundamental place of the community are all value positions opposed to individualism. They lead to the rational affirmation of communal collaboration, a culture of ritual education, a politics of cooperation, and a world governed by “the Way of the king” (*wangdao* 王道). They ought to become universal principles. Communal collaboration emphasizes the significance of the community, which helps counter individualism. A culture of ritual education emphasizes moral consciousness, which distinguishes it from legalism. A politics of cooperation emphasizes the cooperative political communication, which differentiates it from a politics of conflict. Finally, a world governed by “the Way of the king” is a type of world order that differs from hegemonism. These four points are all centred in humaneness (*ren* 仁). Humaneness is a fundamental principle that takes interrelation and peaceful coexistence as its content. The principal purpose of identifying these is to elucidate alternative universal principles that differ from those of Western modernity. After returning from Korea, I immediately published the Chinese text of this study in an academic journal with slight adjustments. I added the following sentences: The basic values formed in Axial Age Chinese civilization became the principle guides for the core values developed in later Chinese civilization. Through the two millennia of development following the Axial Age, Chinese civilization formed its own set value preferences, of which there are principally four: the priority of responsibility to freedom, the priority of duty to rights, the community being higher than the individual, and harmony being higher than conflict. These four points present pronounced contrast with modern Western culture and are adjusted and simplified from the aforementioned ten points. To a certain extent, they also aim to express the characteristics of the values of Chinese civilization in a more focused and succinct way.

The above views all engage with the values of traditional Chinese culture and their characteristics. I have mentioned these often in my various works on Confucianism and Chinese culture in recent years and have drawn the attention of a

certain number of other thinkers. In fact, I have discussed the characteristics of the values of Confucianism and Chinese culture many times in various lectures since 2004.

In recent years, the fervor for *guoxue* 国学 (Chinese studies) has risen throughout China. Passion for the study of the resplendent culture pioneered by our ancestors has increased consistently among the broad Chinese masses. Therefore, this volume includes two papers on the history and concept of this area of scholarship, so as to help readers understand the general academic views on *guoxue*. During the twentieth century's New Culture Movement, there was a movement to organize traditional Chinese culture and learning, and Liang Qichao pointed out two forms of common knowledge of *guoxue*: a general understanding of Chinese history and Chinese people's perspective on human life. That is to say, the study of *guoxue* in one aspect requires grasping China's history and culture and in another aspect requires study and grasping of Chinese culture's perspective on human life. The perspective on human life discussed by Liang Qichao is also values. Therefore, in examining *guoxue* and traditional Chinese culture today, we need broad understanding of the history of the generation, maturation, and development of Chinese culture, recognizing its unique qualities, existential value, and universal significance. We also need self-conscious study and absorption of the values of Chinese civilization, by which to advance the cultural confidence of the people as a whole, inspire the spirit of the people, strengthen the cohesion and vitality of the Chinese people, and strive to realize a great renaissance of the Chinese people and Chinese culture.

Beijing, China  
February 2015—First Day of Spring

Lai Chen

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# Chapter 1

## The Philosophical Foundations of Chinese Civilization

The philosophical foundations of Chinese civilization manifest mainly as cosmology. In contrast to modern Western mechanistic theories of the universe, the classical Chinese philosophical cosmology emphasizes continuity, dynamism, relativity, relationships, and the totality. It is not a self-centric philosophy that assumes a subject-object dichotomy and focuses on static, isolated, and substantial entities. Starting from its organic holism, the classical Chinese perspective views everything in the cosmos as interrelated and interdependent. Each thing's own existence and value manifests only in its relations to other things. Thus relationships of symbiotic harmony should be established between humans and nature, between persons, and between cultures. This cosmology of Chinese philosophy not only provided ideological support for ancient Chinese civilization, but also provides the philosophical foundation for the values of the Chinese civilization.

What is the philosophical foundation of Chinese civilization? This is a question we must ask in face of China's contemporary renaissance and cosmopolitan movement toward the world. This book attempts to respond to this question. "Philosophical foundation" or "philosophical background" are ideas that can be taken in a very broad sense, but I focus on two aspects of the philosophical foundation of the Chinese civilization in my discussion: firstly, philosophical thinking and cosmology; and secondly, values and worldview. In this chapter I will focus on the first aspect.

The Yangtze River and the Yellow River were the center of early agricultural development in the north and central regions of China, and are the bases of Chinese civilization. In the late stages of the Neolithic period, there was diversified development among the regional cultures along the Yangtze River, in areas now known

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This chapter was translated by Paul J. D'Ambrosio. All quotations from Chinese texts in this chapter are also D'Ambrosio's, unless otherwise noted.

The content of this chapter was presented as part of the 2012 series of "Special Lectures by Distinguished Scholars" held in Seoul by the Korean Academic Research Council and Daewoo Fund.

as Shaanxi, Shanxi, Henan, Shandong, and Hubei, for instance. Gradually the Central Plains became the heartland, and the cultures of Yangtze River and the Yellow River regions formed the main body of culture, linking different aspects of surrounding cultures. So the origin and formation of Chinese civilization was achieved through a continual integration of diverse cultures. The Central Plains and early Xiaohua 华夏 civilization were at the center of this integration, which exhibited mutual absorption and fusion between the center and the periphery, forming a pluralistic civilization. Shang dynasty (c. 1600 B.C.E.–c. 1046 B.C.E.) civilization already constituted an example of this pluralistic civilization taking early Xiaohua civilization as the center. This displays a defining element of Chinese culture. Looking at the civilization of ancient China's Three Dynasties, from the Xia dynasty (c. 2070 B.C.E.–c. 1600 B.C.E.) to the Shang, to the Zhou dynasty (c. 1046 B.C.E.–c. 256 B.C.E.), the vast geographical region and tremendous total scope of Chinese civilization are a characteristic that sets it apart from other ancient cultures. During this process the fusion of different races reached a high level. The residents of the Yellow River basin formed the Xiaohua people, and were continually integrated with the surrounding Di, Yi, and Rong peoples. By the time of the Qin dynasty (221 B.C.E.–206 B.C.E.) the Han ethnic group included sixty million people.<sup>1</sup> There are many reasons that contribute to the continuity and wide expanse of the Chinese civilization, many of which are internal aspects of the civilization itself, including ancestor worship and the coupling of the clan and country.

Sinologists have already pointed out that in order to understand Chinese civilization it is necessary to understand its ideological foundations.<sup>2</sup> The method for doing so involves tracing the formation of Chinese civilization to its roots, and finding the ways of thinking and concepts that have been influential to its development, which thereby shows the core elements of Chinese civilization. Understanding Chinese cosmology and the Chinese worldview have been considered the most important of these core elements. Truly, they are the most fundamental premises upon which the Chinese perspective on time, space, causality, and human nature are built. These worldviews are thought to be closely related to many aspects of the history of Chinese civilization.

This attention to the basic concepts of the early stages of the Chinese civilization's formation implies affirmation of the long continuity of the totality of Chinese civilization. This is because if this civilization had been interrupted or significantly altered then there would be no point in paying so much attention to its early formation. Benjamin Schwartz has pointed out that overemphasizing the importance of the early stages of a civilization is often met with criticism because there have been various changes in many aspects of Chinese civilization from the Axial Age to modern China. Schwartz stresses that these changes in Chinese history

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<sup>1</sup>See Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈 and Yan Wenming 严文明, eds., *Zhonghua wenming shi* 中华文明史, (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2006), 1:4–5.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick Mote Mou Fuli 牟复礼, Preface to *Zhongguo sixiang zhi yuanyuan* 中国思想之渊源 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2009), 1.

should be taken within the framework of this civilization because, unlike in the West, it has experienced no comprehensive or fundamental ruptures.<sup>3</sup> That is to say, the overall framework of the Chinese civilization persists continuously throughout history. Here the “framework of civilization” includes not only external institutions of culture, but also characteristics of the ideas behind them. Clearly this means that the most basic concepts and ways of thinking, as the foundation of Chinese civilization, are stable and consistent through history. However, it should also be pointed out that the way Western sinologists trace the origins of Chinese civilization, looking for how modern thinking and concepts are influenced and established in earlier times, is not a comprehensive method. Key characteristics of a civilization are formed not only in its early stages. Understanding the mature stages of a civilization, with all its integrated features, can provide a more complete picture of its content and characteristics.

Clearly, in contrast to modern Western mechanistic theories of the universe, the classical Chinese philosophical cosmology emphasizes continuity, dynamism, relativity, relationships, and the totality. It is not a self-centric philosophy that assumes a subject-object dichotomy and focuses on static, isolated, and substantial entities. Starting from its organic holism, the classical Chinese perspective views everything in the cosmos as interrelated and interdependent. Each thing’s own existence and value manifests only in its relations to other things. Thus relationships of symbiotic harmony should be established between humans and nature, between persons, and between cultures. Below I will clarify a few aspects of this.

## 1.1 Correlative Cosmology

In the 1930s the French social anthropologist Marcel Granet argued that one of the defining characteristics of Chinese thinking is seeing all things as existing in correlation with one another.<sup>4</sup> In the 1970s the American sinologist Frederick Mote noted that whereas Westerners think that humans were created by some sort of higher or external power, there is no comparable creation myth in early Chinese culture. Mote says that Chinese people are unique for thinking the world, and human beings, are autogenetic and autopoetic. The generation of the cosmos is then an organic process, and every aspect of the universe is part of the whole and involved in the interaction of autogenetic life-processes.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the organic theory of the universe, and the way of thinking that it results in, can be used to explain why there is no great creation myth in early Chinese civilization. This

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<sup>3</sup>Benjamin Schwartz, *The World of Ancient Chinese Thought* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 2.

<sup>4</sup>See Roger Ames 安乐哲, *He er bu tong: Zhongguo zhexue de huitong* 和而不同: 中西哲学的会通 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2009), 202.

<sup>5</sup>Frederick Mote Mou Fuli 牟复礼, Preface to *Zhongguo sixiang zhi yuanyuan* 中国思想之渊源, 21.

view of the universe as an interactive organic whole is linked with Granet's idea of correlativity. But this correlative cosmology was formed towards the end of the Warring States period and in the Han dynasty, and thus cannot be used to illustrate why a creation myth does not appear in earlier Chinese civilization. Myths generally appear earlier than philosophical cosmologies. Mote also believes that Western beliefs in a creator God come from a notion of "cause and effect." The Chinese organic perspective, in contrast, focuses on "simultaneity." These are then two different views on the world and explanations of the way things are related.<sup>6</sup> Mote thus argues that according to the ancient Chinese worldview it was only necessary to explain how the world could be harmonious and balanced, so there was no need for a creator God.<sup>7</sup> Joseph Needham makes a similar argument from a different perspective. According to Needham, Chinese thinking is relatable to Alfred North Whitehead's "process metaphysics" (which describes a dynamic ontology) in that they both give preference to processes and complex networks of relationships. In contrast to this, the West has inherited Newton's influence, with a concentration on distinct entities and causal chains. The former describes the universe as processes within a large network of events that are intertwined with one another, whereas the latter conceives of the universe as a causal chain.<sup>8</sup>

Benjamin Schwartz's conception differs. Schwartz believes that many Chinese theories rely mainly on origin metaphors of birth and procreation rather than metaphors of creating. This may be related to these being expressions of an agricultural civilization, but is more likely due to the influence of ancestor worship.<sup>9</sup> That is to say, Schwartz believes that the lack of a creation myth and prevalence of reproductive metaphors in early Chinese civilization does not stem from correlative thinking but rather from ancestor worship. In actuality, however, Schwartz's focus on ancestor worship can only establish a connection with the crop reproduction of agricultural civilization, but cannot reject the function of correlative thinking. Connected to this, Schwartz does not think correlative thinking plays a role in the early stages of Chinese civilization. He thinks that theories of correlative cosmology arose rather late, not appearing until Warring States period *yinyang* 阴阳 theories. Oracle inscriptions, bronze inscriptions, and the "five classics"<sup>10</sup> do not provide enough evidence to support the claim that correlativity cosmologies existed before the Warring States period. We can only find evidence for this type of thinking in the *Zuozhuan* 左传, which is a rather late pre-Qin text in which human practice is seen as related to the movement of heaven. Schwartz also thinks that the thought of the *Laozi* expresses a holistic view of the universe, but that the basic

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>9</sup>Benjamin Schwartz, *The World of Ancient Chinese Thought*, 26.

<sup>10</sup>Translator's note: Namely the *Shijing* 诗经 (Book of Odes), the *Shangshu* 尚书 (Book of Documents), the *Liji* 礼记 (Book of Rites), *Yueji* 乐记 (Book of Music), *Yijing* 易经 (Book of Changes), and *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals).

trajectory of the development of this type of holism is quite distinct from correlative theories of the universe. Thus, Schwartz does not really emphasize the importance of correlative thinking. It is important to note that Schwartz's understanding of correlative thinking is somewhat narrow. For him it refers merely to a type of interactive resonance and responsiveness between things.

Responding to Mote's idea that Chinese civilization has no creation myth, Tu Weiming (Du Weiming 杜维明) introduces notion of "the continuity of being." Tu thinks that, generally speaking, Chinese theories take the universe to be an organic process. Everything in the universe is part of a whole, and its different components interact with one another while at the same time participating in the process of life by self-generating and developing. Tu Weiming points out that China is not necessarily lacking a creation myth, but rather Chinese thinking is more focused on the continuity of being and the harmony of nature. The Chinese universe is a dynamic organism, whose substance is life-force, or *qi* 气. *Qi* is both the continuous material force of space as well as life-force. Tu Weiming emphasizes continuity, dynamism, and holism as the three central points for grasping Chinese theories of the universe. This is entirely accurate. However, Tu also states that Chinese theories of the universe can affirm the universe as originating from nothing, and thus the continuity of being itself cannot respond to Mote's (or related) skepticism about China lacking a creation myth.<sup>11</sup> Similar to Schwartz's position, Tu also does not point out the importance of correlativity in theories of the universe. In fact, since Tu affirms that Chinese theories of the universe rest on an understanding of an organic process, and that process is related to correlativity, a concentration on correlativity should be the fourth central point for grasping Chinese theories of the universe.

In terms of correlative thinking, Needham is an important proponent. He thinks that, at least during the Han period, thinking associated with *yinyang* theory, the five elements (*wu xing* 五行) theory, and the interaction between heaven and humans, is not superstitious, nor is it primitive. Instead, it is "organicism," a characteristic of Chinese civilization. So-called "organicism" expresses the idea that all parts of things are related to one another, coordinate with one another, and form an inseparable unity. One of the characteristics of Han thinking is that symbolic inter connection or correspondence make up a huge model in which the operation of a thing is not necessarily due to the impetus of prior things [i.e. cause-effect thinking]. In the eternal cycle of the universe, things are given their own inherent nature of movement, and therefore movement is inevitable for things. Additionally, all things rely on the entirety of the organic world for their existence as a part of the whole. The interaction between things is not due to mechanical impetuses or functions. Things can be said to have a type of natural resonance.<sup>12</sup> Needham thinks that this is a unique way of thinking, and within this coordinated thinking various

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<sup>11</sup>Du Weiming 杜维明, *Shitan Zhongguo zhexue de sange jidiao* 试谈中国哲学中的三个基调, in Guo Qiyong 郭齐勇 and Zheng Wenlong 郑文龙, ed., *Du Weiming wenji* 杜维明文集 (Wuhan: Wuhan Chubanshe, 2002), 5: 4.

<sup>12</sup>Needham, Joseph. *Science and Civilisation in China* volume 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1956), 293.

concepts are mutually influential and interactive as opposed to being at odds or separate. Within this mutual influence, functioning does not result from mechanical causes, but rather occurs through mutual responsiveness. In this type of worldview, harmony is a basic principle of spontaneous world order. Needham imagines a holistic universe of orderly harmony free of any will exercised by an external master. The various components of the universe are all in spontaneous and harmonious cooperation without any type of mechanical coercion. In this kind of worldview, notions of linear succession are subordinated to notions of mutual dependence.<sup>13</sup> Needham's argument is an explanation of Marcel Granet's theory: because linear succession is not important, creation myths are underdeveloped. A.C. Graham can be regarded as the most important philosopher to take Needham's thought seriously, although he identifies correlative cosmology mostly in Han thinking, and overlooks the correlative thought of pre-Qin times.

When comparing European and American sinologists, we are able to say that the former emphasize correlative thinking (Roger Ames studied in the U.K., and largely follows A.C. Graham's thought), whereas the latter focus on the significance of social culture (for example filial piety (*xiao* 孝) and ancestor worship). In terms of cosmology, Needham emphasizes the dynamicity and entirety of the universe, whereas Tu Weiming emphasizes the continuity of being. We can then see that Chinese cosmological thought emphasizes continuity and dynamicity, as well as holism and connectivity.

In terms of cultural forms in the early stages of civilization, Ernst Cassirer concentrates on mythological thought and emphasizes that myths express a belief in the "unity of life," which links various forms of life with one another in a type of kinship.<sup>14</sup> The principle of "the solidarity and unbroken unity of life" is applicable in simultaneous order as well as successive order. Successive generations of people form an uninterrupted chain in which prior stages of life are preserved by new life, and there is no clear dividing line between past, present, and future.<sup>15</sup> Primitive myths about sympathetic connection did this in emotional aspects, but polytheistic Greek mythology then began to give way to a more rational study of humans, creating a "form of universal ethical sympathy" that then won out over "the primitive feelings of a natural or magical solidarity of life."<sup>16</sup> Clearly there are two types of correlativity. One type is the primitive correlativity of mythological thought, which includes shamanistic association. The second is the correlativity of philosophical thought, which is a higher level of correlativity and the type that we are focusing on. In China, the development of thought occurred in a manner similar to the path of historical reform: its development did not involve one thing overcoming another; instead, the primitive principle of the "unification of life" was

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 294.

<sup>14</sup>Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1944), 109.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 111.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 131, 133.

preserved within intellectual development following the Axial Age to become a part of later thought. But the evolution of sympathy connection among living things towards ethical sympathy and the transformation of religious or myth-based sympathy into philosophical sympathetic connection preserved the characteristics of sympathetic interaction on a higher level for a very long time. Thus the motif of the “unity of life” in mythological thought, under certain conditions, was able to be preserved in higher cultural forms within the subsequent development of civilization, becoming a philosophical cosmological understanding.<sup>17</sup> The correlative cosmological structure of Han thought inherited ideas of the “unity of life” from the age of mythology, and developed them on a higher level to become a characteristic of Chinese cosmology.

## 1.2 The One Continuous *Qi*

The development of Chinese philosophical thought has proceeded uninterrupted for more than two thousand years. There is no doubt that it possesses certain outstanding features in terms of its general understandings of the universe and world, as well as the manner of its thinking reflected by these understandings. One of the most prominent of these features is that the unique characteristics of the structure of Chinese cosmology cannot be separated from a notion of *qi*.

With regard to its understanding the existing world, the theory of *qi* is one of the most basic properties of Chinese philosophy. The philosophy of *qi* is an important property of ancient Chinese ontologies. Since the original meaning of *qi* is a materialistic substance, cosmological *qi* theory represents efforts of Chinese philosophy to understand the structure of the world in terms of materialistic concepts. In Chinese philosophy, *wu* 物 indicates a physical object, and *zhi* 质 refers to the fixed form or body of a thing. The fixed form or body of *zhi* is composed of *qi*. *Qi* that has not yet been formed into specific things is the material from which things are formed.<sup>18</sup> *Qi* in Chinese philosophy refers to the most subtle and dynamic entity. Atomic theory in Western philosophy holds that all things are composed of tiny solid objects, and that these atoms are a type of final individual particle of matter. In Chinese philosophy, on the other hand, *qi* theories hold that all things are made up of the coalescence and dissipation of *qi*. One of the most fundamental differences between atomic theory and *qi* theory is that atomic theory has to assume that in addition to atoms there is empty space, and that there are no atoms in this space, which provides the possibility for atoms to move. *Qi* theory opposes the idea of empty space, thinking instead of all space as full of *qi*. There is an interesting

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<sup>17</sup>Correlative thinking also existed in other civilizations, but the development of the correlative thought of the age of mythology into a philosophical correlative cosmological structure during China’s late-Warring States period differed from other civilizations.

<sup>18</sup>See Zhang Dainian 张岱年, Introduction to *Zhongguo gudai yuanqi xueshuo* 中国古代元气学说 (Wuhan, China: Hubei Renmin Chubanshe, 1986), 1.



contrast between the *qi* theory of Chinese thought and the atomic theory of Western thinking. On this issue Zhang Dainian 张岱年 points out, “Ancient Chinese philosophy discusses *qi* and emphasizes *qi*’s movement and transformation, affirming its continuous existence and the unity of voids and *qi*. This all differs from Western material conceptions.”<sup>19</sup>

The ancient Chinese concept of *qi* comes from “smoke” (*yanqi* 烟气), “vapor” (*zhengqi* 蒸汽), “fog” (*wuqi* 雾气), “haze” (*yunqi* 云气), and other types of *qi*. For example, the *Shuowen Lexicon* (*Shuowen jiezi* 说文解字) states, “*qi* is haze.” *Qi* was a concept that referred originally to concrete objects, and later was generalized to become a concept of natural philosophy. As far as its meaning in natural philosophy is concerned, *qi* remained related to the daily notions of “air” (*kongqi* 空气) and atmosphere (*daqì* 大气). One of the clear conclusions of the contrast between Chinese *qi* theory and Western atomic theory is that atomic theory expresses a discontinuity of substance, whereas *qi* theory reflects continuity of substance. It should be noted that a philosophical appreciation of the continuity of *qi* reflects the emphasis on the continuity of things in Chinese civilization. This is closely related to my description of Chinese civilization as a “civilization of continuity.” The archaeological anthropologist Zhang Guangzhi 张光直 has similarly stressed this aspect of China as a civilization of continuity in describing its connection with Chinese civilization’s emphasis on “continuity of being,” which is also related to early civilization’s holistic cosmology.<sup>20</sup>

*Qi*, as an entity of continuity, is expressed in various ways in Chinese philosophy. For example, Xunzi 荀子 (d. 238 B.C.E.) discussed “filling the great space and leaving no emptiness,”<sup>21</sup> which expresses the idea that haze completely fills the cosmos, and indicates also the continuity of *qi*’s existence. The Song dynasty scholar Zhang Zai 张载 (d. 1077) stated, “The great void (*tai xu* 太虚) cannot be void of *qi*” and “Knowing the great void (*tai xu* 太虚) means [knowing] *qi* is not nothing.”<sup>22</sup> Here Zhang emphasizes that the great void is completely full of *qi*, or that emptiness is another form of *qi*. Wang Tingxiang 王廷相 (d. 1544) wrote, “Heaven and earth have never been divided, original *qi* is undifferentiated, pure vacuity is without separation: these are the original means of generative transformation.”<sup>23</sup> Here, although Wang is talking about the undifferentiated state of heaven and earth, the notion of being “without separation” (*wu jian* 无间) expresses continuity and lack of separation an idea of “no gaps” expresses continuity without rupture. Fang Yizhi 方以智 (d. 1671) wrote, “*qi* has no gaps,”<sup>24</sup> and Wang Fuzhi

<sup>19</sup>Zhang Dainian, “Kaizhan Zhongguo zhexue guyou gainian fanchou de yanjiu” 开展中国哲学固有概念范畴的研究, in *Zhongguo zhexueshi yanjiu* 中国哲学史研究 1 (1982).

<sup>20</sup>Zhang Guangzhi 张光直, “Lianxu yu polie: Yige wenming qi yuan xinshuo de caogao” 连续与破裂——一个文明起源新说的草稿, in *Zhongguo Qingtong Shidai* 中国青铜时代 (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing, 1999).

<sup>21</sup>Xunzi 26.6.

<sup>22</sup>Zhang Zai 张载, “Taihe” 太和, *Zheng meng* 正蒙.

<sup>23</sup>Wang Tingxiang 王廷相, “Daoti” 道体, *Shen yan* 慎言.

<sup>24</sup>Fang Yizhi 方以智, “Guang lun” 光论, *Wuli xiaoshi* 物理小识.

王夫之 (d. 1692) declared, “the two *qi* of *yin* and *yang* fill the entirety of the ultimate void; outside of this there is nothing, and there are no gaps.”<sup>25</sup> In fact, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (d. 1200) also taught that *qi* is continuous and that there are no gaps in the world. The continuity Zhu describes completely fills space and time.<sup>26</sup>

Since *qi* is a continuous existence, and is not independent and individual atomic entities, the mainstream view of the world in Chinese philosophy stresses grasping the existence of *qi* as a whole. It does not emphasize reduction to individual atomic entities, but concentrates instead on the holistic and systematic nature of existence. Thus, in Chinese philosophy we see discussion of “the circulation of the one *qi*” and “the unseparated nature of the one *qi*.” “The one *qi*” expresses an aspect that is prior to differentiation and holistic. “Circulation” expresses that *qi* exists in a constant state of movement. Zhu Xi taught, “The one *qi* is everywhere between heaven and earth. The myriad things are dispersed, distinct, and different, but they have never begun to leave the oneness of *qi*.”<sup>27</sup> Luo Qinchun 罗钦顺 (d. 1547) wrote, “Penetrating throughout heaven and earth, forever, in ancient times and today, there has never not been the one *qi*. *Qi* is one, moving and still, coming and going, closed and open, rising and falling, an endless loop.”<sup>28</sup> Liu Zongzhou 刘宗周 (d. 1645) wrote, “Filling the space between heaven and earth, there is only the one *qi*.”<sup>29</sup> Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 (d. 1695) wrote, “In the space between heaven and earth there is only the one *qi* completely filling, generating humans and things.”<sup>30</sup> The one *qi* exists throughout the entirety of the world as continuous, integrated, and dynamic. This type of cosmology is shared in the history of the development of Chinese philosophy by Confucians, Daoists, and philosophers from other schools. It is the basic cosmological position of Chinese philosophy.

The totality of existence is the unification of humans and world as well as the unification of humans and the cosmos. Dualistic splits in modern philosophy destroy this original unity. In times following modernity humankind should return to the totality of unified existence with the cosmos. At the same time, the person in Chinese culture is not atomic but rather one party of correlative existence within the continuum of social relationships, and this understanding is strong supported by the philosophical theory of *qi*.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, “Taihe” 太和, *Zheng meng zhu* 正蒙注.

<sup>26</sup>See, for example, “Da Lüzi yue” 答吕子约, in *Zhu Wen Gong wenji* 朱文公文集.

<sup>27</sup>Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子语类, vol. 27.

<sup>28</sup>Luo Qinchun 罗钦顺, *Kun zhi ji* 困知记.

<sup>29</sup>Liu Zongzhou 刘宗周, “Yulu” 语录, in *Liu Zongzhou quanji* 刘宗周全集.

<sup>30</sup>Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲, *Mengzi shi shuo* 孟子师说.

<sup>31</sup>Huang Junjie 黄俊杰 describes relative thinking 联系性思维方式 in “Chuantong Zhongguo de siwei fangshi ji qi jiazhi guan” 传统中国的思维方式及其价值观, published in Huang Junjie, ed., *Chuantong Zhongguo wenhua yu xiandai jiazhi de jidang yu tiaoshi* 传统中华文化与现代价值的激荡与调适 (Taipei: Himalaya Foundation, 2002).

### 1.3 Yin-Yang Complementation

The concepts of *yin* and *yang* arose even earlier than *qi*, having appeared already in the early Western Zhou. In their earliest uses they referred to the sunny and shady sides of things, the sunny being *yang* and the shady being *yin*. In the *Yijing* 易经 (Book of Changes), *yin* and *yang* are taken to be two fundamental forces in the world and two opposing aspects of single things.

The most famous ancient *yin-yang* discussion is given in the “Appended Phrases” (*Xi ci* 系辞) of the *Yizhuan* 易传 (Zhou commentary on the *Book of Changes*), which states, “One *yin* one *yang*, that is called the Way (*dao* 道).” This line refers to the opposition and interaction of *yin* and *yang*, which is a universal law of change in the cosmos. The “Discussion of the Trigrams” (*Shuo gua* 说卦) passages of the *Yizhuan* universalize *yin* and *yang*, stating, “Establishing the Way of heaven is called *yin* and *yang*, establishing the Way of earth is called soft and firm, establishing the Way of humans is called humaneness and obligation.” This thought takes the opposition and complementary nature of *yin* and *yang* as the Way of heaven, and the Way of the earth and the Way of humans are also supported by this principle. In the *Zhuangzi* 庄子 (Book of Master Zhuang) there is already a generative theory of *yin* and *yang*: “The utmost *yin* is cold and still, the utmost *yang* is hot and turbulent; coldness and stillness come from heaven, heat and turbulence come from earth, the thorough interaction between the two generates harmony, and all things are born therein.”<sup>32</sup>

Towards the end of the Western Zhou, *yin* and *yang* were not only two types of universal basic oppositions in the cosmos, but the concepts of *yin* and *yang* were united with the concept of *qi*. During the Warring States period, for example, Zhuangzi 庄子 (d. 295 B.C.E.) discussed, “*Yin* and *yang* and greatest *qi*.”<sup>33</sup> This is a way of referring to *yin* as *yin-qi* and *yang* as *yang-qi*. This creates the “two *qi*” concept. The *Yizhuan* demonstrates this type of thinking: not only is *qi* distinguished as *yin* and *yang*, but also there is stress on the interaction between the two types of *qi*. For example, the “Commentary on the Judgment” (*Tuan zhuan* 象传) for the *xian* 咸 hexagram says, “The responsiveness between the two *qi* is mutual... Heaven and earth interact and all things transform and are generated.” Xunzi expressed a similar idea: “Heaven and earth unite and all things are generated, *yin* and *yang* meet and change is initiated.”<sup>34</sup> *Yin* and *yang*, as the basic elements composing the universe, are not only mutually opposing, but are also mutually functioning and mutually responsive. The interaction between *yin* and *yang* causes the myriad of things to be generated, and allows for the possibility of transformation and change. *Yin* and *yang*, as complementary opposites, are the root of existence and changes in the world. Using correlative language we could say that *yin* and *yang* are the most basic elements of correlativity.

<sup>32</sup>Zhuangzi 21.4.

<sup>33</sup>Zhuangzi 25.10.

<sup>34</sup>Xunzi 17.11.

After the Han period, *yin* and *yang* became deeply ingrained basic characteristics of Chinese philosophy. Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (d. 104 B.C.E.) stated, “The *qi* of heaven and earth unites as one; divided it is *yin* and *yang*, distinguished it is the four seasons, broken up it is the five elements.”<sup>35</sup> In Han thinking, *yin-yang*, the five elements, and the four seasons are all divided and different forms of the *qi* of heaven and earth. Additionally, there is a strong connection between *yin-yang* and the five elements, four seasons, five directions, five colors, and five flavors. From this a relational schema of the correlative cosmos was developed. Apart from the interaction and complementarity of *yin* and *yang*, the five elements are also understood as reinforcing one another—even reciprocally promoting and restricting one another. The Song dynasty scholar Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 (d. 1073) argued, “Separating *yin* and separating *yang*, two rites are established; *yang* changes and *yin* unites, and metal, wood, water, fire, and earth are generated.” He also wrote, “the two *qi* and five elements transform and generate all things; the five particularities have two realities, and these two are fundamentally one.”<sup>36</sup> From the Song dynasty on, every philosopher has been influenced by *yin-yang*. Neo-Confucians especially rely on *yin-yang* philosophy in the *Yizhuan* to continue the development of a *yin-yang* worldview. Shao Yong 邵雍 (d. 1077) wrote, “In the beginning of movement, *yang* is generated; at the peak of movement, *yin* is generated. In the interaction of *yin* and *yang*, the function of heaven can be seen.” He also stated, “*Yang* below intersects with *yin*, *yin* above intersects with *yang*, and the four images are generated therein. *Yang* intersects with *yin*, *yin* intersects with *yang*, and this generates the four images of heaven.”<sup>37</sup> Whether it is the association of *yin* and *yang*, or their intersection, philosophically this indicates the interaction of *yin* and *yang*. This type of interaction is not of conflicting opposites, but responsive fusion; they are mutually attracted and cooperate with one another. Of course, in terms of the fundamental properties of *yin* and *yang*, we generally say that *yang* is proactive and *yin* is passive. However, the theory of the generation of the universe according to “the two *qi*” philosophy does not emphasize this type of difference. As Zhu Xi taught of the two *qi* of *yin-yang*, “Heaven and earth are one *qi*, and are self-split into *yin* and *yang*; *yin* and *yang* as two *qi* are mutually responsive, and transform and generate all things. Thus all the myriad things have never not had counterparts.”<sup>38</sup> Zhang Zai has the famous saying, “One thing with two bodies, that is *qi*. As one it is numinous; as two it is transformation.”<sup>39</sup> “One thing with two bodies” refers to one *qi* including *yin* and *yang* as two aspects. “As one it is numinous” refers to the sublime function realized only through the totality of the unification of *yin* and *yang*. “As two it is transformation” refers to the one *qi* containing the interaction of *yin* and *yang*, which allows for *qi* functions of transformation and generation. Dai

<sup>35</sup>Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, “Wuxing xiangsheng” 五行相生, *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露.

<sup>36</sup>Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐, *Taiji tu shuo* 太极图说.

<sup>37</sup>Shao Yong 邵雍, *Guan wu nei pian* 观物内篇.

<sup>38</sup>Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, vol. 53.

<sup>39</sup>Zhang Zai, *Zheng meng*.

Zhen 戴震 (d. 1777) explains, “One *yin* and one *yang*, their circulation never ceases; this is called the Way.”<sup>40</sup> This clearly states that the Way is the process of the movement of *yin* and *yang*, the two *qi*.

The pre-Qin text *Guanzi* 管子 (Book of Master Guan) provides an early representation of the function of *yin* and *yang*: “Spring, summer, autumn, and winter, these are the transitions of *yin* and *yang*; the duration being short or long is the function of *yin* and *yang*; the change of day and night is the transformation of *yin* and *yang*.”<sup>41</sup> Here *yin* and *yang* are seen as the origin and impetus for the many changes in the natural world. Zhang Zai wrote, “*Qi* has *yin* and *yang*; pushing forward gradually there is transformation.” He also stated:

The *qi* of *yin* and *yang*, circulating and alternating extremes, converging and dispersing; mutually swinging, rising and falling; mutually seeking, a mist; mutually massaging, covering each other and restraining each other, wanting to be one but unable to. So there is stretching and contracting without end, movement without cessation, never will they be made one.<sup>42</sup>

Zhu Xi wrote, “In *yang* there is *yin*, in *yin* there is *yang*, the extreme of *yang* gives rise to *yin*, the extreme of *yin* gives rise to *yang*, so the mysterious transformations have no end.”<sup>43</sup> Thus, *yin* and *yang* are interconnected, interactive, interpenetrating, and mutually transforming, and in this way comprise the entirety of dynamic change. This is a general understanding of the universe for Chinese people, and it influences many aspects of Chinese civilization. For example, Chinese medicine is full of *yin-yang* and five elements theories, which speak to the makeup of the human body, life, and theories of sickness. The Ming dynasty doctor Zhang Jingyue 张景岳 (d. 1640) asserted, “*Yang* is not independent; it cannot be completed without *yin*.... *Yin* cannot be exclusive of itself; it cannot act without *yang*.”<sup>44</sup> *Yin* and *yang* include one another, they interact, and their balance is what makes a body healthy. Chinese medicine is a concentrated manifestation of holism and correlative thinking that is representative of Chinese thought more broadly.

The universe is the integrated totality of the various interconnected things. To put it more simply, the universe is the entirety of the complementary interaction between *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* provide the condition for existence of one another, and the mutual combination of *yin* and *yang* comprise the world and its movements. A.C. Graham argues that Chinese tend to see pairs as complementary, whereas Westerners emphasize conflict.<sup>45</sup> All issues of the human world are based in how to deal with the various oppositional aspects of relationships. Thus, the

<sup>40</sup>Dai Zhen 戴震, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* 孟子字义疏证.

<sup>41</sup>“Cheng ma” 乘马, *Guanzi* 管子.

<sup>42</sup>Zhang Zai, “Can liang” 参两, *Zheng mengi*.

<sup>43</sup>Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, vol. 98.

<sup>44</sup>Zhang Jingyue 张景岳, *Yin-yang* 阴阳 category of the *Leijing* 类经.

<sup>45</sup>A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the TAO: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993), 227.

balancing of *yin* and *yang* is not merely ancient China's fundamental way of thinking. It still has universal significance today.

Zhang Zai argues that all phenomena have two conflicting aspects, and that in their interaction these move in opposing directions but are still bound to result in a harmony.<sup>46</sup> Opposing, clashing, and even conflicting results, necessarily eventually become commentary and coordinated and move towards reconciliation. In their opposition they seek unification, turning conflict into harmony, and in doing so bring continuous vitality throughout the whole.

## 1.4 Continuously Generative Transformation

Another big difference between the mechanistic worldviews of the West and the philosophical cosmology of China is that the latter stresses the generative nature of the universe. The *Yijing* is representative of this in seeing the world as a process of continuous generation.

Confucius (d. 479 B.C.E.) also views the world as a continuous flow of change and transformation. Standing by a river Confucius is recorded as saying, "It passes by like this, without ceasing day or night."<sup>47</sup> This continuous passing is endless movement and change. The world we exist in is like an enormous river, which is to say that everything exists in a flow of change. Thus, flow and change are universal. Zhuangzi notes, "A thing's life is like the galloping of a horse: there is change with every movement, and transformation in every moment."<sup>48</sup> Zhuangzi further teaches, "In the transformation of all things, the sprouts and spots all have their state, and in this there is growth and decay; this is the Way (*dao* 道) of change and transformation."<sup>49</sup>

Of the "Ten Wings" (*shi yi* 十翼) of the *Yizhuan*, used to interpret the *Yijing*, the "Appended Phrases" are the most outstanding, and these commentaries strongly emphasize the significance of transformation. They teach, "Moving towards the extreme, things then change; change allows for continuity, and continuity allows for endurance."<sup>50</sup> Moreover, "The Way constantly alters, changing without rest, flowing into any of the six voids [in the hexagrams], rising and falling without end, the soft and hard changing places; there is no constant code, only the fitness of changes."<sup>51</sup> The world constantly changes, and is never still. People cannot adhere to rigid formulas in dealing with this type of constantly changing universe. Everything must adapt to change. The *Yijing* established this type of worldview for

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<sup>46</sup>Zhang Zai, "Taihe," *Zheng meng*.

<sup>47</sup>*Analects* 9.17.

<sup>48</sup>*Zhuangzi* 17.6.

<sup>49</sup>*Zhuangzi* 13.3.

<sup>50</sup>*Xi ci* II 2.

<sup>51</sup>*Xi ci* II 8.

Chinese civilization: Everything in the entire world, from the smallest things to the biggest, all exist in constant generation and transformation, a never-ending flow of change and continuous motion. The entire world, especially the natural world, is seen as eternal flow and cyclical movement. From this point of view, ideas of the world as absolute and unchanging are incomprehensible. Things are not fixed and unchanging; change is the basic way of existence. Existence itself is flow and transformation. This philosophical appreciation of change serves to support Chinese civilization's never-ending development through "advancing with the times" and adapting to change.

In Chinese philosophical thought, which is based in the representative cosmology of the *Yijing*, there is increasing emphasis on change itself as being absolute and on the notion that this change includes definite tendencies. The philosophy of the *Yijing* promotes the idea that change is not without content, and that one of the most important aspects of change is constant generation. In other words, in the continuous flow of the cosmos, new things are constantly born. This is the essence of change, and change does not occur without certain tendencies. The universe is not characterized by a deathlike stillness, but rather full of creative life force.

The "Appended Phrases" of the *Yizhuan* speak to the aforementioned point very clearly: "The great virtue of the heaven and earth is called generation."<sup>52</sup> It also states, "Its [Dao's] richness is called great industry, its daily renewal is called abundant virtue, its continuous generation is called change."<sup>53</sup> In this way, it becomes clear that change includes the creation of new things, and eternal change contains perpetual innovation. Daily renewal is uninterrupted creation. Continuous generation endows change with more profound things. Change is constant enrichment, maturing, updating and unfolding. The line "the action of heaven is robust"<sup>54</sup> means that there is great change and flowing in continuous generation. This type of cosmological view provides a foundational worldview for the Chinese cultural spirit of "strengthening oneself ceaselessly."<sup>55</sup>

The idea of continuous generation also penetrates Neo-Confucian thought. For example, Zhou Dunyi wrote, "The two *qi* interact and are responsive, transform and generate the myriad things. The myriad things continuously generate and there is endless change therein."<sup>56</sup> Cheng Hao 程颢 (d. 1085) likewise wrote, "Continuous generation is called change, which is that by which heaven has its Way. Generation is the only Way of heaven."<sup>57</sup> Here we find that continuous generation is the most basic law of the cosmos. Continuous generation is taken as the content of the Way of heaven (*tian dao* 天道) and heavenly patterns (*tian li* 天理). Cheng Yi 程颐 (d. 1107) also stressed the importance of continuous generation. He wrote,

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<sup>52</sup>*Xi ci* II 1.

<sup>53</sup>*Xi ci* I 5.

<sup>54</sup>"Commentary to the Images" for the *qian* 乾 hexagram, *Yijing*.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup>Zhou Dunyi, *Taiji tu shuo*.

<sup>57</sup>*Er Cheng yishu* 二程遗书, vol. 2A.



“The transformation of heaven and earth spontaneously generates continuously without end.”<sup>58</sup> Here he takes continuous generation as something natural, a process that never ceases.

It is clear then that in Chinese philosophy the flow of change indicates the flow of life, and that the flow of life takes the continuum of *qi* as its vehicle. Song-Ming Neo-Confucian cosmological views lay particular importance on “great change and flow,” which is often called “the change and flow of *qi*.” This is seen further in Dai Zhen’s statement, “One *yin* and one *yang*, this is continuous generation.”<sup>59</sup> Dai Zhen also wrote, “*Qi* transforms and flows within heaven and earth; there is continuous generation, and this is called the Way.”<sup>60</sup> *Qi* is, itself, a substance that flows, and the process of the movement of *qi* is called the Way. “Great change and flow” is the complete continuum of activity, and all things are integral parts of this continuum.

Here we see the generative aspects of the Chinese philosophical view of the universe. According to the philosophical system of the *Zhou Yi* 周易 (Zhou Book of Changes), all things are gradually generated and transform in the process of space and time. Things are produced from some state of undifferentiation, and are gradually generated and developed. This generation is becoming, and therefore it is not being but rather becoming that is the basic problematic of Chinese philosophy. The philosophy of the *Zhou Yi* is then the root of philosophy in Chinese culture. Viewed from this perspective, generation and development are one’s own, and interaction between *yin-yang* and the five elements form the fundamental mechanism of this generation and development. Things are not created by a governor or force outside of nature, and no substance exists that is absolute and unchanging. Only from this perspective we can gain a deeper appreciation for Mote’s idea that Chinese civilization lacks a creation myth, which indeed is essentially an issue that has to do with the particular Chinese way of thinking. However, the reason China lacks a creation myth is not because of the continuity of being, as Tu Weiming states, but because of generative thinking. The lack of a creation myth shows that attention is on the internal impetus of generation and transformation rather than external forces. The world is its own origin. The idea that generation and transformation happen spontaneously form the generative theory that has become mainstream in China. Principles in the *Zhou Yi* already contain a tendency towards this kind of understanding. As Roger Ames has also pointed out, Greek philosophy focuses on stillness, which requires a theory of cause and effect to explain change and transformation. Chinese thinking, on the other hand, views the world as a natural process, naturally changing and naturally generating. Thus Chinese thinking does not require an external principle or force to understand change.<sup>61</sup> If the line

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<sup>58</sup>*Er Cheng yishu*, vol. 15.

<sup>59</sup>Dai Zhen, *Yuan shan* 原善.

<sup>60</sup>Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* 孟子字义疏证.

<sup>61</sup>Roger Ames 安乐哲, *He er bu tong: Zhongguo zhexue de huitong*, 45.



“the action of Heaven is robust, and gentlemen accordingly strengthen themselves ceaselessly”<sup>62</sup> is an expression of the spirit of Chinese culture, then continuous generation and daily renewal are philosophical reflections of this spirit.

## 1.5 Natural Heavenly Patterns

Mote argues that there was no creation myth even well into early Chinese civilization. If we take this to be something that the mode of thinking in the Chinese civilization depends upon, then even though what Mote said about China lacking a creation myth is correct, it does not negate the possibility of China having a theory about the origin of the cosmos. Nor does it mean that in ancient Chinese thought the cosmos was eternal. The question of how heaven and earth and the myriad things have been produced and exist is something that was deeply considered by early Chinese philosophers. Qu Yuan’s 屈原 (d. 278 B.C.E.) “Heavenly Questions” (*Tian wen* 天问) section in the *Chu ci* 楚辞 (Songs of Chu) is the most obvious expression of interest towards the origin and structure of the universe in ancient Chinese thinking:

Who passed down the story of the far-off ancient beginning of things?  
 How can we be sure what it was like before the sky above and the earth below had taken shape?  
 Since none could penetrate that murk when darkness and light were yet undivided, how do we know about the chaos of insubstantial forms?  
 What manner of things are the darkness and light? How did Yin and Yang come together, and how could they originate and transform all things that are by their commingling?  
 Whose compass measured out the ninefold heavens?  
 Whose work was this and how did he accomplish it?<sup>63</sup>

Although mainstream Chinese philosophical views do not hold that the cosmos is an eternal existence, and has its own history of occurrence, the rise of the cosmos is not due to some kind of external anthropomorphic creative power. According to Chinese philosophers, if there is a beginning to the universe, then this beginning is spontaneous (autopoietic) and natural. Indeed, Chinese thought, generally speaking, does not think that heaven and earth (the world) were created, nor does it think that humans were created, nor space and time in the universe. It especially does not think that there is any creator outside the universe—any God.

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<sup>62</sup>See Footnote 54.

<sup>63</sup>“Tian wen” 天问 (Heavenly Questions), trans. David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 127.

Arguing that the world was not created is not the same as arguing that the world is eternal. For example, Han dynasty Daoist theories of the cosmos do not take the world to be an eternal existence. They think *qi* is gradually produced from nothing, and when *qi* condenses the world is produced. So our world is the result of transformation, not creation.

Now, is there a master (or god-like figure) internal to this universe? The answer is not necessarily “no.” During the Shang and Zhou periods many affirmed *di* 帝 (“god”) or *tian* 天 (“sky” or “heaven”) as the highest god in the cosmos. But even the “god” of the early Chinese civilization is not a god that creates humans and the cosmos; it is rather a type of master who is part of the universe. Ancient Chinese endowed neither “god” nor “heaven” with the power to create the universe. Regardless of whether it was a cause or result of this, a focus on the human rose in the Western Zhou period that weakened any impulse towards the invention of a creation myth. So the “god” (*di*) of early Chinese civilization is not a god outside the universe who creates, but rather something that controls things from within the cosmos. In terms of humans not being created by god, this means that “humans” in Chinese civilization must have a higher position than “humans” in a Christian civilization. People being “born from heaven and earth”<sup>64</sup> is an ancient concept in Chinese civilization, which, against the background of *qi* theory, shows that humans can be given a position that is higher than any other thing or life form in the cosmos—or as Xunzi puts it, “humans are most precious of all under heaven.”<sup>65</sup> At the very least, as the philosophy of the *Changes*—which is central to Chinese philosophy generally—argues, humans stand alongside heaven and earth in their cosmological status, identified as one of the *san cai* 三才. The mutual responsiveness and communication between heaven and humans—in fact, the entirety of the discussion of the relationship between heaven and humans in Chinese philosophy—refers to those aspects of the rationality, intrinsic nature, and value of humans that bring humans to transcend the other beings of the world. This is what allows humans to be counterparts with heaven in their relationship. Chinese philosophy is at its roots a tradition of human “participation with heaven and earth.” Humans have the ability to participate in the growth, development, and great change and flow of the cosmos. Moreover, the theory of participation is extremely Chinese. Humans can participate in the heaven’s generation of things, as well as be mutually responsive and communicative with heaven. For Westerners this must be so very strange!

In Neo-Confucianism there is a certain type of argument, represented in Shao Yong and Zhu Xi, which sees our universe or this world as not eternal, and believes that after it disappears there will be another universe or world that replaces it. Similarly, prior to the existence of this universe or world there was another one, which has been replaced by ours. This means that all things are generated and move

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<sup>64</sup>For the generation of humans from the meeting of heaven and earth, see Duke Liu Kang’s 刘康公 statement recorded in “Cheng Gong shisannian” 成公十三年, *Zuozhuan* 左传.

<sup>65</sup>Xunzi 9.19.

towards termination. *Qi*'s converging and dispersing can be used to clarify this type of generation and termination, which is very natural. The notion of heaven and earth use in ancient China can be understood as what we call the solar system or the universe today. It is generated according to its natural course, and when it dies there will be another heaven and earth that also follows its natural course in being generated. There is no end to this process, and it does not require the concept of a creator.

Accordingly, Needham asserts that the Chinese worldview and understanding of the structure of the universe is one that has no governor but still has harmony. There are good reasons to hold this view, even though it is not accurate. From the perspective of Neo-Confucianism, there is, first of all, a master of the universe, but it is internal to the universe, and is not a creator. In other words, the master is not transcendent; it is an intrinsic part of the universe. Additionally, this ruler was called *di* or *tian* in the Shang and Zhou times, but from the Song dynasty forward this master had been rationalized as *li* 理 (“pattern” or “principle”) or *tian li* 天理 (“heavenly pattern” or “heavenly principle”). This reverence for *li* has been a familiar guiding conception for over a thousand years of Chinese civilization. *Li* is a guiding principle or law for the universe and society.

As everyone knows, Zhu Xi is the best representative of affirming this *li*. Zhu writes, “The governor is *li*.”<sup>66</sup> Like Zhu Xi, the Yuan dynasty scholar Wu Cheng 吴澄 (d. 1333) uses “governor” (*zhuzai* 主宰) to define *li*, which involves a theory of *li* and *qi* as well as of human nature. However, Wu Cheng appropriates these terms in a way that misuses Neo-Confucian metaphysical vocabulary. In any case, this theory speaks of *li* as “governor” only in terms of its function, and abandons ideas of an aspect of *li* as substantive entity. The Ming dynasty scholar Luo Qinchun declared that Zhu Xi's theory of the relationship between *li* and *qi* has serious shortcomings, asserting that *li* is not a metaphysical substance, but rather the pattern of *qi*'s movement. Luo explained:

*Li* is only *qi*'s *li*. Viewed from the perspective of its transitions, it goes and comes, comes and goes; these are its transitions. When it goes it cannot but come, when it comes it cannot but go. There is something about it that cannot be known; if there is something that controls and governs it, it can be named *li*.<sup>67</sup>

Luo Qinchun thinks that *qi* is something that continuously changes, shifting back and forth while grounded on what is intrinsic within itself. From Cheng Yi to Zhu Xi, scholars envisioned the role *li* played for *qi* is like the controller of a moving body, guiding its coming and going and its changes and transformation. Luo Qinchun argues that, from the perspective of function, although *li* guides the movement of *qi*, *li* is not a god, and is not some additional substance contained within *qi*. More importantly, Luo argues that while *li*'s controlling function may seem very similar to the function of governor, no such governor actually exists.

<sup>66</sup>Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, vol. 1.

<sup>67</sup>Luo Qinchun, *Kun zhi ji*.

Thus, in the mature period of Chinese civilization, philosophy has increasingly held the position that the cosmos was not created by an external governor and has no beginning or end: “motion and stillness have no end, *yin* and *yang* have no beginning.” Yet the cosmos is still affected by a governing force that controls and restricts it. This force is inherent within the universe, and is not a god, but some sort of “Way” or *li*. Needham was then incorrect when he characterized the Chinese view of the cosmos as one without a governor. In Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism, there is no governor external to the cosmos, and there is no personal governor in the universe, but “the Way” or “*li*” can be understood as a type of governor or regulative power that exists within the universe. The entire universe then—from its existence to its movement, and including human society—is guided by *li*. *Li* is not only the origin of heaven and the earth, and the law of all things, it is also the highest value. This type of universal *li* theory makes it similar to natural law, and allowed Neo-Confucianism to powerfully support medieval Chinese sociocultural values. Similarly, this concept of *li*, which exists universally in all things, and the idea of a universal *li* that developed from this, was the rational foundation for the advances of pre-modern Chinese science.

*Li*'s function has to do with regulating relations, which means that *li* is not a substantive entity; it is, rather, the manifestation of relationships. One of the characteristics of Chinese philosophy is that it stresses relationships rather than substantive entities. Substance-based thinking tends to revert the universe back to some type of primitive state and reduce it to some sort of smallest material substance, focusing on the resultant state established by these tiny objects rather than the process of generation and cultivation; or alternatively, substance-based thinking searches for an eternal unchanging substance, something absolute which does not relate to other things. Relational thinking understands things as dynamic relationships. It takes each concrete existence as regulated by the inseparable relationships within which it exists, and sees everything as based on the other parties with which it has formed relationships. In Neo-Confucianism, heavenly *li* is likened to the Way of heaven. The *li* of the Way of heaven's continuous generation takes “responsive communication” (*gantong* 感通) as its mode of actualization. The *Zhou Yi* commentary on the *xian* 咸 hexagram states, “Heaven and earth respond to one another, and the myriad things are generated.” Responsive communication is the state of the interconnected relationship of all things. Responsive communication, more than responsive reaction (*ganying* 感应), is a philosophical concept. Responsive reaction can mean that one thing stimulates another thing that then responds, and there is not necessarily direct mutual interaction, whereas responsive communication implies directly mutual interaction. Thus, on the level of social ethics, a position that stressing the importance of relationships is necessarily not one that takes the individual person as most fundamental. Relational thinking argues that when people forge or constitute relationships with other parties, one does not place oneself at the center of this relationship. Rather, one takes oneself as a starting point, and each party recognizes the importance of the other.

From this perspective of organic holism, everything in the universe is interdependent, and interconnected, with a thing's own existence and values manifesting in

its relationship with others. Thereby, there should be symbiotic harmony in the relationship between human beings, among cultures, and between humans and nature.

## 1.6 Unification of Humans and Heaven<sup>68</sup>

The idea of “the unification of humans and heaven” argues that heaven and humans do not simply exist in opposition to one another. In some ways there is a distinction between heaven and humans, and in this way they are opposed. But in other ways, and from a higher perspective, heaven and humans comprise a unified totality. The two are continually related, and there is no gap between them: this is “the unification of humans and heaven.” While this idea can be seen as evolved from the “unity of life” thinking of the era of mythology, it actually has greater significance in rejecting opposition between subject and object.

From the perspective of the Way, the Way of heaven is the root of the Way of humans. Human ethics and the Way of humans come from heaven and the Way of heaven, and human nature is endowed by heaven. In this way, heaven and humans are thoroughly unified in a relationship referred to as “interconnection between heaven and human” (*tianren xiangtong* 天人相通). This “interconnection between heaven and human” is one way in which the broad sense of “the unity of heaven and human” is expressed. Zhang Zai especially stressed the unity of heaven and human. He writes, “When the function of heaven and humans is divided there is no sincerity. When heaven and humans are divided in knowledge there is no clarity. One who is sincere and clear has a nature that is more or less aligned with the Way of heaven.”<sup>69</sup> In other words, the function of heaven and the function of humans do not differ, and only those who understand this point can be called “sincere” (*cheng* 诚). Sincerity is the truth of the universe. Knowledge of heaven and knowledge of humans are not separate, and those who do not understand this cannot exhibit clarity. Clarity is human reason. In this way Zhang Zai argues that human nature and the Way of heaven do not in actuality diverge. They are unified. Zhang Zai also asserts that “human nature has its source in the myriad things.” He continues,

For Confucians, because there is clarity there can be sincerity, because there is sincerity there can be clarity, and thus there is the unity heaven and humans. Study can make one become a sage, attaining heaven but never beginning to leave humans.<sup>70</sup>

Zhang Zai explicates the unification of heavens and humans by arguing that the Way of heaven and the Way of humans have an identical nature, and that the Way of heaven and human nature also have an identical nature. In the Northern Song

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<sup>68</sup>Translator’s note: Throughout this section “heaven” (*tian* 天) can also be interpreted as “nature.”

<sup>69</sup>Zhang Zai, “Cheng ming” 诚明, *Zheng meng*.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

period this thinking was widely accepted. The Cheng brothers<sup>71</sup> also shared this type of thinking. Cheng Hao, for example, wrote, “Humans are one thing with heaven and earth, and yet humans alone among these lessen themselves. Why is this so?”<sup>72</sup> He believed, as well, “Heaven and humans are fundamentally without distinction; there is no reason to speak of their unification.”<sup>73</sup> Cheng Yi wrote, “The Way never began to differentiate between heaven and humans,” as well as, “Heaven, earth, and humans have only one Way.”<sup>74</sup> These lines all stress the unity and interconnection of heaven and human. As Cheng Hao notes, heaven and humans are directly unified. If people cannot see this point, then it is mainly due to people reducing their own status in the face of heaven and earth.

This type of philosophy differs from metaphysical positions of absolute dualism. The identification of humans and nature, as well as the Way of heaven, expresses the wisdom of the unified totality. According to this type of wisdom everything in the cosmos forms an inseparable unity. Similarly, under the guidance of this type of thinking, philosophy does not take noumena and phenomena as split. Noumenon manifests in phenomena, and is inseparable from living phenomena.

In Zhang Zai’s “Western Inscription” (*Xi ming* 西铭), he argues that interaction between heaven and earth generated the world, giving humans both their physical body and their intrinsic nature. Thus, every person is the progeny of heaven and earth. In fact, all things are, like humans, also born from heaven and earth. Therefore, all people are one’s siblings, and all things are one’s friends. Symbiotic harmony should be formed among humans, between humans and the myriad things, and between humans and nature in which all form part of the same totality. Ancient Chinese thought saw facts and values not as opposing, but as consistent.

This understanding also involves thought based in “the consubstantiation of all things.” Zhang Zai believed that humans and all things are composed of *qi*, and in this way everything in the universe is directly related with oneself. From the perspective of the individual, then, heaven and earth are one’s mother and father, the people are one’s kin, and all things are one’s friends. The high-level correlativity of type of thinking, which is grounded in *qi*, affirms Confucian ethics. Respecting elders and caring for the young and disadvantaged are obligations one possesses toward members of this cosmic family. The type of thought expressed in the “Western Inscription” can be said to be precisely that of “the consubstantiation of all things.” In ancient Chinese thinking we see clearly that a certain view of the universe tends towards a certain set of values, or that certain views of the universe are founded on certain values. Its cosmology and values are often interconnected. This is precisely the kind of relationship found between China’s correlative cosmology and correlative values.

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<sup>71</sup>Translator’s note: “Cheng brothers” refers to Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi.

<sup>72</sup>*Er Cheng yishu*, vol. 11.

<sup>73</sup>*Er Cheng yishu*, vol. 6.

<sup>74</sup>*Er Cheng yishu*, vol. 18.

A quote from Cheng Hao expresses this simply and clearly, and connects it to humaneness:

Medical books call numbness of the hands and feet in humaneness; this is the best way to put it. Humane people take heaven, earth, and all things as one body, as part of oneself. Thinking they are part of oneself, is this not the utmost? If these do not belong to oneself, then there can be no mutual interaction with them. If the hands and feet are inhumane, *qi* does not flow, and they do not belong to oneself... Viewing humaneness in this way, one can attain the substance of humaneness.<sup>75</sup>

Here Cheng Hao describes “humaneness.” According to his view, humaneness is a type of spiritual realm, one that takes all things as sharing one body. Not only do they share one body, but moreover the “self” is taken as fundamental, thereby allowing heaven, earth, and all things to be seen as thoroughly connected with oneself—just as people feel that their hands and feet are part of themselves. This notion of “the consubstantiation of all things” is the highest ethical expression of cosmological correlativity. It indicates both the person’s obligations to the interconnected totality as well as that striving toward the harmony of this totality is the person’s most basic goal.

This realm of humane consubstantiation differs from a pure ontological theory of the consubstantiation of all things. Sharing one body in this realm does not refer to a reality, but rather to a feeling of compassion—that of loving one’s intimate relations, being humane to the people, and caring for things. This realm is thereby used to realize human social obligations. However, Chen Hao’s notion of this realm remains closely connected with his ontology and cosmology. He writes, “The life and vitality of the myriad things is most observable; the development of the goodness of the origin of this is called humaneness.”<sup>76</sup> This shows that the cosmological view of “continuous generation” is the foundation of Cheng Hao’s spiritual realm of consubstantiation and spirit of personality.

This type of pursuit of integrated harmony is already expressed in ancient cosmology. For example, the Western Zhou thinker Shi Bo 史伯 taught, “Harmony is that by which things are actually generated; whereas through sameness things are unable to continue. Bringing different things together so as to arrive at equilibrium is called harmony. One is thereby able to richly develop and unite things.”<sup>77</sup> Only by blending and integrating different things is it possible to generate flourishing and new things. The existence of difference, diversity, and otherness is a prerequisite for the growth of things. The basic condition for continuous generation is the harmonious integration of diverse things. The “Appended Phrases” of the *Yizhuan* states, “*Yin* and *yang* combine according to their virtues (qualities),”<sup>78</sup> which includes the fusion of *yin* and *yang*. The *Zhuangzi*, speaking of *yin* and *yang*, says,

<sup>75</sup>*Er Cheng yishu*, volume 2A.

<sup>76</sup>“Mingdao xuean shang” 明道学案上, in *Song Yuan xuean* 宋元学案.

<sup>77</sup>“Shi Bi wei Huan Gong lun xing shuai” 史伯为桓公论兴衰 section of the *Zhengyu* 郑语 book of the *Guoyu*.

<sup>78</sup>*Xi ci* II 6.

“the thorough interaction between the two generates harmony, and all things are born therein.”<sup>79</sup> Clearly, this takes harmony as the foundation of generation. Xunzi taught, “*Yin* and *yang* undergo great transformations; the winds and rain are broadly given, and when the various things attain harmony there is generation.”<sup>80</sup> Here harmony is given as the necessary condition for the generation of things. Xunzi also stated, “Heaven and earth unite and all things are generated; *yin* and *yang* meet and change is initiated.”<sup>81</sup> This sentence also means that things are generated from the harmonious interaction of *yin* and *yang*. The blending of *yin* and *yang* is the most general ideal in ancient cosmology.

The philosophical thinking described above penetrates all aspects of Chinese culture, and also functions to support the Chinese civilization as a whole. We could say that these ideas are the philosophical background of Chinese civilization. In concluding this discussion I would like to add a few things about correlative thinking and correlative values. Correlative thinking sees interrelation as universal, and is characterized by seeing interconnectivity where people generally see distinction, opposition, and separation. It especially emphasizes seeing heaven, earth, humans, and all things as an interconnected totality. Correlativity is the foundation of interaction and harmony, and interaction and harmony are essential requirements of correlativity. A.C. Graham argues that correlative thinking is a prominent characteristic of Han dynasty thinking, and that after the rise of Song dynasty Neo-Confucianism, Chinese philosophy’s cosmology underwent a paradigm shift. The shift Graham argues for is from using original *qi* as naturally responsive and communicative to using human nature and *li* to observe and think about the universe. In actuality, Han and Song dynasty thinking are not opposed. The correlative theory of the universe in Han thought is a unified cosmology, which also serves to support political unity. Song dynasty Neo-Confucianism faced new challenges with the introduction and popularity of Buddhism, as well as the new institutional changes from the Sui and Tang dynasties, which strengthened the structure of Confucian thought. The more rationalized system led Chinese civilization to attain the unity of consubstantiation from a more mature height. We should note that although the peak of “responsiveness between heaven and humans” as a characteristic of the structure of the correlative cosmos was during Han times, stress on the universal interconnection between things as well as the interdependence, correlativity, interaction, mutual functioning, mutual influencing, and mutual responsiveness of all things—which includes emphasis on the mutual inclusiveness of the parts and whole—long ago came to constitute principal characteristics of Chinese thinking. Thus, although Han theories of original *qi* were replaced with Song-Ming Neo-Confucian theories of *li* and *qi*, the emphasis Chinese people give to correlative thinking did not change. The only change that occurred was in the theoretical expression of correlativity and in the areas and forms

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<sup>79</sup>See Footnote 32.

<sup>80</sup>Xunzi 17.3.

<sup>81</sup>Xunzi 19.22.



in which correlativity manifested. Moreover, stressing the importance of correlativity is not merely the manner of thinking in Chinese civilization, it also reflects the value orientation of Chinese civilization. After the Axial Age the foundational values of the Chinese civilization can all be said to have developed based on this cosmology. Today, facing the problems of Western modernity, we advocate pluralistic complementarity between Eastern and Western thought. We promote striving towards reciprocal ethics, relational society, cooperative politics, and symbiotic harmony. We must cherish diverse values from different cultures to enlarge the scope of possible solutions to our difficulties.<sup>82</sup> In this sense, reviewing and reviving the worldview of the Chinese civilization should prove beneficial.

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<sup>82</sup>Emphasis on correlative values does not need to completely replace modern individualism or consciousness of rights; instead correlative values and individualism and rights can be used to complement one another.

## Chapter 2

# The Values and Worldview of Chinese Civilization

By the mid-Neolithic period, seven or eight thousand years ago, a relatively stable agrarian economy had already formed in both northern and southern China. The prehistoric agriculture of China's Yellow River and Yangtze regions at this time had already moved beyond primeval slash and burn agriculture. Due to the richness of loess and crop resistance to arid conditions and drought, intensive farming had already developed in the Central Plains and northern China, where use of stone tools predominated and the irrigation of major waterways was not relied on. Because of this, in contrast to Mesopotamia and Egypt, although early Chinese Civilization also arose in regions along the middle and lower stretches the Yellow River and Yangtze, China's agrarian economy nevertheless led early Chinese civilization away from becoming a civilization of irrigation of major waterways. The slow but steady maturation of Chinese agriculture came to influence the entirety of the development of its civilization. Archeologists describe Chinese civilization as having originated ten thousand years ago, evolving from tribal clanship into early ancient nation-states beginning around five thousand years ago, and then ultimately developing from diverse sources into a unified empire.<sup>1</sup>

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This chapter was translated by Robert Carleo III. All quotations from Chinese texts in this chapter are also Carleo's, unless otherwise noted.

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<sup>1</sup>Su Bingqi 苏秉琦, *Zhongguo wenming qiuyuan xintan* 中国文明起源新探 (Hong Kong: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1997), 142.

## 2.1 The Ethical Spirit of Early Chinese Civilization

A great many peoples of the world have lived in tribal clans organized by relations of kinship. However, very few exhibit the isomorphism of clan organization and political rights found in the society of early Chinese civilization. In ancient Chinese civilization, the sites of ancestral temples became centers of early settlement, and the inheritance of political and ancestral identity were unified. These became pronounced characteristics of Shang and Zhou society. This unity of political and ancestral identity, or reliance of political identity on ancestral identity, developed a political tradition in which familial order was merged with state order. Culturally, China's culture of ritual and music came to characterize this period generally.

From the Western Zhou to the Spring and Autumn period, ancient Chinese society was basically a clan society. Here, I use the term "clan society" as a descriptive concept, without affirmative or pejorative connotations, to refer to a type of society structured by familial relations and regulated by principles and standards of familial relations. In clan societies, all social relationships are transformed into relations of clanship or kinship. Clan relations are political relations, and political relations are clan relations. Therefore, the norms and regulations of political and other social relationships all follow the familial relations of clanship. This type of society is in essence quite close to what Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 describes as a society in which ethical relations are most fundamental (*lunli benwei de shehui* 伦理本位的社会). A characteristic of ethical relations is that they concurrently involve both hierarchical order and compassionate emotional connection. Because of this, in a society of such relations, the leading principles are not laws but rather emotional ties, with principal emphasis on obligation and not rights. Liang Shuming believed China's society in which ethical relations are most fundamental arose from ancient clan society.<sup>2</sup> This is accurate. With the arrival of the late Spring and Autumn period, clan relations had already broken down in the political realm. However, these clan relationships persisted on the social level, and those characteristics of the civilization and cultural spirit fostered by clan society were replicated and passed on.

In terms of the evolution of early Chinese culture, the modes of Xia, Shang, and Zhou culture differed, yet the Three Dynasties also developed qualities of continuity. The general background of these qualities was the culture of the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, which gradually formed within the historical progress of the increasing power of the imperial court to unify and integrate surrounding vassal states. These qualities began to fix themselves within Western Zhou culture, and through the development of the Axial Age, they evolved into the fundamental characteristics of Chinese civilization. These cultural characteristics found focused expression in the Zhou dynasty as emphasis on filial piety, caring relations with others, valuing the people, and veneration of virtue. Filial piety was not only exhibited in the rich and widespread practices of sacrificial ancestor

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<sup>2</sup>See Liang Shuming, *Zhongguo wenhua yaoyi* 中国文化要义 (Taipei: Liren, 1982), 81.

worship of the Shang dynasty. Within the Zhou culture of music and ritual, it was even more strongly expressed as amicable relations between members of the ancestral clan, love for human life and human relationships, and familial obligation and dependence. This emphasis on the centripetal, inward orientation of the family or clan, which anthropologists refer to as clan ties, manifests an ancient Chinese value attitude toward oneself and the world in which one resides. Therefore, these cultural qualities differ greatly from orientations that stress the divine realm and the afterlife, seeing the human world and human life as pure illusion and seeking supernatural fulfillment. They tend more toward a proactive, social, sincere, and humane value orientation. Chinese people seek to establish positive human relations and the internal needs and orientation of these human relationships, whereas Hindu culture strives to establish positive relations with the divine and the internal needs and orientation of these divine relationships. Chinese culture lays great emphasis on the people and their needs, whereas Hindu culture extols the divine and seeks unification with the supernatural. There are indeed large differences between the two. Moreover, although Hinduism strongly emphasizes familial worship in one's life, and in its rites of passage and other aspects is even comparable to Western Zhou ritual ceremony and etiquette, the deceased in Hinduism generally go without tombs. Throughout India, phenomena associated with ancestral worship are extremely rare. The highly developed state of Shang and Zhou culture's funerary rites and ritual worship for the dead form a dramatic contrast with India's lack of emphasis on funerary matters and worship. This is not only a difference in religious views, but also manifests divergence in value orientation.

Another characteristic exhibited by early Chinese culture is an emphasis on virtue. Early modern scholars have already asserted Chinese culture to be a culture of ethics (*lunli leixing de wenhua* 伦理类型的文化). In terms of the qualities of its guiding spirit, the most pronounced achievements and clearest limitations of Chinese culture are all related with the tendency of its ethical aspects toward predominance and regulation. This cultural tendency was revealed very early in ancient China, and developed from these tendencies into the fundamental emphasis on ethical relations that has characterized the spirit of Chinese culture. Chinese culture had formed the genes of a "sense of virtue" as early as the Western Zhou period. In mainstream Chinese culture, extraordinary importance was laid on the moral evaluation of things and affairs, exhibiting a rich vibrancy of moral culture. Moreover, the early expression of morality was often concentrated within the political realm, specifically on issues of "the people." The will of the people, understood as the demands of the people, came to be seen as the ultimate source of all political legitimacy. This focus on the will of the people tremendously influenced the idea of heavenly mandate (*tianming* 天命) in the Western Zhou period, which led the will of the people to become the principle connotation of the notion of "heaven" (*tian* 天) in Western Zhou thought. The qualities of the spirit of Chinese culture formed by Western Zhou culture were the source and foundation from which later Confucian thought was produced.

Deep understanding of the historical course of cultural development over the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties grants us the clear impression that the content

developed in Confucius and early Confucian thought was not produced in opposition to or breaking away from Western Zhou culture and its path of development. In the thought and early cultural characteristics of Confucius and early Confucians there was a relationship of inheritance and continuity with Western Zhou culture and its direction of progression. Without the Duke of Zhou there would have been no culture of music and ritual passed onward. Without the Duke of Zhou there would have been no historical origin of Confucianism.<sup>3</sup> Confucius' admiration and reverence of the Duke of Zhou and Xunzi's view of the Duke of Zhou as the first major Confucian both explicitly identify these origins of Confucian thought, and do so very early on in the Confucian tradition. We could say that the Western Zhou culture of ritual and music was the soil from which Confucianism was born. Western Zhou thought provided an important foundation for the worldview, political philosophy, ethics, and virtues of Confucius and early Confucianism. At the same time, Western Zhou culture was also the product of the long and gradual evolution of the culture of ancient China's Three Dynasties. Through cultures of magical shamanism and sacrificial worship developed the culture of ritual and music. From primeval religion to natural religion, and then developing into ethical religion, the deep foundation from which Confucius and Confucian thought emerged was formed. Traced further back, this developed from Longshan 龙山 culture through the integration of various local cultures of the Central Plains. Political culture, religious belief, and moral emotion gradually developed, and in the Western Zhou period began to form relatively stable qualities of spirit. These qualities manifested as a political culture in which virtue was venerated and the people valued, as an ethical culture of filial piety, respect for elder siblings, and amicability of intimate relations, as a culture of ritual and music that combined inner substance with outward refinement, as existential believe in the unity of heaven and human, and as a humanistic tendency of keeping distance from the spirits and engaging with the human. Because of this, Confucian thought and its humanistic spirit are products of the continuous development of Chinese culture itself from the early stages of Chinese civilization. They embody the tradition passed on through ancient China's Three Dynasties and the qualities of spirit it fostered. Confucian thought possesses an intrinsic connection with the progress of development of ancient Chinese culture, and Confucian values correspondingly came to form the mainstream value system of Chinese civilization.<sup>4</sup>

As the crystallization of the wisdom of the Three Dynasties of Xia, Shang, and Zhou, the "Six Classics" are the original classic texts of Chinese civilization. Therein are solidified the historical wisdom and mainstream values developed by early Chinese civilization, such as reverence for virtue, protection of the people, emphasis on filial piety, careful consideration and reservation regarding

<sup>3</sup>See Yang Xiangkui 杨向奎, *Zong Zhou zhidu yu liyue wenming* 宗周制度与礼乐文明 (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1992), 136.

<sup>4</sup>Chen Lai, Introduction, *Gudai zongjiao yu lunli* 古代宗教与伦理 (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing, 1996), 7–8.

punishment, and cooperation between states. These embody the political wisdom, moral ideas, and aesthetic spirit accumulated within the historical experience of the millennium or even longer period of development of Chinese civilization under the Xia, Shang, and Zhou, and became the principle historical source of the development of later Chinese culture.

## 2.2 The Fundamental Values of Axial Age Chinese Civilization

From this perspective, Axial Age Chinese civilization continued the development of the humanistic thought of early civilization and the Western Zhou period, systematically putting forward cultural values and virtues. The primary values and virtues among these were asserted in regard to the relationships of a person with others and with the community. This tendency is seen in the emphasis on the values of humane love (*ren'ai* 仁爱) and ritual and music exhibited in Axial Age Chinese civilization as represented in Confucianism. Through later philosophical explication, these values even more clearly exhibited universality.

First among these is the veneration of humaneness (*ren* 仁). As is widely known, the most important moral notion of Axial Age Confucian thought was “humaneness.” Humaneness is an attitude of the self toward others. It is concern and care for others, or the enactment of compassion for others. This is why the *Guoyu* 国语 states that “speaking of humaneness must involve humans (others).”<sup>5</sup> In terms of etymology, the Eastern Han period *Shuowen Lexicon* (*Shuowen jiezi* 说文解字) explains the character for “humaneness” as equivalent to feelings of intimacy, and points out that it is composed of the graphs for “human” (*ren* 人) and “two” (*er* 二). This shows that the basic literal meaning of “humaneness” is intimate caring or love. Qing dynasty scholar Ruan Yuan 阮元 especially emphasizes that the left graph for human and right graph for two combine to express the relationship of intimate caring between two people, and that therefore one can only speak of humaneness in terms of two or more people. A single person enclosed in solitude at home cannot be considered humane. Humaneness is a reciprocal or mutual relationship between persons. Ruan Yuan’s description here explicates humaneness’s quality of reciprocity.<sup>6</sup> In terms of textual resources, the concept of “humaneness” prior to Confucius referred to caring and love for one’s parents. The *Guoyu* states clearly, “Loving one’s parents is called humaneness.”<sup>7</sup> Confucius took humaneness as the highest moral notion, and both Confucius and Mencius emphasize that humaneness involves loving others. Humaneness thereby gradually transformed

<sup>5</sup>“Zhouyu III” 周语下, *Guoyu*.

<sup>6</sup>See Ruan Yuan 阮元, “Lunyu lun renlun” 论语论仁论, in *Yanjingshi ji* 掣经室集 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1993), vol. 1, book 8.

<sup>7</sup>“Jinyu I” 晋语上, *Guoyu*.

into universal humane love, no longer referring exclusively to intimate caring for one's parents or for certain people. Kong Yingda 孔颖达 explains the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (Doctrine of the mean), "humaneness refers to reciprocal humane love among intimate relations." Of course, humaneness is love, but love is not necessarily humaneness, because if love is partial or biased, then it is not humaneness. Humane love is universal, just, and selfless love. In fact, Mencius further expands humaneness to "loving one's intimate relations, being humane to the people, and caring for animals."<sup>8</sup> Humane love at this point had already been further extended from social ethics to human caring for nature. Chinese Confucianism consistently placed the virtue of humaneness in the foremost position of its moral and value systems. Some scholars believe that the promotion of humaneness is a natural development of ties of kinship and clan democracy, a manifestation of the continuity of Chinese civilization.<sup>9</sup>

Viewed from another perspective, the primeval spirit of humaneness was a mutual caring and ritual respect demanding recognition of the importance of the other party by both parties. It relied on the emotion and etiquette that people ought to exhibit in their engagement with things to express feelings of caring and respect. This displays the ancient notion of humanism or belief in "the Way of humans" (*rendaozhuyi* 人道主义) contained in the character for "humaneness." Confucianism then extended this to the universal love and humane caring of an ethic of humanism or "the Way of humans" (*rendao* 人道). However, "humaneness" certainly does not advocate mere unilateral subjective expression of one's own feelings. Rather, one must respect other parties. The representative modern New Confucian thinker Liang Shuming summarized the ethic of Chinese culture as "mutual recognition of the importance of the other" (*hu yi duifang wei zhong* 互以对方为重), which expresses precisely the spirit of the traditional Confucian ethic of the theory of "humaneness."<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, the practice of humaneness possesses a principle of extension which resolves the question of how to extend oneself to others (*tui ji ji ren* 推己及人). This is the Way of loyalty and empathy (*zhong-shu zhi dao* 忠恕之道), especially empathy (*shu* 恕). Confucius discussed empathy in stating, "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire."<sup>11</sup> Through respecting other parties, this can assure that one does not force one's own loves and preferences upon others, which has become a universal principle of global ethics in contemporary times.

Ancillary to this is reverence of ritual. Ancient Chinese civilization has been called a "civilization of ritual and music." Ritual held an important place within ancient Confucian culture. Confucius emphasized that the practice of ritual was the

<sup>8</sup>Mencius 7A45.

<sup>9</sup>The first to assert this point was Li Zehou 李泽厚. See Li Zehou, *Zhongguo gudai sixiang shilun* 中国古代思想史论 (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1985), 22, 25.

<sup>10</sup>Liang Shuming, *Liang Shuming quanji* 梁漱溟全集, vol. 5 (Shandong: Shandong Renmin Chubanshe, 1990), 706.

<sup>11</sup>*Analects* 12.2, 15.24, trans. D.C. Lau [Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979 (1992, sec. ed.)], 109, 155.

basic method of carrying out humaneness. Confucian thought is representative of East Asian Axial civilization, and Axial Age Confucian thought can be said to be extremely closely related with the culture of “ritual.” The Western Zhou civilization of ritual and music was the mother of Confucian thought. Axial Age Confucianism was characterized by an emphasis on “ritual” and full of a ritual spirit. This ritual quality was a rational affirmation of the fundamental nature, spirit, and values of ritual education (*lijiao* 礼教).

In Confucianism, morality is realized within the concrete acts of human interaction. The common mode of these acts is ritual. Ritual is the expression of mutual respect as well as the humanized form of interpersonal relations. Of course, the “ritual” of ancient historical culture contained a plurality of meanings, as recorded in ancient books of ritual. The majority of these were rules of etiquette for the aristocratic society of the level of “scholar-gentleman” (*shi* 士) and above. These regulated the forms of aristocratic life and communicative relations, and possessed extremely developed formal expression and specific formal regulations of etiquette. The ancient phrase “Ritual emphasizes reciprocal interaction” (*li shang wang lai* 礼尚往来) refers precisely to the separation of ancient ritual from ceremonial worship and development into the formalized normative system of communicative relationships of the Western Zhou period. Comparatively speaking, the ancient system of the *Classic of Ritual* (*Yi li* 仪礼) can be better characterized as ceremonial and behavioral regulations regarding the celebrations, holidays, life journey, and interpersonal interactions of ancient aristocratic life. The later *Record of Rites* (*Li ji* 礼记), on the other hand, emphasizes, “The first indications of the meaning of ritual appear in the correct arrangement of the bodily carriage, the harmonious adjustment of the countenance, and in the natural ordering of the speech.”<sup>12</sup> This takes ritual to be a system of behavioral norms, emphasizing that norms and adornments of appearance and speech are the foundation of this normative system as well as the entrance into beginning practiced cultivation of ritual etiquette. One’s behavior, speech, adherence to proper order, and correct use of gestures in accordance with specific circumstance must all be carried out in line with regulations of ritual etiquette, which clearly shows highly developed formalization of behavior. People began study of these regulations in childhood, then refining it into an autonomous art, and this art of behavior at that time was a type of civilized cultivation. Zixia 子夏 even stated, “The Gentleman is reverent and does nothing amiss, is respectful towards others and observant of the rites, and all within the Four Seas are his brothers.”<sup>13</sup> Only by being respectful and observing ritual could one make brothers of all within the Four Seas and achieve harmony in interpersonal relations.

History shows that the formal aspects of ritual can change. This transformation occurs following shifts in the circumstances of the times. The essence or “substance” (*ti* 体) of ritual, on the other hand, is an unchanging fundamental spirit and principle. It can be said that for several millennia Chinese culture has fostered a

<sup>12</sup>“Guan Yi” 冠義, *Record of Rites* (*Li ji* 礼记), trans. follows James Legge, with alterations.

<sup>13</sup>*Analects* 12.5, trans. D.C. Lau, 111.



“spirit of ritual education” that originated in the ritual ceremony of sacrificial worship. This gradually became independent from religious practice and developed into rituals of social interaction within the human realm. These are exhibited in the diverse expressions of ritual custom of various ancient historical periods, yet are also a universal spirit that transcends these specific regulations of etiquette. This is a humanistic ritual spirit. The culture of ritual includes three levels: ritual spirit, ritual attitude, and ritual regulations. We can say that the “ritual” of Chinese civilization is a cultural system that takes “respectful yielding to others” as its spirit, takes “being temperate, kind, respectful, restrained, and magnanimous” (*wen liang gong jian rang* 温良恭俭让) as its attitude, and takes comprehensive ritualized adornments and limitations of behavior its particular forms. Whatever the case, ritual not only is significant to personal cultivation, it has an even greater function for society in advancing the progression of social spirit and culture. In terms of relations between states, “love of ritual” (*hao li* 好礼) manifests a behavioral mode of respect for other states and peoples.

### 2.3 The Ancient Confucian System of Moral Concepts

The guiding value of the Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn periods was “ritual.” This can be seen clearly from the evaluative system of the *Zuo zhuan* 左传. The individual virtues promoted during the Spring and Autumn period were myriad, and although no unified understanding of a principal virtue had yet developed, nevertheless it can be said that in general “loyalty and trustworthiness” (*zhong xin* 忠信) and “humaneness, wisdom, and courage” (*ren zhi yong* 仁智勇) were the major virtues of the middle and late Warring States period. In the *Analects*, Confucius retains this emphasis on “loyalty and trustworthiness,” and the *Zhongyong* affirms “humaneness, wisdom, and courage” to be the three major virtues (*san da de* 三达德). And yet whatever the case, by the end of the Spring and Autumn period, “humaneness” within the thought of Confucius had already become the most important value and moral virtue.

“Righteousness” (*yi* 义) already held a place of importance in the Spring and Autumn period. However, this position of importance was not especially pronounced. By the Warring States period, righteousness and humaneness in the thought of Mencius were already discussed alongside one another, beginning the promotion of “humaneness and righteousness” together as the principal Confucian virtues. Mencius’ promotion of humaneness, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom alongside one another as the “four virtues” became the most historically influential particular moral virtues through their promotion by later thinkers. The “four virtues” of humaneness, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom also became the basic morals promoted by Confucianism. During Han times, the virtue of trustworthiness (*xin* 信) was added to humaneness, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom, leading these five virtues to correspond to the “five standards of conduct” (*wuxing* 五行) and thereby form the “five constant virtues” (*wuchang* 五常). The “four virtues” and

“five constant virtues” became the basic Confucian morals of the last two millennia, deeply and broadly influencing Chinese society.

In addition to the “four virtues” and “five constant virtues,” other virtues appear in the “five classics” and “four books” that Confucianism promotes. Together with the “four virtues” and “five constant virtues,” these constitute Confucianism’s complete system of moral virtues. They include filial piety and respect for elder siblings, loyalty and empathy, achieving the mean and harmony, and sincerity and respect. Within practical social life in ancient China, these virtues functioned together with the “four virtues” and “five constant virtues” to commonly govern the moral life of Chinese people. The clearest example of this is that of “filial piety,” which although it is not included among the five constant virtues, nevertheless undeniably occupied an important and prominent position in the moral life of Chinese people.

The theory of “humaneness” strongly promoted by Confucius had as a moral concept already broken free of feudal society as well as ties of kinship, and had advanced to more general relations between humans. By the Warring States period, “humaneness and righteousness” had become the most important morals. This was not only because of their successive promotion by Confucius and Mencius; it was also due to the decay, demise, and transformation of feudal and clan institutions that took place during this period. The personal morals of clan and political relations gave way to more general social morals and interpersonal standards. Humaneness, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom moved beyond standards regulating particular ethical relations. They moved beyond particular ethics of kinship (such as filial piety) and particular ethics of political relationships (such as loyalty) to possess more universal notions of virtue and standards of interpersonal relations, and were thereby more universally accepted.

As for “humaneness,” the foremost of the “four virtues,” there has historically been very little dispute over the interpretation that the principle content of humaneness is universal love. At the very least, there has been consensus on this since the Tang thinker Han Yu 韩愈 stressed, “Universal love is called humaneness.” The core of humaneness is loving others, yet humaneness is not limited to love. Humaneness transcends the intimate caring and love among family members to possess broader and deeper connotations. The ritual of the “four virtues” originally emphasized regulations of ceremonial forms and etiquette, focusing on the adornment of behavior and appearance. Therefore ritual as a moral virtue referred to respecting and adhering to these regulations of the rites. The early concept of righteousness possibly emphasized respect for elders or superiors outside of one’s immediate family, and later increasing came to denote a virtue connected with shame. Shame emphasizes moral judgment distinguishing between good and evil, and therefore its meaning evolved toward steadfast moral principle and the rejection of evil and promotion of the good. Wisdom is a higher level of epistemological form than knowledge. As a moral virtue it refers to the ability for distinction and grasping of moral knowledge. Clearly, as virtues of personal morals, “humaneness” is warm and deep caring and love, “righteousness” is steadfast moral principles, “ritual” is adherence to ritual regulations and respectful yielding, “wisdom” is clear

consideration and distinction, and “trustworthiness” is faithful adherence to one’s promises and honesty.

What needs to be pointed out is that the “four virtues” of humaneness, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom not only possess meaning as virtues of personal morality, they also possess broader meaning as social values. Humaneness, for example, is advocated in Mencius’ call for humane governance, which emphasizes the realization of humaneness through political means. Here humaneness is no longer merely personal morality, it is also a principle of government. Thus Mencius states:

An Emperor cannot keep the Empire within the Four Seas unless he is humane; a feudal lord cannot preserve the altars to the gods of earth and grain unless he is humane; a Minister or a Counsellor cannot preserve his ancestral temple unless he is humane; a Gentleman or a Commoner cannot preserve his four limbs unless he is humane.<sup>14</sup>

Facing the broader world, humaneness is expanded to be expressed as the highest social ideal of “brotherhood of all those within the Four Seas” and “great unity under heaven” (*tianxia datong* 天下大同). In both its values and theory, the more than two millennia of Chinese political culture from the Han dynasty onward took humaneness as its guiding political and administrative principle. For example, the *Zhen Guan zheng yao* 贞观政要 takes humaneness and righteousness as the foremost basic values. Due to the influence of Confucian thought, this was not limited to the political realm, and “humaneness” became the most universal value within more than two millennia of history and culture. As for righteousness, we see it used in the sense of “justice” (*zhengyi* 正义) in the *Zuozhuan*, which states, “the abundance of unrighteous action necessarily results in one’s own failure.”<sup>15</sup> Mencius states, “It is contrary to humaneness to kill one innocent man; it is contrary to righteousness to take what one is not entitled to.”<sup>16</sup> Killing one innocent man violates the principle of humane love, and taking what belongs to another as one’s own violates the principle of justice. Righteousness in these places does not refer to righteousness of virtue but rather to righteousness of moral principle (*daoyi* 道义) and justice. We thus see that righteousness in ancient times was used in many places as justice. Song thinker Zhu Xi 朱熹 often spoke of righteousness as resolve and resilience, emphasizing that righteousness involves clear and firm distinction between good and evil along with resolute and steadfast rejection of evil and promotion of goodness. This characterization of righteousness points to the connotations of justice in righteousness and its aspect of carrying out this justice. Thus, the “four virtues” of humaneness, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom are not merely personal virtues; they are also social values of ancient society. As social values, humaneness is humane governance and benevolence toward the people, righteousness is the principle of justice, ritual is cultural order, and wisdom is intelligent practice. Additionally, methods of moral

<sup>14</sup>Mencius 4A3, trans. follows D.C. Lau with alterations [Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979 (2003, rev. ed.)], 153.

<sup>15</sup>“Yin Gong yuan nuan” 隱公元年, *Zuozhuan*.

<sup>16</sup>Mencius 7A33, trans. D.C. Lau, 301, with alterations.

cultivation were considered of extraordinary importance in ancient times. The Confucian classics include many methods of practice for the cultivation of morality, such as “overcoming oneself” (*ke ji* 克己), self-reflection (*fan shen* 反身), preserving the heartmind and cultivating intrinsic nature (*cun xin yang xing* 存心养性), rectification of the heartmind (*zheng xin* 正心), making one’s intentions sincere (*cheng yi* 诚意), vigilance and fear (*jieshen kongju* 戒慎恐惧), vigilance when alone (*shen du* 慎独), and so on. The resources of Confucian moral cultivation are extraordinarily rich. From Han times to Tang times, celebration of humaneness, honoring of harmony, respect for ritual, and benefiting the community were well established as the core values of Chinese culture.

## 2.4 The Preferences and Characteristics of the Values of Chinese Civilization

The cognitive and existential aspects of an established civilization belong to its worldview, while the principles of evaluation of moral values of an established culture represent the basic lifestyles of its people and their fundamental cultural character. If we aim to explicate the philosophical foundations of Chinese civilization, we will lay greater emphasis on cognitive and existential aspects, especially pronounced qualities of its cosmological views. This is because people generally express their overall views of the world in which they live through their cosmological views. These are primarily embodied in their understanding of how the cosmos and world exist and act, as well as of how the cosmos and world are composed. That is to say, what is generally called worldview primarily refers to understanding of the world. However, this worldview also includes or expresses another aspect, which is the attitudes people hold toward the world. People’s understanding of the world and people’s attitudes toward the world are interconnected and run through one another. Understanding of the world often reflects or influences one’s attitude toward the world, or creates a certain attitude. The same is true in reverse. People’s attitudes toward the world arise from their understanding of the world, or influence their understanding of the world. In this lecture, we focus on Chinese civilization’s attitude toward the world in which it resides, highlighting the significance of the value attitudes of Chinese civilization in constituting the worldview of Chinese civilization. We will describe this from several aspects. The first of these is attitudes toward others and the community. The second is China’s attitude toward the external world and other parts of the world. Third is Chinese civilization’s pursuit of order in the world. Attitudes are values, and therefore this lecture mostly describes Chinese civilization’s pursuit of values.

The value preferences of Chinese civilization are interconnected with its cosmological views. The philosophy and cosmology of ancient Chinese civilization emphasized ideas of continuity, dynamicism, connection, relation, and totality. They did not advocate a self-centered philosophy prioritizing the static, independence, reality, and subject-object distinction. Beginning from this organic holism,

all of the cosmos is interconnected and existentially interdependent. Every thing manifests its existence and value within connection with others. Therefore, relationships of symbiosis and harmony ought to be established between people, between cultures, and between humans and nature. In another aspect, the value preferences of Chinese civilization are also connected with the historical path of Chinese civilization. Many historians believe that ancient China entered into civilized society without fundamentally altering its clan structures. Because of this, the framework of political and social institutions retained many characteristics of clan society, which have been carried forward continuously since ancient China's Three Dynasties. That is to say, the political and cultural development of Chinese civilization exhibits continuity. This is the historical basis on which Chinese civilization became a "civilization of continuity." Some have called this manner of transformation in entering into civilized society ancient institutional reformation. Reformation is not revolution that breaks from the past, but rather inclusive revision involving transformation and development characterized by continuity.<sup>17</sup> According to this position, the culture and values of the tribal and clan society of early Chinese civilization were extended and elevated within the continuous inheritance of Chinese civilization into the later intellectual world.

Values have various levels. An important question of the study of values is how to grasp traditional Chinese notions of value, especially the characteristics of values on the social level. One of the characteristics of values is that they generally display these value preferences through comparison, choice, and selection between various ideas and things. Therefore we cannot merely look at the moral concepts of Chinese culture themselves in discussing the characteristics of the values of Chinese civilization. Rather, we must take Western culture, especially the values of modern Western culture, as an object of comparison in order to observe and understand the characteristics of the values of Chinese civilization.

Viewed from this perspective, the fundamental values and value system of Chinese civilization clearly differ greatly from modern Western culture. There are four fundamental qualities in which the values of Chinese civilization contrast with modern Western values.

The first of these qualities is "the priority of responsibility to freedom." The values of Chinese culture strongly emphasize the person's responsibility to others, to society, and even to nature, which manifests very powerful consciousness of responsibility. This responsibility involves transcendence of the desire for life and needs of survival of the individual self and facing the demands on the self made by others and higher levels of society. Ancient Confucianism's virtue theory was extraordinarily developed. A complete virtue system had formed by the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, and its virtues of loyalty, trustworthiness, humaneness, righteousness, filial piety, benevolence, yielding, and respect all concerned the direct relationship of the person with others and society. The value

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<sup>17</sup>See Hou Wailu 侯外庐, *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi* 中国思想通史, vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1992), 8–9.

orientations of these social virtues all call on the person to take on responsibility toward others and society. For example, filial piety emphasized responsibility to one's parents, loyalty emphasized fulfillment of one's responsibility toward others, and trustworthiness emphasized responsibility toward one's friends. Assertions of responsibility sit in opposition to rights. The ancient Chinese moral concept of "righteousness" often included demands of responsibility. In Confucian thought, the relationship of the person with others and with the community is a continuous and unbroken connection. Within such relationships, people must proactively take on their own responsibility toward other parties. Self-consciously taking on responsibilities toward others was considered virtuous, and this served to maintain and solidify such relationships. This mentality of responsibility was a universal psychology of values cultivated by Confucian culture.

Within the understanding of Chinese culture, the person is not atomic. Rather the person is a relational being that forms one party of the continuous body of social relationships. Therefore, this position emphasizing relationships differs from positions taking the individual person as most fundamental. It advocates that within relationships composed by the person with other objects, people do not form these relationships with a mentality of rights, but rather with a mentality of responsibility. When the person forms a relationship with another party, it does not take itself as the center, but rather takes itself as a starting point from which the importance of the opposite party is recognized, with the requirement that personal benefit be subordinated to responsibility. People forget themselves in the realization of responsibility, disregarding their own person. Responsibility often becomes a major motivation of personal social practice. Such a position is one that asserts responsibility as most fundamental within interpersonal relationships. At the same time, since the person is a person within a web of social relations, the person forms various relations with diverse objects, and thereby the responsibilities of the person are manifold, and not single or unitary. However many roles a person has, he or she possesses a corresponding number of responsibilities.

Confucian values have always expressed the seriousness of shouldering responsibility. As Mencius states, a cultivated gentleman "takes upon himself the heavy charge of the empire (all under heaven)."<sup>18</sup> That is, the moral person takes important affairs of "all under heaven" as his or her own responsibility. Han thinkers explicitly stated that one ought to "take all under heaven as one's own responsibility." From the pre-Qin scholar-ruler to the Han dynasty scholar-official, this consciousness of responsibility is constantly pronounced, emphasizing responsibility toward the state and not personal freedom. Among scholar-officials from the Han dynasty to the Song dynasty, the representative statement of this consciousness of responsibility is Fan Zhongyan's 范仲淹 advocacy to "Place concern for the concerns of the empire first, and then take pleasure in the pleasure of the empire."<sup>19</sup> This is the most paradigmatic example of this in Chinese history.

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<sup>18</sup>*Mencius* 5A7, trans. follows James Legge with alterations.

<sup>19</sup>Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹, *Yueyanglou Ji* 岳阳楼记 (1046).

Later, Ming dynasty scholar Gu Xiancheng 顾宪成 put forth advocacy of “concern for all affairs,” including “affairs of the family, affairs of the state, and affairs of all under heaven.” Gu Yanwu 顾炎武, whose life spanned the transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties, likewise declared, “ordinary citizens hold responsibility for the flourishing and decline of the empire.”<sup>20</sup> Qing dynasty thinker Lin Zexu 林则徐 even promoted willingness to sacrifice one’s life if it benefits one’s nation.<sup>21</sup> All of these are common statements in Chinese culture that express of scholar-officials’ views on responsibility. Chinese people are familiar with them, and they have deeply influenced society and folk culture.

The second quality in which the values of Chinese civilization contrast with modern Western values is “the priority of duty to rights.” Since modern times, Western society has laid extraordinary emphasis on the priority of individual rights. However, Chinese thinking, especially Confucian thought, emphasizes instead the priority of obligation. The major 20th century Confucian Liang Shuming participated in the movement to establish rural government in Shandong and Hebei, and during this experience had an insight: This is Chinese culture’s prioritization of duty in relationships among people. The reciprocal assumption of duty is a fundamental characteristic of Chinese ethics. He believed that the rise of individualism that began with Western modernity formed a society in which individuals are most fundamental (*geren benwei de shehui* 个人本位的社会). Such a society contains myriad problems. China, on the other hand, took ethical relations as most fundamental. Liang Shuming wrote:

A human life has other people with whom it is necessarily interrelated; these are heavenly relations.<sup>22</sup> A human life takes place in its entirety within relations between humans; these are ethical relations. Feelings of intimate interrelation arise from the corporality of heavenly relations. These natural emotions extend to all interrelated persons, without exception. Where there are feelings of affection, duty is born. The duty of the father is loving his children; the duty of the child is filial piety; the duty of elder siblings is friendship; and the duty of younger siblings is respect. Spouses, friends, and all interrelated people naturally have duties which they ought to fulfill. Ethical relationships are expressions of a kind of obligation. A person seems to not exist for oneself, but rather recognizes the importance of the other. Modern Westerners oppose this, their belief in the self as most fundamental arising everywhere, and everything concerned primarily with concepts of rights.

From this perspective, the ethics of Chinese people especially emphasize sense of duty. Of course this sense of duty is open. Ethical duty can be enlarged from the family to the clan and community, and further to the country prefecture, nation, all under heaven, and the cosmos. In sum, the ethical notions of Chinese people emphasize sense of duty, and the virtue toward which duty is oriented does not celebrate individual rights but rather strives to realize obligation toward others and the fulfillment of the responsibilities one carries. Liang Shuming believes this orientation of duty is especially expressed in how one treats the relationship

<sup>20</sup>Gu Yanwu 顾炎武, “Zhengshi” 正始 chapter of *Ri Zhi Lu* 日知录.

<sup>21</sup>Lin Zexu 林则徐, “Pu shu dengcheng kou zhan shi jieren” 赴戍登程口占示家人 (1842).

<sup>22</sup>Translator’s note: Or perhaps “natural relations,” in the sense of relations bestowed by heaven.

between oneself and others. In his view, the West prioritizes the individual, taking oneself as most important, while China sees duty as most important, respecting other parties. Liang Shuming writes, “Primary concern with the fundamentality of the individual leads to proliferation of notions of rights. Primary concern with consciousness of respect for other parties leads to proliferation of notions of duty.” Clearly, rights have become a fundamental notion of modern Western society, while in Chinese culture notions of duty occupy a fundamental position.

The third quality in which the values of Chinese civilization contrast with modern Western values is “the community being higher than the individual.” Following the Western Zhou rise of humanistic thought in Chinese culture, the Spring and Autumn period clearly put forth notions of the human as most fundamental. Early modern Western culture following the Renaissance also advocated the fundamental position of the human. However, modern Western humanism has had a stronger affinity to take the individual as fundamental, whereas Chinese culture’s assertion of the human as fundamental does not promote the fundamentality of the individual but rather emphasizes the fundamentality of the community. Therefore, its values see the community as higher than the individual.

According to the views of Chinese culture, humans do not exist in the world as individual and independent beings. They live necessarily as beings within the community. The realization of human morality also must be achieved within communal life. The most basic communal unit by which one transcends one’s individual person is the family, which expanded is the clan, community, and various levels of the scope of political administration, such as village, county, prefecture, and province, all the way up to the national level. Chinese civilization views family values as especially important, as the family is the first level by which one moves beyond oneself and develops toward society. The mainstream thought of Chinese culture does not emphasize individual rights and interests. It believes that personal values cannot be higher than communal values. Society is far more important than the person. It therefore emphasizes a melding of the personal with the communal and the duty of the person to the community. It emphasizes the importance of the interests of the communal totality. Although in ancient times Chinese thought did not give abstract discussions of the community but rather mostly used ideas of the “family,” “state,” “gods of land and grain,” “all under heaven,” and so on to concretely express the meaning and value of the community, all of these descriptions (such as “ability to form community,” “protecting one’s family,” “dedication to serving one’s country,” and so on) nevertheless clearly embody the importance of social stability, harmony, and prosperity. They emphasize the person’s duty toward community and society, as well as the priority and importance of community and society for the person. In its forms of expression, emphasis on the priority of society is also often accentuated through the opposition of “public” (*gong* 公) and “personal” (*si* 私). The “public” transcends beyond the personal and refers to the value of the interests of the larger community. If the individual is personal, then family is public; if the family is personal, then the state is public, and so forth. The publicness of the community and state gods of land and grain are greater versions of publicness. The greatest publicness lies in justice



(*gongdao* 公道),<sup>23</sup> fairness (*gongping* 公平), and public interest (*gongyi* 公益). Thus it is said, “The public is all under heaven” (*tianxia wei gong* 天下为公).

In summary, Confucian ethics do not see the individual as fundamental, but rather develop within a structure of concentric circles that open toward society and are characterized by continuity. These circles are the person, family, state, world, and nature. They expand outwardly, unbroken, thereby giving Confucian ethics manifold dimensions and affirming the responsibility people carry toward various levels of community. The *Analects* discusses the idea of fraternity with “all within the Four Seas,”<sup>24</sup> and the *Record of Rites* advocates “looking on all under heaven as one family.”<sup>25</sup> If we say that family is a fundamental idea of Chinese people, and that familial relations are the basic relations among Chinese people, then Chinese people long ago extended and enriched this concept of family and familial relations. It should be pointed out that the value structures of Chinese civilization are pluralistic. Daoism and Buddhism both provide their values, making them constitutive parts of the values of Chinese civilization. However, Confucian value structures formed the mainstream values of Chinese civilization. This is without doubt. At the same time, that our focus is on East-West relations in an era of globalization and concentrated on political and moral values is also a reason that our discussion here often takes Confucianism as representative and does not look at other schools of thought.

The fourth quality in which the values of Chinese civilization contrast with modern Western values is “harmony being higher than conflict.” The cultural history of humankind is full of conflict, battle, and bloodshed. East and West are the same in this regard. However, comparatively speaking, Chinese culture lays greater emphasis on harmony among people than Western culture does. Chinese culture focuses on the high esteem of harmony and emphasizes pursuit of pluralistic harmony.

The Spring and Autumn period imperial historian Bo Yangfu 伯阳父 (known as Shi Bo 史伯) put forth the teaching, “Harmony is that by which things are actually generated; whereas through sameness things are unable to continue.”<sup>26</sup> This formed Chinese culture’s notion of “being harmonious while being dissimilar” (*he er bu tong* 和而不同).<sup>27</sup> This notion of “harmony” began to develop in the early stages of Chinese civilization. The *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚书) records Emperor Shun 帝舜 ordering a minister of music to achieve a state in which “the eight different kinds of musical instruments can be adjusted so that one shall not take from or interfere with another; and spirits and men are brought into harmony.”<sup>28</sup> This shows that ancient people already understood the harmonious function of

<sup>23</sup>Translator’s note: Literally equivalent to “the Way of publicness,” perhaps philosophically corresponding to a “Way of public reason.”

<sup>24</sup>See Footnote 13.

<sup>25</sup>“Li yun” 礼运 18, *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 礼记), trans. follows James Legge with alterations.

<sup>26</sup>“Shi Bi wei Huan Gong lun xing shuai” 史伯为桓公论兴衰, *Zhengyu* 郑语 book of the *Guoyu* 国语.

<sup>27</sup>See *Analects* 13.23.

<sup>28</sup>“Shun Dian” 舜典 (Canon of Shun), *Yu Shu* 虞书 (Book of Yu) of the *Book of Documents*, trans. James Legge.

music, and embodies the aspiration toward cosmic harmony in early wisdom. Ancient Chinese repeatedly used musical harmony as a metaphor for harmony among the various things of the world, and harmony thereby became a sort of universal pursuit. The *Zuozhuan* correspondingly describes, “In nine meetings of vassal lords over eight years, there was harmony like that of music, with no element out of concert.”<sup>29</sup> Ancient Chinese took musical harmony as a model for managing relationships between people, between persons and society, between communities, between humans and heaven, and so on. The pursuit of “harmony” also became a universal ideal of Chinese culture and thought, shaping the modes of thought and value orientations of Chinese civilization.

This type of thinking also strongly influenced Confucianism. The Confucian classic of the “Record of Music” (*Yueji* 乐记) in the *Record of the Rites* states, “Music is the harmony of heaven and earth; ritual is the order of heaven and earth. From harmony all things receive their being; through order they are all differentiated.” This clearly shows that the harmony of humankind fundamentally originates from the harmony of heaven and earth, that is, the harmony of nature. Harmony is the principle of the generation and development of all things; without harmony there is no generative transformation of the myriad things. The realization of harmony, moreover, has deep cosmological origins. Song era philosopher Zhang Zai 张载 wrote, “When there is one thing, there is its opposite; this opposite must be contrary to it in its activity; with this contrariness, there is antagonism; this antagonism must be harmonized and resolved.” This emphasizes that the movement from opposition to harmony is not merely a law of nature, but also a principle of society and human life that possesses universal significance.

There is a consciousness of conflict in Western culture in which people generally want to use their own power in a self-centered way to conquer, control, and possess others. Because of this, religious war is extraordinarily cruel in Western history. Such religious war did not occur in China. We might even say that the two World Wars of the 20th century did not have their source in Eastern culture. Generally speaking, in comparison with Western culture, Chinese culture emphasizes harmony to be higher than conflict.

## 2.5 The Divergence Between the Value Preferences of Chinese Civilization and Modern Values

The basic values formed in Axial Age Chinese civilization became the core values that guided the development of later Chinese civilization. Through development over the two millennia following the Axial Age, Chinese civilization fixed its own value preferences, the principal four of which are “the priority of responsibility to freedom,” “the priority of duty over rights,” “the community being higher than the

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<sup>29</sup>“Xiang Gong shiyi nian” 襄公十一年, *Zuozhuan*.

individual,” and “harmony being higher than conflict,” along with the unity of heaven and human (*tian ren he yi* 天人合一) being higher than the subject-object distinction.

There is great divergence between the values of Chinese civilization and modern Western values. For example, the central moral principle of modern Western liberalism is the prioritization of individual human rights. Everyone has the right to live and act in accordance with their own values. This position believes that making demands on all citizens according to a conception of the common good violates basic individual liberty. Confucianism and the ethics of the various major world religions, on the other hand, all emphasize the common social good, social responsibility, and the virtue of benefiting the public interest. The “community” and the “individual” along with “responsibility” and “rights” constitute two different ethical vocabularies that reflect two different ethical positions and are suited to two different spheres of values. The ethical position centered in the community and responsibility must clarify its own outlook. That is, while also expressing affirmation of freedom and human rights, it should at the same time unambiguously declare that it does not affirm the discourse of rights and the ethical position of prioritizing the individual.

Today we have experienced the course of modern and contemporary development of Chinese culture. In facing the social transformation of modernization and trend of global change, we undoubtedly ought to uphold and protect the demands of the Declaration of Human Rights as well as strive for its realization. However, this certainly does not mean that freedom and human rights are the most important values, or that ethics is merely meant to provide support for individual human rights. It should be pointed out that the discourse and thinking of rights are limited and insufficient in dealing with ethical issues. The generalization of rights-centered thinking is even one of the sources of the many problems we face today. The discourse of rights is also often connected with individualism. Individualism’s prioritization of rights holds a basic presupposition placing individual rights in the foremost position, believing that individual rights must have priority over collective aims and the common social good. In this position, individual duty, responsibility, and virtue all prove difficult to establish. Advocacy of the prioritization of rights emphasizes merely emphasize the protection of people’s negative freedom, and is unable to promote individual recognition of the importance of society’s public interests. It is unable to clearly recognize the conflict between society’s public interests and individual personal interests. The position emphasizing the community and responsibility, on the other hand, seeks to advance the establishment of value attitudes that have positive significance. The 20th century Chinese New Confucian Liang Shuming promoted ideas of self-responsibility representative of Chinese culture, a position asserting the responsibility to “reciprocally recognizing the importance of the other,” in opposition to the outlook of individualism and notions of rights as fundamental to human life. This can be said to fundamentally oppose the rooting of basic attitudes and basic ethical principles for human life in individualism. What Liang Shuming advocated was a Confucian outlook that can be seen as the view of the modern values of Chinese civilization on an ethic of rights.

Liang Shuming's ethic of "recognizing the importance of the other" might be said to arise from the Confucian ethic that he explicated, which indeed possessed a consciousness that differed from the emphasis of the subject. It differed as well from notions of "intersubjectivity," being an ethic characterized by recognition of the importance of "the other." Within this ethic, not only was acknowledgment of the opposite party pronounced, but caring, obligation, and respect toward the other was also emphasized. This was not respect in the sense of fair exchange, but rather an unconditional "recognition of the importance of the other."

In the mainstream understanding of Western culture, human rights are rights demanded by individuals in facing the state. They are moral and political demands on government that are needed by everyone. Here, the demands of individual rights are the responsibility and duty of government. Therefore, notions of human rights involve only the responsibilities and obligations of government, but are unable to delineate the obligations and responsibilities of the individual toward society, family, and others. These ideas of rights have been the core of Western liberal philosophy since early modernity. They are products of the advance of the modern market economy and political democracy. Yet due to the focus on demands of the individual toward society, the responsibility of the individual toward society has often been overlooked. Concentration on the individual's protection of his or her own rights has left the responsibility also possessed by the individual to respect the rights of others overlooked.

As the core of Chinese civilization, the values of Confucian ethics have various forms of expression in modern society. For example, in modern East Asia, Singapore's celebration of "Asian values" constitutes one of these forms. Although Singapore's use of the term "Asian values" may draw skepticism from Asian cultures including those of West and South Asia, nevertheless, according to Li Guangyao's 李光耀 explanation, the term "Asian values" principally refers to the manifestation of Confucian-influenced East Asian values. These "Asian values" are the value attitudes and principles developed in the convergence of the traditional and modern worlds of East Asia. These principles are rooted in the historical development of the culture, religion, and spiritual tradition of East Asia. They are also challenges within Asia's process of modernization of dealing with the world, as they are principles formed by removing unreasonable elements of tradition and adapting to modern Asian experience. The Asian values Li Guangyao has asserted are summarized as five major principles: 1. Society and the nation are more important than the individual person; 2. The root of the state lies in the family; 3. The state must respect the individual person; 4. Harmony is more beneficial to maintaining order than conflict; and 5. Religions ought to complement one another and coexist peacefully.<sup>30</sup>

These five principles not only include the traditional values of East Asia, they also include the new values developed out of the process of absorbing Western

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<sup>30</sup>Taken from Lü Yuanli 吕远礼, *Yazhou jiazhi guan: Xinjiapo zhengzhi de quanshi* 亚洲价值观: 新加坡政治的诠释 (Nanchang, Jiangxi: Jiangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 2002), 59.

culture and establishing a market economy and democratic governance over the last century. Therefore, asserting these to be “Asian values” does not imply that all elements of this system of values are exclusively Asian. That modern Asian values and modern Western values differ does not mean that all aspects of these values are different, but rather that there are differences in the structure and order of these values. That which is most central in these values differs. Simply stated, this is a set of values that do not prioritize individualism. They are a Singaporean version of modern Asian values, as well as a Singaporean version of the values of modern Confucian civilization. Their core is not the prioritization of individual freedom and rights, but rather the prioritization of the interests of the community and society. It is not related with the prioritization of conflict among parties, but related with the prioritization of harmony among parties. This value attitude of prioritization of the interests of the community cannot be used as an excuse for repression of human rights. It must rely on values of democratic institutions and respect for individual persons to realize the protection of human rights. Its difference from modern Western values lies in this value attitude demanding that people possess a mentality of duty and responsibility toward others and the community. This mentality of duty and responsibility accords with the fundamental consensus and shared values of the community. Of course, Singaporean ethics are not the entirety of modern Confucian ethics. For example, in addition to the emphasis on communal values and responsibility, modern Confucian ethics also strongly demands that people maintain traditional virtues, believing that these virtues are both the manifestation of intrinsic human nature and the distillation of universal social interests. These values strive for symbiosis and harmony between people, between persons and society, between cultures, and between humans and nature, yet what they seek goes beyond social harmony, as well. More importantly, even in its social values, modern Confucianism still necessarily grants humaneness the foremost position. This differs from Li Guangyao’s perspective as a politician.

The principle of humane love, spirit of ritual education, consciousness of responsibility, and fundamentality of the community all oppose the value position of individualism. The communal collaboration, culture of ritual education, politics of cooperation, and world governed by “the Way of the king” (*wangdao* 王道)<sup>31</sup> that develop from this are needs of the contemporary world. Communal collaboration emphasizes the significance of the community, in contrast with individualism; a culture of ritual education emphasizes moral consciousness, as opposed to legalism; a politics of cooperation emphasizes collaborative political communication, unlike a politics of conflict; and finally, a world governed by “the Way of the king” is a universal order that differs from the use of brute force and hegemony of imperialism. These four points all take humaneness as their core. Humaneness is a fundamental principle of interconnection and symbiotic harmony. It is a universal cultural

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<sup>31</sup>Translator’s note: “The Way of the king” is generally understood in the Confucian tradition as the highest path of governance, characterized by moral virtue, benevolence, and the implementation of political practices and policies that benefit society. “The Way of the king” thereby also involves the people willingly following their ruler and a corresponding lack of need for coercion.

principle that differs from modern Western mainstream values. In contemporary society, humaneness can form mutual complementarity with modern Western values.

Several years ago I brought up the question of the “pluralistic universality” (*duoyuan pubianxing* 多元普遍性) of values. I believe that we must attempt to establish this notion of “pluralistic universality.” In his book *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, American sociologist Roland Robertson asserts that “the particularization of universalism” and “universalization of particularism” are mutually complementary dual processes of globalization.<sup>32</sup> In the particularization of universality, universality refers to the basic values of the modern economy, political institutions, and systems of management first developed in the West. This can also be called “global localization” or “glocalization.” “The universalization of particularism” on the other hand refers to the increasing global universality of particular values and identities. If individual peoples and local communities abandon their various particular forms of essentialism and are open to integrating into the process of globalization, then the culture and localized knowledge of those peoples can likewise acquire globalized universal significance. This is “local globalization.” Roland Robertson’s ideas here are highly significant. Yet this explanation is certainly insufficient in regards to the universal significance of the values of Eastern civilization. In my view, the West actualized the universality of its own values rather early on, whereas the East was still only beginning to actualize the universality of its own local qualities. Yet the internal universality of spiritual values is certainly not determined by the external degree of actualization of this universality. The spiritual culture and values of both East and West internally and intrinsically possess universality. This can be called “internal universality.” Whether or not internal universality is able to be actualized depends on many external and historical conditions, and when realized can be called “actualized universality.” Therefore, in reality we must recognize that both Eastern and Western cultures each possess universality on the level of spirit and values. Both are universalist, it is just that they diverge from one another and their degree of actualization differs in different historical periods. This is pluralistic universality. Justice, freedom, rights, and rational individuality are universalist values; humane love, ritual education, responsibility, community, and inner tranquility are also universalist values. This was precisely the point that Liang Shuming strove to make clear in his early work *Dong-Xi wenhua ji qi zhexue* 东西文化及其哲学 (Eastern and Western cultures and their philosophy). Today, only by establishing the notion of pluralistic universality within globalization is it possible to make all cultural modes of the world relativized and equalized. In this sense, if we say that in the first stage of globalization cultural shifts possess characteristics of Westernization, then in its second stage we will possibly return the West to the West and return Western culture to a relativized position similar to that of Eastern culture. In this sense, in contrast with the emphasis on “the politics of recognition” of Western pluralist

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<sup>32</sup>Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: SAGE Publications, 1992), 100.

positions, we will emphasize a “culture of recognition” in globalized cultural relations. This would be the recognition of pluralistic universality among cultures, a principle that would be used to manage relationships among diverse cultures. This position is naturally a position of cosmopolitan cultural pluralism, and advocates decentralization and polycentrism in global cultural relations.

## 2.6 The Worldview of Chinese Civilization: Understanding and Attitude Regarding the External World

The attitude of Chinese civilization toward the world is not only an ethical attitude of the person toward the other and toward the community in which one resides, it also includes a cultural-political attitude toward the external world. “Chinese,” “all under heaven,” “the Way of the king,” and “soft and yielding” are all typical notions and elements of this discourse. The fundamental ideas they embody are culture being higher than ethnicity, all under heaven being higher than the nation, and the ideal of the world as “great unity.”

In ancient China, the idea of “Chinese” (*Zhonghua* 中华) did not refer to the name of a nation or a geographical region, nor did it refer to ethnic lineage. The title of “Chinese” referred to a cultural group. Thus the Chinese could devolve into barbarism and barbarians could evolve to become Chinese. During the Western Zhou period, the state of Lu 鲁, ruled by the same familial clan as the Zhou court, was considered Chinese; the state of Qi 齐, ruled by a different familial clan, was also considered Chinese. The criterion for being Chinese was that of the culture of ritual and music developed in the early dynasties. Over the following several millennia, various ethnic groups of the north and south integrated into the traditionally Chinese people, all becoming Chinese. Therefore, the meaning of “Chinese” is cultural, not ethnic. This shows that within Chinese civilization, generally speaking cultural values are far higher than ethnic consciousness.

As for the term “all under heaven,” this term has historically been used in three ways. Theoretically, all under heaven refers to the entirety of geographic space that lies beneath the sky. It is unlimited, and equivalent to what today we call the world. This is the first sense of all under heaven. Yet in reality the use of the term “all under heaven” was often limited. For example, in Chinese people’s use of the term, it is often seen to refer to the actual scope of rule and domination of the ancient Chinese emperor. In this sense, all under heaven refers to China. This is the second meaning of the term. Finally, all under heaven was also used to refer to the concentric world centered on China and its structural system. This is the third meaning of the term.<sup>33</sup> The first sense of all under heaven is seen frequently in classic texts of

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<sup>33</sup>See Shinichiro Watanabe 渡边信一郎, *Zhongguo gudai de wangquan yu tianxia zhixu* 中国古代的王权与天下秩序 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2008) 2–9.

Confucianism, and expresses Chinese people's understanding and ideal of the world. The second sense is seen frequently in Chinese political texts, and is used to discuss the management of political affairs within China. The third sense of the term is seen frequently in texts that discuss Chinese involvement with the external world, including how Chinese thought imagined the structural order of the world.

In terms of the second sense of the term, all under heaven is China itself, its geographical scope equivalent to the "Nine Regions" (*jiuzhou* 九州). This use of all under heaven is close to the modern nation. In terms of the third sense of the term, all under heaven is the structured space of the Nine Regions, Four Seas, and Four Wildernesses (*sihuang* 四荒). The Nine Regions were the center, the Four Seas were occupied by border states, and the Four Wildernesses were even more remote realms. This meaning of all under heaven is close to world order. Ancient China considered itself the center of civilization, believing that the degree of civilization decreased progressively from the Nine Regions to the Four Seas and then the Four Wildernesses. The ancient Chinese conceptualized and put into practice this graded arrangement of world order.<sup>34</sup> We see this in the system of imperial tributes of the Ming and Qing dynasties. In this arrangement, the relationship between China and the world that borders it is not equal, yet China only carried out "hegemony of titles of rank" and "regulations of imperial tribute" toward border states. It did not interfere with local lines of independent rulers, nor did it demand to directly govern their people. Their people had no obligation to pay taxes to the Chinese emperor. In this type of relationship, the formal requirements of ritual institutions were the most important of China's demands on the world on its borders. The Chinese emperor did not greedily seek the land and wealth of these surrounding states.<sup>35</sup>

Early modern China fell victim to imperialist oppression, and Chinese intellectuals reacted emotionally in response. Some said that Chinese people had only considered the idea of all under heaven and not nationality, and that Chinese people had only world consciousness and not national consciousness. They hoped to use this explanation to promote people's national consciousness and establish a modern nation state. Others said that Chinese people had generally envisioned no world external to China, that China was equivalent to the world and the world equivalent to China. These thinkers asserted that Chinese people had only a consciousness of China and no consciousness of the world. Both explanations are inaccurate. Chinese people had established their own national identity long before China transformed into a modern nation. It is simply that this national identity differed from the form of modern ethnic national identity. Speaking historically, since Qin and Han times, Chinese people clearly understood the limitations of their own borders. The *Shiji* 史记 (Records of the Grand Historian) discusses China as the "Middle Kingdom" alongside "external kingdoms" in several places. As early as

<sup>34</sup>Gao Mingshi 高明士, *Tianxia zhixu yu wenhuaquan de tansuo* 天下秩序与文化圈的探索 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2008), 23.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 26, quotation of Tang emperor Taizong 唐太宗.



Han times people clearly recognized that China was only one of the states of the world.<sup>36</sup>

Chinese civilization's political imagination of the order of the external world and attitude toward dealing with it were centered in rule by ritual and rule by virtue. This extended from its central belief that the Way is achieved through virtue and order achieved through ritual. The leading foreign policy of Confucian thought generally has not advocated expansion of China's borders. It is rooted instead in maintaining peace along its borders and prized harmony with its neighbors.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, its attitude toward the external world differs from the orientation of early modern ideology and the hegemonic international relations of imperialist violence and inhumanity. Overall, it does not adopt an approach of military force but of peace in achieving its goals. This differs fundamentally from modern imperialism's use of force to occupy territory and seize wealth. Naturally, in empirical fact, there are many isolated instances of emperors violating the guides of Confucian thought and carrying out military campaigns on border states. However, these actions do not accord with the mainstream values of Chinese civilization, and within China have been reflected on and judged critically.

The differences of this way of imagining the world and these political politics arise directly from Confucian culture's attitude toward the realm of distant peoples. The *Analects* states:

What I have heard is that the head of a state or a noble family worries not about underpopulation but about uneven distribution, not about poverty but about instability. For where there is even distribution there is no such thing as poverty, where there is harmony there is no such thing as underpopulation and where there is stability there is no such thing as overturning. It is for this reason that when distant subjects are unsubmitive one cultivates one's moral quality in order to attract them, and once they have come one makes them content.<sup>38</sup>

This is the use of moral civilization and culture to attract and pacify distant peoples. The *Zhongyong* book of the *Record of Rites* states:

There are nine standards by which to administer the empire, its states, and the families. They are: cultivating the personal life, honoring the worthy, being affectionate to relatives, being respectful toward the great ministers, identifying oneself with the welfare of the whole body of officers, treating the common people as one's own children, attracting the various artisans, showing tenderness to strangers from far countries, and extending kindly and awesome influence on the feudal lords. If the ruler cultivates his personal life, the Way will be established. If he honors the worthy, he will not be perplexed. If he is affectionate to his relatives, there will be no grumbling among his uncles and brothers. If he respects the great ministers, he will not be deceived. If he identifies himself with the welfare of the whole body of officers, then the officers will repay him heavily for his courtesies. If he

<sup>36</sup>Yao Dali 姚大力, "Bianhua zhong de guojia rentong: Dui Zhongguo guojia guannian shi de yanjiu shuping" 变化中的国家认同:对中国国家观念史的研究述评, in *Du shi de zhihui* 读史的智慧 (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe, 2010), 260.

<sup>37</sup>Yu Yunguo 虞云国, "Gudai Zhongguoren de zhoubian guozuguan" 古代中国人的周边国族观, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中华文史论丛 (Jan. 2009): 239.

<sup>38</sup>*Analects* 16.1, trans. D.C. Lau, 161–163.

treats the common people as his own children, then the masses will exhort one another [to do good]. If he attracts the various artisans, there will be sufficiency of wealth and resources in the country. If he shows tenderness to strangers from far countries, people from all quarters of the world will flock to him. And if he extends kindly and awesome influence over the feudal lords, then the world will stand in awe of him. ...To welcome them when they come and send them off when they go and to commend the good among them and show compassion to the incompetent—this is the way to show tenderness to strangers from far countries. To restore lines of broken succession, to revive states that have been extinguished, to bring order to chaotic states, to support those states that are in danger, to have fixed times for their attendance at court, and to present them with generous gifts while expecting little when they come—this is the way to extend kindly and awesome influence on the feudal lords.<sup>39</sup>

Showing tenderness and extending kindly and awesome influence are the use of education of virtue to deal with distant peoples, drawing them into allegiance and obedience.

In reality, Chinese civilization during the Western Zhou period already followed this attitude. The *Zuozhuan* states:

Use music to solidify virtue, righteousness to manage it, ritual to enact it, trustworthiness to maintain it, and humaneness to impel it; then one is able to pacify the nation, share in common prosperity, and attract remote peoples. This is what is called happiness [in the *Book of Poetry*].<sup>40</sup>

The *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周礼) similarly promotes, “creating harmonious relations among the various states, fostering harmonious accord among the people, placing guests at ease, and making remote peoples happily offer their allegiance.”<sup>41</sup> This notion of dealing with the external world through showing tenderness to distant peoples as a way to promote moralization is deeply ingrained in Chinese civilization. Although ancient Chinese civilization in its time was an advanced and powerful civilization, pride was never a virtue upheld by Chinese culture. To prosper without arrogance and have power but love the rites are virtues promoted in Chinese civilization. Chinese people value a civilization in which strength does not coerce the weak, does not violate the weak, and carries out ritual. “Strength without righteousness and without ritual” is not civilized. It does not reach the level of civilization.

If we see all under heaven as conceiving of the world, then a reasonable way of thinking about this kind of world order can be seen in Mencius’ explication of a world governed by “the Way of the king.” Mencius’ distinction between “the Way of the king” and “the Way of the hegemon” is:

One who uses force while borrowing from humaneness will become leader of the feudal lords [as a hegemon], but to do so he must first be the ruler of a state of considerable size. One who puts humaneness into effect through the transforming influence of morality will

<sup>39</sup>Trans. Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 105–106, brackets in original text.

<sup>40</sup>See Footnote 29.

<sup>41</sup>“Da si le” 大司乐 section of “Chun guan zong bo” 春官宗伯, *Rites of Zhou*.

become a true King, and his success will not depend on the size of his state. . . . When people submit to force they do so not willingly but because they are not strong enough. When people submit to the transforming influence of morality they do so sincerely, with admiration in their hearts.<sup>42</sup>

Under the guidance of this type of thought, the humane government of “being a king for all under heaven” and the ideals of “the public as all under heaven” and “great unity of all under heaven” opened the moral dimension of “all under heaven” external to political-geographic structures.

In regards to the world consciousness of Chinese people, what must be pointed out is that prior to Qin times, all under heaven was a synonym for the imperial Zhou court. This was a concept of the nation that was higher than its individual vassal states. “All under heaven” also represented unified values that were a level above the vassal “state.” While the vassal states under the Zhou dynasty were individually self-governing, they all recognized the Zhou court to be the common feudal leader of all under heaven, and all took Zhou culture as a shared cultural paradigm. Even under the successive rise of the Five Hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period, the political borders of the larger territory represented by the Zhou court, which transcended the individual vassal states, remained an important part of the political consciousness of each state. Even if by the late Spring and Autumn and Warring States period that unity of the Zhou court that was higher than individual states had gradually become a formal unity, nevertheless this notion of “all under heaven” as higher than the individual state continued to influence political imagination during this and subsequent periods. For example, Confucius’ time was characterized by the collapse of ritual and downfall of music, and yet Confucius continued to uphold that “the rites and music and punitive expeditions are initiated by the Emperor,”<sup>43</sup> that is, that they ought to be initiated by the Zhou emperor. In Mencius’ time, the political vision of scholar-officials was not limited to individual states, but took political aim instead at kingly governance for all under heaven. “All under heaven” was a larger world that transcended individual vassal states. The representative ideas of the *Daxue* 大学 (*Great Learning*) also place the pursuit of “pacifying all under heaven” (*ping tianxia* 平天下) above “governing the nation” (*zhi guo* 治国). In the prefecture and county system practiced in Qin and Han times there was equivalence and unity between the nation and all under heaven. There was no pursuit of a greater political unity beyond China. Yet, because there were in fact other nations outside of China, the teachings of “all under heaven” being greater and higher than “the nation,” especially in the Confucian classics, expanded people’s political consciousness beyond the limits of “the nation.” The nation was certainly not the highest concept, and this had very early on already become Chinese people’s worldview and conception of all under heaven.<sup>44</sup> In this sense,

<sup>42</sup>*Mencius* 2A3, trans. D.C. Lau with alterations, 69, brackets added.

<sup>43</sup>*Analects* 16.2, trans. D.C. Lau, 163.

<sup>44</sup>See Zhao Tingyang 赵汀阳, *Tianxia tixi* 天下体系 (Nanchang, Jiangsu: Jiangsu Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2005), 44.

“all under heaven” expressed the world consciousness of Chinese people. The *Record of Rites* states, “Look on all under the sky as one family, and on all in the Middle states [i.e., China] as one man.”<sup>45</sup> The world of great unity is a world of mutual assistance and loving fraternity, of residing in peace and taking pleasure in industry, of social equality, and of peaceful international relations. The ideal of great unity of all under heaven is equivalent to the ideal of the world of great unity, and remains the Confucian ideal.

## 2.7 The Universal Ideal of Chinese Civilization: Pursuit of Pluralism and Harmony

The *Guoyu* records imperial historian Bo Yangfu 伯阳父 of the Spring and Autumn period as stating:

Harmony is that by which things are actually generated; whereas through sameness things are unable to continue. Bringing different things together so as to arrive at equilibrium is called harmony. One is thereby able to richly develop and unite things. If one adds together like elements, their interaction results in exhaustion and leaves nothing. Therefore, the former kings mixed soil with metal, wood, water, and fire, and the interaction of these created the myriad things. We thereby have harmonization of the five flavors to please the mouth, strengthening of the four limbs to protect the body, harmonization of the six notes to cultivate the ear, rectification of the seven apertures to serve the heartmind, coordination of the eight body parts to constitute the complete person, the health of the nine organs to establish pure virtue, and the use of ten levels of office to guide the myriad ministers. ... This is supreme harmony. Therefore, the former kings married queens of other clans, grew their wealth through tributaries from all four directions, selects those ministers presenting criticism to manage affairs, and strives to put forth harmony and unity. A sound with only one note is not something worth hearing; a thing with only one color is without richness; monotony of flavor does not please people’s tastes; when things are all the same there is no corrective balance.<sup>46</sup>

This type of thinking believes that harmony among different things is the root by which things are generated. The pure replication or addition of like things is unable to produce generation and growth. In this sense, the existence of the other is a precondition of the generation and development of new things. This is seen in five elements theory, which posits five different fundamental materials which through their interaction and combination produce all things. The principle herein is that of “being harmonious while being dissimilar.” This rejection of uniformity, which sees plurality as the root of flourishing and development, is true wisdom. It is a view that emphasizes that coordination, mediation, balance, and harmony among plural factors is far superior to uniformity, and believes that uniformity can only obstruct

<sup>45</sup>“Li yun” 礼运, *Record of Rites*, trans. James Legge, brackets added.

<sup>46</sup>“Shi Bi wei Huan Gong lun xing shuai” 史伯为桓公论兴衰, *Zhengyu* 郑语 book of the *Guoyu*.

creation and development. The *Zuozhuan* also records the late Spring and Autumn thought of Yan Ying 晏嬰:

Harmony is like making soup. One cooks fish with water, fire, vinegar, meat sauce, salt, and plums, and heats it with firewood. The masterful chef combines these harmoniously, adjusting its various flavors, adding where insufficient and subtracting where excessive. ...If one uses water to adjust the flavor of water, who will find it edible? If the ancient instruments of the *qin* and *se* played only a single note, who would be willing to listen to them?<sup>47</sup>

Only the mediation, complementarity, and blending of different things can produce flourishing and new things. The existence of difference, plurality, and otherness are preconditions of the generation and development of things. Harmony of the differences of diversity is the fundamental condition of continuous generation. This type of dialectic thought had already developed prior to Confucius to become an intellectual resource for the celebration of diversity inherent within Chinese philosophy, and was applied in understanding of politics, society, cosmological generation, and other realms.

As for the connotation of “harmony” possessed by the Chinese term *he* 和, this began developing in early Chinese civilization. As mentioned above, the *Book of Documents* records Emperor Shun ordering his minister of music to use poetry and song to reach a state in which “the eight different kinds of musical instruments can be adjusted so that one shall not take from or interfere with another; and spirits and men are brought into harmony.” This makes clear that ancient people already understood the harmonious function of music, and hoped that musical harmony could lead humans and deities to achieve a harmonious relationship. The people of the Spring and Autumn period inherited this type of thought, and advocated the expansion of harmony of sounds to a harmony that transcends the human realm, that is, “to bring spirits and men into harmony.”<sup>48</sup> This manifested the yearning of early learned people for cosmological harmony. Ancient Chinese people repeatedly used musical harmony as an allegory for harmony among the various things of the world, and harmony thereby became a universal pursuit. The *Zuozhuan* likewise records the marquis of Jin 晉 stating, “You have taught me to use harmony with border tribes to manage the Chinese vassal states of the Central Plains, and in nine meetings of vassal lords over eight years, there was harmony like that of music, with no element out of concert.”<sup>49</sup> Ancient Chinese people took musical harmony as a model for managing relations among people, between people and society, among communities, and between heaven and human. The pursuit of “harmony” also became a general ideal of Chinese thought and culture, and molded the modes of thought, value orientations, and aesthetic pursuits of Chinese civilization.

Confucius’ grandson Zi Si 子思 wrote, in the *Zhongyong* book of the *Record of Rites*:

<sup>47</sup>“Zhao Gong ershi nian” 昭公二十年, *Zuozhuan*.

<sup>48</sup>See Footnote 5.

<sup>49</sup>See Footnote 29.

Equilibrium is the great foundation of the world, and harmony its universal path. When equilibrium and harmony are realized to the highest degree, heaven and earth will attain their proper order and all things will flourish.<sup>50</sup>

“Equilibrium” (*zhong* 中) is the principle of the Way of the mean and balance, and harmony the principle of concord. Balance and harmony not only possess significance for humankind, they are also universal cosmic laws. Humans must accord with the universe, adhering to the principles of balance and harmony, which will result not only in the prospering of human society but also necessarily advance the flourishing and order of the cosmos. This is a manifestation of so-called correlative thought. Moreover, the harmonious unification of humans and nature, which following the Han period was referred to as “the unity of heaven and human,” became an inherent value ideal of Chinese civilization.

From the Warring States period to the Han dynasty and then to the Song dynasty and thereafter, the notion of the unity of heaven and human was consistently rich and highly developed. What was referred to as the unity of heaven and human was an emphasis on the harmonious unity of humans and nature. This stressed accordance between the Way of humans (the laws of human society) and the Way of heaven (universal cosmic laws). It did not advocate the separation of heaven and human. This way of thinking does not emphasize the conquering or alteration of nature, nor does it advocate opposition between heaven and humans. It advocates coordination between heaven and humans. According to this type of thought, humans cannot go against nature, but rather ought to coordinate human behavior with nature under the precondition of obeying natural law. Ancient ideas of the unity of heaven and human emphasized that humans are one part of nature and that humans themselves embody intrinsic natural properties. These notions strive toward the unification of humans with nature and integration of humans and nature in a single body. At the same time, these ideas also advocate people’s proactive cooperation with the continuous generation and transformation of the natural world. While coordinating ourselves with nature, we should also facilitate and advance the harmony and development of the cosmos. This pursuit of universal harmony of humans and nature has its reasonable practical significance in correcting the pursuit of comprehensive and coordinated socioeconomic development of unrestricted conquering of nature and disregard for the environment and ecological equilibrium.

Taking the pursuit of lasting harmony as its attitude in dealing with the external world has long historical roots within Chinese civilization. *The Book of Documents* states:

He made the able and virtuous distinguished, and thence proceeded to the love of all in the nine classes of his kindred, who thus became harmonious. He also regulated and polished the people of his domain, who all became brightly intelligent. Finally, he united and harmonized the myriad states.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup>Trans. Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 98.

<sup>51</sup>“Yao Dian” 尧典 (“Cannon of Yao”), *Book of Documents*, trans. James Legge.

Later, “harmonization of the myriad states” became a paradigm of the worldview of Chinese culture. A similar statement is made in the *Rites of Zhou*, which advocates, “harmonizing the various states of the empire, governing the various officials, and making the people harmonious.”<sup>52</sup> Confucius long ago employed “harmony” as a principle of interaction with the external world. The *Zuozhuan* records Confucius stating, “Peace is had through harmony.” The commentary on the judgments for the *qian* 乾 hexagram in the *Book of Changes* states, “One stands with head above the multitudes, and the myriad states are all at peace,”<sup>53</sup> which is also in line with the idea of concord among the myriad states. A world of peaceful coexistence has been the continuous ideal of Chinese civilization for several millennia.

Prior to Han times, communication was limited and China had remained unable to clearly put forth a concept of the world as a non-concentric collective body of a plurality of civilizations. Due to the communication between India and China that followed the Wei-Jin period, and especially the eastward transmission of Buddhist teachings from India, Chinese culture not only absorbed Buddhist culture, but its consciousness also clearly understood the existence of other advanced civilizations outside of Chinese civilization. These other civilizations even surpassed China in certain aspects. This opened up the Chinese vision of pluralistic civilization. Moreover, the exchange between Chinese civilization and Indian civilization remained continuously peaceful. Due to the transmission and development of Buddhism, China’s various dynasties mostly upheld all three teachings of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, which came to be called “the unity of the three teachings” (*san jiao heyi* 三教合一) among later Chinese intellectuals. This showed that it was possible to interblend different religions, which thereby precluded the occurrence of religious war between China and the external world. This tradition of integration of different civilizations and diverse religious teachings is the cultural practice of ancient China’s notion of “being harmonious while being dissimilar.” It has also been a major resource for managing religion and culture in Chinese civilization since at least the Tang period. All of this makes clear that the harmony pursued by Chinese culture is a vision of harmony under conditions of mutually complementary diverse coexistence.

Globalization has already led to close interconnection in many aspects of the world, including the economy, technology, finance, and trade. The world is now more interconnected in these various realms than at any previous period in history, yet the situation of humankind has not improved as a result. Following the end of the Cold War, localized warfare has not ceased. The Balkans, Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan—with the intervention of the West, warfare and disorder have arisen intertwined. With the rising tide of globalization, the gap between north and south has not contracted. Developing countries have received not only opportunity from

<sup>52</sup>“Dazai” 大宰 section of “Tian Guan Zhong Zai” 天官冢宰, *Rites of Zhou*.

<sup>53</sup>Trans. Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 130.

globalization, but also disaster. The establishment of global and regional communities, although of urgent necessity, is riddled with difficulties. America's financial tsunami showed the inherent danger of market capitalism, while Europe's financial crisis has proven increasingly severe. Facing these problems leads us to believe that it is impossible to remedy them relying only on modern Western values—freedom, democracy, the law, rights, the market, individualism. We must open up and pursue various paths of exploration, including renewed excavation of the values and worldview of East Asian civilization, development and promotion of correlative and reciprocal ethics, and engagement of moral consciousness and consciousness of ritual education so as to improve this unsatisfactory world.



## Chapter 3

# A Brief Account of the Development of the Chinese Intellectual Tradition

Unlike the world's other ancient civilizations, which arose within relatively small geographical areas, Chinese civilization developed over a vast territory surrounding the Yellow and Yangtze River valleys, and was able to amass and sustain an immense population. This geographic feature has imbued Chinese civilization with an exceptional capacity to maintain stability, to absorb and to integrate. Throughout history, there have been civilizations that existed in antiquity but not in modernity, and vice versa. Chinese civilization is unique in that it has spanned both antiquity and modernity: it was already considerably advanced before the Qin unification, and has gone through another two millennia of development since. It is the only historically uninterrupted and ceaselessly productive ancient civilization in the world. Although the Han ethnic group and Chinese script are at the core of Chinese society and civilization, the nation has developed as an integrated multi-ethnic whole, and the civilization has been co-created by the Han Chinese as well as other ethnic groups.

Chinese civilization is fundamentally agrarian in character, representing the most fully developed formation of this type in the world. This has impacted the Chinese *Weltanschauung*, bringing into prominence the notion of “the unity of heaven and humans” (*tian ren he yi* 天人合一), the ideal of “peace in the world” (*tian xia heping* 天下和平) and family ethics based on China's agrarian culture. Throughout its long development, in addition to introducing an abundance of philosophical, intellectual, cultural, and scientific innovations, Chinese civilization has also made unique inventions in political organization. The latter include the regime combining centralized power and the commandery system implemented during the Han unification and the civil examination system introduced during the Tang era. These phenomena have substantially contributed to the longevity of Chinese civilization

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This chapter was translated by Joanna Guzowska.

Translator's note: The expression “Chinese Intellectual Tradition” is meant to render the Chinese term *guoxue* 国学 which will be discussed later in the chapter. Its literal meaning is “a state's learning” and its primary reference is a state's, in this case China's, indigenous intellectual tradition and body of knowledge, including its inherent organizing principles, especially prior to that state's exposure to the modern West. (trans.)

and played an important role in its cultural development, forming the civilization's superstructure.

Historically, Chinese culture has thrived owing to an interfusion of indigenous ethnic cultures as well as an ongoing absorption of foreign culture. The growth and rejuvenation thus facilitated speak to the civilization's broad inclusiveness. Indeed, Chinese civilization has not developed in isolation but under specific historical conditions, in an environment shaped by multiple mutually interacting factors, including geography, politics, economy, social and governmental realities, and exchanges with the outside world. At the same time, the spirit of the Chinese civilization and its developmental trajectory have provided impetus to the sustained development of the Chinese nation: the spirit of unremitting striving has enabled the Chinese people to remain upbeat and entrepreneurial in times of crisis and to continually move forward, while confidence in the efficacy of virtue has allowed them to embrace whatever situation they face, to grow and to prosper. The spirit of the Chinese people and the fundamental spirit of Chinese civilization have reinforced each other and jointly played an important role in China's millennia-long history, contributing to the nation's strong cohesion, tenacious vitality and great creativity. As the eminent British historian Arnold J. Toynbee once observed:

For several millennia, the Chinese, more so than any other nation in the world, have managed to successfully unite, both politically and culturally, hundreds of millions of people. They have shown, on the political as well as the cultural level, a capacity for unification whose success is unparalleled.

Today, in order to bolster China's national spirit, wide recourse must be made to that outstanding spiritual culture which facilitated the growth and development of the Chinese nation throughout history, reflecting and promoting its vitality, cohesion, and creativity. This must be coupled with timely development and innovation, so that a major revival of Chinese civilization and the Chinese nation can be brought about more expeditiously.

Chinese culture is extensive and profound and its long history goes back to the dim and distant past. The term *guoxue* 国学 [used in the title of this chapter and rendered in English as "Chinese intellectual tradition"] refers to the indigenous intellectual and cultural complex created and developed by the Chinese people over several millennia prior to China's exposure to Western culture during the early modern period.<sup>1</sup> Counting from the Xia dynasty to the late nineteenth century, the emergence, formation, and evolution of *guoxue* spanned over four millennia and featured, as its core substance, the classical canon (*jing* 经), historiography (*shi* 史), master literature (*zi* 子), belletristic writing (*ji* 集), Confucianism or Ruism (*ru* 儒), Daoism (*dao* 道), and Buddhism (*fo* 佛). *Guoxue* is the record of the intellectual activity and cultural production undertaken by the Chinese people since antiquity in their effort to build a homeland. It is a reflection of their higher-order pursuits and

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<sup>1</sup>Translator's note: The expression "early modern" is used here to translate the Chinese term *jindai* 近代 which refers to the period between the Opium Wars of 1839–1842 and 1856–1860 and the 1919 May Fourth Movement.

an expression of their spiritual world. It has been an important resource for the nation's ceaseless development and growth.

Chinese civilization has left a unique mark on the history of human civilization and contributed significantly to its development. The essence and core of Chinese civilization is the Chinese intellectual tradition. Although scholarship certainly does not exhaust the entirety of Chinese culture, it can be seen as an embodiment of the cultural creativity and value outlook of the Chinese people. It is a valuable asset that must be properly reviewed, diligently continued and innovatively reworked as new historical conditions continue to arise.

Below, I present, in chronological order, an outline of Chinese intellectual history and briefly describe the intellectual and cultural phenomena which dominated each distinctive historical period.

### 3.1 Chinese Script and the Early Textual Corpus

The Xia was the first Chinese royal dynasty to rule over a civilized territory. The Xia era, together with the subsequent Shang and Zhou, represent the formative period in the history of Chinese civilization. Two highly significant developments occurred during this period which radically determined the future course of China's intellectual history: the invention of Chinese script (*han zi* 汉字) and the formation of the Six Classics (*liu jing* 六经).

Chinese script has served as the basic medium for the expression and transmission of Chinese culture since its invention. It is the most important and unique cultural creation stemming from China's formative period and the most fundamental invention in the civilization's history. Once it had formed, other products of Chinese cultural creativity could be passed down in written form, elaborated on, and developed. Chinese script emerged at the turn of the Xia and the Shang eras. Currently, its earliest known form is in Shang era oracle bone script, literally "shell and bone writing" (*jia gu wen* 甲骨文), carved on tortoise plastrons and animal scapulae. The oldest surviving batch of oracle bone inscriptions was discovered at the Ruins of Yin (Shang) in the present-day city of Anyang and has been dated to the late Shang period, over three millennia ago. Around 4500 distinct graphs have been identified in the oracle bone corpus, of which two thousand have been successfully deciphered. More than ten thousand oracle bone inscriptions written with over one million characters have been excavated to date. Anyang inscriptions show that oracle bone script was a fully functional writing system capable of thoroughly recording contemporary language, which clearly implies an origin earlier than the late Shang. The oracle bone corpus features numerous pictograms (*xiang xing zi* 象形字), associative compounds (*hui yi zi* 会意字), and phonetic loan graphs (*jia jie zi* 假借字). Semantic-phonetic compounds (*xing sheng zi* 形声字) are also relatively common, which is a mark of oracle bone script's maturity. Throughout history, Chinese script continued to develop beyond oracle bone script, and its younger contemporary, the bronze script (*jin wen* 金文).

Chinese civilization has spread over a vast and dialectally varied territory. As a commonly used medium, Chinese writing has facilitated and promoted interregional cultural exchange and played an important role in unifying China culturally as well as politically. Over time, Chinese script has also considerably influenced the mode of thought and expression of the Chinese people, so much so that the formation and development of Chinese intellectual culture is inseparable from Chinese script. Moreover, following the Han era, grammatological research into traditional Chinese script developed and went on to become an important component of classical Chinese scholarship. Written culture based on Chinese script has been the major ingredient of China's intellectual culture throughout the long history of Chinese civilization. Han Chinese scholars, as well as those from minority ethnic backgrounds, have all contributed to its successful development.

Chinese scholarship is expressed through a textual corpus written using Chinese writing. The origins of the Chinese textual corpus are considerably early. Tradition has it that the *Xia xiao zheng* 夏小正 (Calendar of the Xia), preserved among later Warring States materials, is a Xia era almanac. It is the oldest surviving Chinese calendrical text, and a rather precise one, considering its age. The *Shang shu* 尚书 (Ancient Documents) holds another clue to China's literary past: "The people of the Yin [Shang] had bamboo books and records (*you ce you dian* 有册有典)." The term *ce* 册, here rendered as "bamboo books," refers to inscribed bamboo slips bound together to form a longer document and the passage implies that the bamboo book format was already in use during the Shang era. The main purpose of bamboo books early on was record keeping. However, by the Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn period the practice had greatly spread and diversified. According to the *Chu yu* 楚语 (Discourses of Chu), the following material was used in the state of Chu in the mid Spring and Autumn period in the education of the state's crown prince: *Chun Qiu* 春秋 (Springs and Autumns); *Shi* 世 (Lineages); *Shi* 诗 (Poems); *Li* 礼 (Rites); *Yue* 乐 (Music); *Ling* 令 (Orders); *Yu* 语 (Discourses); *Gu zhi* 故志 (Ancient Records); and *Xun dian* 训典 (Instructions). *Springs and Autumns* were a type of historical writing, and we learn about this writing from the *Mengzi* 孟子 (Mencius): "The *Sheng* 乘 of Jin, the *Tao Wu* 柶杙 of Chu and the *Springs and Autumns* of Lu are all the same. They deal with (the era of) King Huan of Qi and King Wen of Jin, and are historical in character (*qi wen ze shi* 其文则史)." The passage would seem to imply that at the time different states had their own titles for historical books. However, in the *Mozi* 墨子 (Mozi) the *Springs and Autumns* of Zhou, Yan, Song, and Qi are mentioned and an explicit reference is made to multiple *Springs and Autumns*: "I have seen the *Springs and Autumns* from the hundred states." This would suggest that every state had some historical writings and those written specifically in annalistic form were called *Springs and Autumns*. As is attested to in the *Zuo zhuan* 左传 (*Zuo's Commentary*), more old literature was still extant during the Spring and Autumn period, including books titled the *San fen* 三坟, the *Wu dian* 五典, and the *Ba suo* 八索. Moreover, during the Warring States period, every state had their own *Shi ji* 史记 (Historical Records), and there also existed the *Shi ben* 世本 (Genealogies) and the *Zhu shu jinian* 竹书纪年 (Bamboo Annals). As the American sinologist Frederick W. Mote once said:

“No early civilization could match China for the extent and diversity of textual material passed down from before 500 B.C.E. or the emphasis placed on writing and textual research.”

### 3.2 The Formation of the Six Classics

The most important among the bamboo books from the Western Zhou era to the Spring and Autumn period, both during that time and later in history, were the *Shi* 诗 (*Poems*); the *Shu* 书 (*Documents*); the *Yi* 易 (*Changes*); the *Li* 礼 (*Rites*); the *Yue* 乐 (*Music*); and the *Chun Qiu* 春秋 (*Springs and Autumns*). The *Poems*, the *Documents* and the *Changes* were repeatedly cited in political, diplomatic, and social contexts as early as the Spring and Autumn period, and over time they came to be viewed as unquestionably authoritative. The canon listed above was already known as the Six Classics during the Warring States period, after their collation and redaction by Confucius 孔子 (d. 479 B.C.E.) in the late Spring and Autumn period. For example, the “Tian yun” 天运 (“The Turning of Heaven”) chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 庄子 (Zhuangzi) contains the following remark: “Confucius said to Lao Dan: I have studied the Six Classics, the *Poems*, the *Documents*, the *Changes*, the *Rites*, the *Music* and the *Springs and Autumns*, for what I consider a long time.” Perhaps more importantly, the “Tian xia” 天下 (“The Realm”) chapter found in the same text offers the following cultural and intellectual characterization of the Six Classics: “The *Poems* to guide the intent; the *Documents* to guide the endeavour; the *Rites* to guide conduct; the *Music* to guide harmonizing; the *Changes* to guide *yin* and *yang*; and the *Springs and Autumns* to guide titles and duties.”

The *Poems*, later referred to as the *Shi jing* 诗经 (Classic of Poetry), is the oldest Chinese collection featuring *shi* poetry (*shi* 诗). It is divided into three sections: airs (*feng* 风), odes (*ya* 雅), and eulogies (*song* 颂). Odes were sung during aristocratic banquets, eulogies were performed during aristocratic sacrificial ceremonies, and airs were for the most part folk songs originating from the state’s various regions. Most poems collected in the anthology stem from the Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn period, with fewer dating from the Shang era. The *Documents*, later known as the *Shu jing* 书经 (Classic of Documents) or *Ancient Documents*, is the earliest known anthology of political material. It is divided into four sections: Yu (the mythical sage period), Xia, Shang, and Zhou. The main section is the *Zhou shu* 周书 (Documents of the Zhou) which contains political texts stemming from the Western Zhou era. The *Changes*, also known as the *Zhou yi* 周易 (Changes of the Zhou) and later called the *Yi jing* 易经 (Classic of Changes), is an ancient divination text comprising sixty-four hexagrams (*gua* 卦) with hexagram comments (*gua ci* 卦辞) and three hundred eighty-six lines (*yao* 爻) with line comments (*yao ci* 爻辞). The material found in the *Changes* reflects the divinatory experience accumulated by Western Zhou court recorders (*shi guan* 史官), it also contains elements of early Chinese philosophical thought. The *Rites*, later referred to as the *Li jing* 礼经 (Classic of Ritual) and later still as the *Yi li* 仪礼 (Ceremonies and

Rites), is a compilation pertaining to the Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn aristocratic ritual and custom related to capping, marriage, funeral, and mourning rituals, as well as sacrificial ceremonies, court audiences, interstate relations, village gatherings, and archery. The specific *Springs and Autumns* included in the Six Classics is a chronicle of the state of Lu, and the *Music* was a work on the system and theory of music.

The Six Classics had been compiled before Confucius's time. They do not belong any particular school but document cultural wisdom acquired during the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou era. They constitute the original classical canon of the Chinese civilization. The Six Classics encapsulate the historical wisdom and mainstream values shaped during the civilization's early phase, including reverence for moral virtue (*jing de* 敬德), interest in the welfare of the people (*bao min* 保民), emphasis on filial piety (*zhong xiao* 重孝), caution regarding the penal regime (*shen fa* 慎罚), and the ideal of harmony between all states (*xiehe wan bang* 协和万邦). The classical canon is the embodiment of the political wisdom, ethical outlook, and aesthetic spirit of Chinese civilization accrued over more than one millennium—spanning the Zhou, the Shang, and the Xia, and even the earlier period. It has been the main historical source for the subsequent development of Chinese culture and its intellectual tradition.

Early Chinese civilization, from the Xia through the Shang and the Zhou, was based on ritual and musical. It provided a fertile ground for the development of the “Six Classics” culture, and conversely, the classical canon constituted the core part of the broader ritualistic-musical civilization (*li yue wenming* 礼乐文明). Before the Qin unification, the Six Classics were not uniquely Confucian but represented the mainstream culture of the Three Dynasties (*san dai* 三代). One prominent feature of the classical canon is its rationalistic and humanistic spirit. The *Poems* and the *Documents* shifted the orientation from the belief in spirits to a reflection on human life and endeavour, away from the spirit realm and closer to the human world, with special focus on governance and education. The canon is also characterized by a keen sense of history: a considerable amount of historical material is preserved in the *Documents*, and the *Poems* is often in keeping with historical fact; the *Springs and Autumns* is a historical chronicle. All this reflects the importance Chinese culture attached to historical experience. Finally, the Six Classics display a strong moral sense by augmenting the historical narrative with value criticism and character assessment. There are elements of satire in the *Poems* and praise and blame in the *Springs and Autumns*. These characteristics reveal the canon's ethical orientation. The Six Classics were collated and redacted by Confucius, who was born at the end of the Spring and Autumn period. This played an important role in the recognition the material received and its dissemination. Confucius's intervention brought out more clearly the humanistic, rationalistic, historical, and ethical orientation of the classical canon, which has exerted much influence on Chinese culture since. The canon's role as a model in the real socio-political context became more pronounced owing to Confucius as well. As we read in the *Mencius*: “Confucius compiled the *Springs and Autumns*, and unruly officials and wicked children were struck with terror.” Confucius's revision of the text emphasized

historiography's capacity to "uphold virtue and condemn evil" (*cheng e yang shan* 惩恶扬善), and this ethical view of history had a lasting influence on subsequent historiography.

The Confucian school, founded by Confucius, made it its mission to pass on the classical canon, becoming the only school before the Qin unification to value China's cultural heritage. Since the Six Classics were passed on by the Confucians, the canon was looked on by later generations as Confucian, and venerated by this particular school. This shows that Confucian culture was an extension of the cultural mainstream of Chinese civilization, Confucius being the figure who summarized and passed on the Xia, Shang, and Zhou civilization. The *Shi ji* 史记 (*Records of the Grand Historian*) contains the following quotation from Sima Tan 司马谈 (d. 110 B.C.E.) recorded by his son and the book's author Sima Qian 司马迁 (d. 86 B.C.E.): "The Confucians considered the Six Arts (*liu yi* 六艺) as their model passed down the Six Classic in innumerable copies." The Six Arts referred to here are the same as the Six Classics and the quoted fragment shows the contribution the Pre-Qin Confucian school made to the preservation and continuation of the Six Classics tradition.

The *Music* became lost after the burning of books ordered by the first emperor Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇 (d. 210 B.C.E.) and only five classics survived. This is why Emperor Wu of the Han 武帝 (d. 87 B.C.E.) established Erudites (*boshi* 博士) for the Five Classics (*wu jing* 五经). Later on, more literature was added to the classical canon, including three commentaries to the *Springs and Autumns* (*Chun Qiu san zhuan* 春秋三传) and three texts on ritual (*san li* 三礼) as well as the *Lunyu* 论语 (Analects of Confucius), the *Xiao jing* 孝经 (Classic of Filial Piety), the *Erya* 尔雅,<sup>2</sup> and the *Mencius*. By the Tang and the Song era, the canon had expanded to contain thirteen classics. The core content of the Thirteen Classics (*shi san jing* 十三经) are the Five Classics together with their Confucian interpretation and elaboration.

### 3.3 The One Hundred Schools

The Zhou era was a golden age for civilization based on ritual and music. However, at the end of the Spring and Autumn period the ritualistic-musical order began to gradually disintegrate and Chinese intellectual culture entered a new era. The period from the end of the Spring and Autumn period through the Warring States belonged to the many masters and the hundred schools (*zhu zi bai jia* 诸子百家). In the wake of the dissolution of the clan-based political system at the end of the Spring and Autumn period, and the accompanying "collapse of ritual and ruination of music" (*li beng yue huai* 礼崩乐坏), the educated elite or the scholarly strata (*shi* 士) became

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<sup>2</sup>The *Erya* is an early Chinese glossary. The title could perhaps be translated as "Approximating the Correct [Use of Language]." I render it in the original throughout the chapter. (trans.).

disassociated from its original aristocratic class background. Court scholars turned into private teachers and book-writing doctrine-devising intellectuals, and scholarship, previously controlled by aristocracy, became disseminated among broader society. The rise of the private teaching class promoted intellectual freedom, while general social upheaval inspired social thought and deep reflection on human life. A number of philosophers emerged at end of the Spring and Autumn period and throughout the Warring States period, including Confucius, Mozi 墨子 (fl. ca. 430 B.C.E.), Laozi 老子,<sup>3</sup> and Zhuangzi 庄子 (fl. fourth century B.C.E.). At the time, a disciple would call his teacher “master” (*zi* 子), which is why the thinkers of this period came to be collectively known as the many masters (*zhu zi* 诸子) and their thought and legacy was later referred to as Master Learning (*zi xue* 子学).

Although Master Learning had its historical sources, its rise had much more to do with contemporary social and existential reflection inspired by the revolutionary changes occurring in China at the time. Confucius is the founder of the Confucian school, Mozi founded the Mohist school, while Laozi and Zhuangzi founded the Daoist school. In fact, numerous schools emerged during the period, hence the term “hundred schools” (*bai jia* 百家). The many masters and the hundred schools debated and rivalled one another, and the Chinese intellectual tradition underwent rapid development due to this climate of free deliberation and discussion. During the Warring States period, the rulers of particular states retained and gave patronage to scholars with an eye to new ideas regarding rulership, and policies regulating intellectual output were tolerant, which created a favourable political and living environment for those exploring new intellectual avenues and promoted the emergence of a vast and philosophically diverse textual corpus. The claim that “the scholars of the hundred schools now and then take up some part of (ancient wisdom) and pronounce it to be the guide” found in “The Realm” chapter of the *Zhuangzi* as well as the claim that “each school has a different doctrine” expressed in the “Jie bi” 解弊 (“Dispelling Blindness”) chapter of the *Xunzi* 荀子 (Xunzi) accurately reflect the situation. The flourishing of the many masters and the hundred schools is comparable to the golden age of philosophical thought of Ancient Greece. In China, there were six prominent schools during the period: the Confucian School (*ru jia* 儒家), the Mohist School (*mo jia* 墨家), the Daoist School (*dao jia* 道家), the Legalist School (*fa jia* 法家), the School of Names (*ming jia* 名家), and the Yin Yang School (*yin yang jia* 阴阳家). Confucians paid much attention to history and the continuation of China’s cultural heritage as well as the promotion of benevolent government and welfare for the people; they emphasized moral order and moral cultivation. Daoists pursued equanimity, emphasized non-action, advocated spontaneity, and encouraged free and easy wandering beyond the mundane. Mohists advocated all-inclusive care, pacifism, activism, and

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<sup>3</sup>Translator’s note: Laozi’s death cannot be dated with any accuracy. (In fact, it is debated within contemporary scholarship whether he was a historical figure at all. The Chinese historiographical tradition presented him as an older contemporary of Confucius.)



anti-fatalism; they opposed lush decoration, ritual, and music. Later Mohists studied forms of human reasoning, including the notions of name (*ming* 名), phrase (*ci* 辞), and doctrine (*shuo* 说). Legalists paid much attention to laws and regulations and attached much importance to the penal regime; they emphasized strength and prosperity and valorized practical operation. School of Names thinkers focused on the relation between names (*ming* 名) and actualities (*shi* 实); they discussed “the unity of sameness and difference” (*he tong yi* 合同异) and “the separation of hard and white” (*li jian bai* 离坚白), and were interested in paradox; they also studied conceptual inference. Yin Yang thinkers theorized about *yinyang* 阴阳 and the five processes (*wu xing* 五行); they interpreted history through the “cycle of five virtues” (*wu de zhong shi* 五德终始) and emphasized the junction between heaven (natural phenomena) and humans (social life) (*tian ren zhi ji* 天人之际). They contributed to the development of Chinese astronomy and calendrics. Of particular importance among the above are Confucianism, Mohism, Daoism, and Legalism. Unlike Ancient Greek philosophers who tended to explore nature, the many masters and the hundred schools focused more on society and human life.

The dominant schools at the beginning of the Warring States period were Confucianism and Mohism. However, by the late Warring States period, Confucianism and Daoism emerged as the most influential. Indeed, the complementarity nature of Confucianism and Daoism, with Confucianism as the core tradition, became the fundamental cultural pattern throughout China’s subsequent history, as far as its spiritual development is concerned. Politically, Confucianism and Legalism were jointly applied, with Confucianism as the core component. The Confucian veneration of humaneness, the Daoist appreciation for harmony and the Legalist valorization of strength deeply influenced the shape of the fundamental value outlook shared within Chinese culture throughout its future development. Each intellectual current made its specific contribution to the overall system outlook of Chinese civilization. However, it was the Confucian moral orientation that ultimately became its mainstream.

The many masters and the hundred schools each proposed their own philosophy and intellectual position. This was the freest, liveliest and most productive time in Chinese intellectual history. It truly was what some historians in the West refer to as the “axial age.” The master tradition was a great leap in the development of the Chinese cultural spirit; it initiated the golden age of Chinese intellectual thought. The remarkable development of Chinese philosophical thought in this period is an iconic phenomenon in the history of world culture. The six schools listed above, together with the Strategists (*zong heng jia* 纵横家), the Miscellaneous School (*za jia* 杂家), and the Agronomists (*nong jia* 农家), are jointly known as the “nine currents” (*jiu liu* 九流), and these nine, together with the Story Tellers (*xiaoshuo jia* 小说家), as the “ten schools” (*shi jia* 十家). This is a later Han dynasty designation; in fact, there were numerous other schools active at the time, including the Military School (*bing jia* 兵家) and the Physicians (*yi jia* 医家). The period’s intellectual output became the source for the subsequent development of Chinese philosophical thought. It also promoted the overall cultural development of its own era. This includes Zuo Qiuming’s 左丘明 (d. 452 B.C.E.) *Zuo’s Commentary*, a milestone in

the development of annalistic historiography and a precursor to historical literature. Qu Yuan's 屈原 (d. 278 B.C.E.) *Chu ci* 楚辞 (Songs of Chu) is the second earliest poetry collection in China after the *Classic of Poetry* and features such timeless poems as the "Li sao" 离骚 ("Encountering Sorrow") and the "Jiu ge" 九歌 ("Nine Songs").

Also during the Warring States period, Gan De 甘德 (fl. fourth century B.C.E.) and Shi Shen 石申 (fl. fourth century B.C.E.) authored the *Sui xing ji* 岁星经 (On Jupiter), *Tian wen xing zhan* 天文星占 (Astrology) and *Shi shi xing jing* 石氏星经 (Star Catalogue of Mister Shi), which represent high quality research in astronomy and calendrics. In medicine, an early compendium was compiled titled the *Huang Di nei jing* 黄帝内经 (Yellow Emperor's Internal Canon), which explained pathological phenomena in terms of *yin* and *yang* and the five processes. The *Mo jing* 墨经 (Mohist Canon) is a record of contemporary knowledge and technology related to physics. The *Zhou bi* 周髀 (Circles and Gnomons) contains astronomical knowledge stemming from the Eastern Zhou era.

### 3.4 Han Dynasty Classical Learning<sup>4</sup>

The Six Classics redacted by Confucius continued to be passed down by the Confucian school. The task was divided between multiple lineages. According to the *Han shu yiwen zhi* 汉书艺文志 (History of the Han Bibliographic Essay), following Confucius and his seventy-two disciples, "the *Springs and Autumns* was divided into five [parts], the *Poems* was into four [parts], and the *Changes* was passed down by several lineages." An important way of transmitting the Six Classics by the Confucian school was to write commentaries (*zhuan* 传), prefaces (*xu* 序), and records (*ji* 记) to explain the canon's doctrinal import and, through this elaboration, to further develop Confucian thought. The Warring States exegetical writings, such as the *Yi zhuan* 易传 (Commentaries to the Changes), the *Li ji* 礼记 (Record of Ritual), the *Shi xu* 诗序 (Preface to the Poems), the *Shu xu* 书序 (Preface to the Documents) and the *Commentaries to the Springs and Autumns*, began to be classified as part of the complex web woven around the Five Classics during the Han era. For example, by the Han period, the *Yi zhuan shi yi* 易传十翼 (Ten Wings of the Commentary to the Changes) were already appended to the classic, forming an indispensable part of the *Changes of the Zhou*. The *Commentaries to the Changes* elaborated the philosophical ideas found in the *Classic of Changes*, switching the focus in the text's vision of the world as a spiritual creation to its understanding as the overall natural process characterized by unceasing productivity, perpetual flux, and a harmonious relationship between *yin*

<sup>4</sup>Translator's note: The expression "Classical Learning" is meant to render the Chinese term *jing xue* 经学 which refers to research in the classical canon classics, including textual criticism, commentary and exegesis, and philosophical and political reconstruction and interpretation.

and *yang*. This conception fundamentally determined the Chinese philosophical worldview.

Classical Learning (*jing xue* 经学) was officially established during the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han. By then, one of the initial six classics, the *Music*, had been lost and there only remained five. Emperor Wu accepted the proposal put forward by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (d. 104 B.C.E.) to dismiss the hundred schools and to “only revere the Confucian art” (*du zun ru shu* 独尊儒术). He established five erudites specializing in the surviving classics and dismissed those trained in any other learning. The Imperial Academy (*tai xue* 太学), where they taught initially schooled fifty students; the number grew to two hundred during the reign of Emperor Zhao 昭帝 (d. 74 B.C.E.) and to one thousand during the reign of Emperor Yuan 元帝 (d. 33 B.C.E.). It reached ten thousand under Wang Mang 王莽 (d. 23 C.E.) and thirty thousand during the Eastern Han era. On graduation, outstanding alumni were appointed as government officials or deployed regionally. This practice changed the government’s composition and led to the emergence of scholar-based government. The erudites studied and the students were instructed in the Five Classics, and this is how Classical Learning came to be. Seen from the historical-cultural perspective, the precondition for the emergence of Classical Learning was the Han dynasty’s designation of the civilization’s classical canon, which had formed spontaneously throughout China’s history, as state canon and the establishment of the erudite system devoted to their specialized study, both of which were backed by state power enjoyed by the Han dynasty. This development made the Five Classics into the state’s political, legal, and ideological foundation. The validation of the civilization’s classical canon on the state level, its sanctioned transmission and study, as well as the desire to maintain it as unchanged provided an objective systemic safeguard for the perpetuation of Chinese civilization and fixed Classical Learning as the core component of Chinese scholarship, which led to its enormous development. Classical Learning became the intellectual mainstream already during the Han. The emphasis on learning in Confucius and the Confucian school, combined with the development of Classical Learning, imbued Chinese civilization with its characteristic reverence for knowledge. The Han integration of Confucian learning and Classical Learning also helped elevate the status of Confucianism as the mainstream intellectual formation, which was then adapted to the needs of unified centralized state power. Moreover, the central status of Confucianism and the classical canon helped to clearly establish, as the preeminent social ethic, the five relations (*wu lun* 五伦) [between father and son there is affinity (*qin* 亲); between ruler and subject there is duty (*yi* 义); between husband and wife there is distinction (*bie* 别); between older brother and younger brother there is order (*xu* 序); between friend and friend there is trust (*xin* 信)] and the five constant virtues (*wu chang* 五常) [humaneness (*ren* 仁); morality (*yi* 义); ritual propriety (*li* 礼); wisdom (*zhi* 智); and trustworthiness (*xin* 信)] advocated by the Confucian school. Apart from the above, the principle to “seek truth from fact” (*shi shi qiu shi* 实事求是) was introduced during the Han era which had an important influence on Chinese scholarship later in history. After the status of Classical Learning had been secured, the period produced numerous eminent commentators and famous commentaries. It is important to

observe at this point that the doctrines propounded by the many masters, with the exception of Confucianism and Daoism, began to gradually decline during the Han era.

The book burning instigated by Qin Shi Huang, sometimes referred to as the Fire of Qin, was a catastrophe for China's literary heritage. The *Music* was inadvertently lost, while the other five classics were only preserved orally by Confucian scholars and collated during the early Han period. It was this newly collated material written down during the Han in contemporary orthography that was studied by the erudites promoted by Emperor Wu. It came to be referred to the "new text [corpus]" (*jin wen* 今文). Following the reign of Emperor Jing 景帝 (d. 141 B.C.E.), a series of Warring States period documents related to the classics and written using Pre-Qin orthography were discovered in the walls of Confucius's old residence. These became known as the "old text [corpus]" (*gu wen* 古文). The main difference between the old and the new corpus is the script and the amount of material. For example, the *Ancient Documents* found in Confucius's old house had sixteen more chapters when compared to the version transmitted by Fu Sheng 伏胜 (d. 178 B.C.E.), also known as Master Fu 伏生. Material unattested in the new corpus was also discovered, including the *Zhou guan* 周官 (Institutions of the Zhou) and *Zuo's Commentary*. Since the erudites after the reign of Emperor Wu used new text material, Liu Xin 刘欣 (d. 1 B.C.E.), who reigned close to the end of the Western Han, insisted that academic positions be established for the study of the old text corpus as well. Since that was not possible at the time, the two corpora remained clearly distinguished and a controversy arose between the old and new text Classical Learning. New Text Classical Learning elaborated on the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊传 (Gongyang Commentary to the Springs and Autumns), emphasizing the need to draw out the text's subtle implications. This was the mainstream position during the Western Han era. For example, Dong Zhongshu tried to use Classical Learning mixed with *yinyang* catastrophism (*yin yangzai yi shuo* 阴阳灾异说) to restrain unified imperial power and to bring about better governance. Old Text Classical Learning developed and flourished during the Eastern Han era. It focused on parsing the textual material and glossing the vocabulary and it featured prominently historical as well as textual research. This inner division and rivalry within Classical Learning facilitated its further development. As far as scholarship is concerned, New and Old Text Classical Learning represented two methods and orientations: the New Text tradition focused on the intellectual content, political philosophy and the view of history underlying the classical canon and emphasized its socio-political application; the tradition's shortcoming was its involvement in Han Confucian divinatory practice and mysticism. Old Text Confucianism sought to parse and gloss the original material and to clarify nomenclature related to former offices and institutions. It advocated a return to historical and cultural heritage. Old Text Confucianism made numerous contributions to scholarship; however, it also tended to slide into pedantic textual research with no relation to the broader intellectual picture or lived reality. The *Bai hu tong yi* 白虎通义 (Comprehensive Meanings as Discussed at the White Tiger Hall) written during the reign of Emperor Zhang 章帝 (d. 88 C.E.) is a predominantly New Text work, it emphasizes the broad meaning and social value of Classical Learning. Its

goal was to uphold the mainstream intellectual agenda and it can be seen, to an extent, as its theoretical summary. During the Eastern Han era, the Old Text Confucian thinker Zheng Xuan 郑玄 (d. 200 C.E.) wrote commentaries to the existing classics. He carried out extensive and in-depth research into the ancient political system and office nomenclature. He also combined New and Old Text Classical Learning and thus can be considered a great synthesizer of the Han tradition in this respect. The difference in style and orientation between New and Old Text Classical Learning as well as their early separation was nonetheless quite significant and went on to deeply influence the history of Chinese scholarship.

### 3.5 *The Records of the Grand Historian, the History of the Han, and the Shuo Wen Dictionary*

The keen sense of history characteristic of Chinese civilization became fully manifest during the Han era. During the reign of Emperor Wu, Sima Qian completed his monumental *Records of the Grand Historian*, which he composed with the following goal in mind: “I have tried to probe into the junction between heaven and humans (*jiu tian ren zhi ji* 究天人之际), to comprehend change from the past to the present (*tong gu jin zhi bian* 通古今之变), and to complete what my family had to say (*cheng yi jia zhi yan* 成一家之言).” Probing into the junction between heaven and humans was meant to mutually relate cosmic transformation and the history of human civilization and to pursue their unity as well as mutual difference. Comprehending change from the past to the present was intended to yield a consistent account of the transition from antiquity to the present time, with an eye to grasping historical development. This approach determined the ideal objective of Chinese historiography as well as its fundamental spirit. The *Records of the Grand Historian* is divided into five major sections: “Basic Annals” (*ben ji* 本纪) in twelve chapters; “Tables” (*biao* 表) in ten chapters; “Treatises” (*shu* 书) in eight chapters; “Hereditary Houses” (*shi jia* 世家) in thirty chapters; and “Ranked Biographies” (*lie zhuan* 列传) in seventy chapters. “Basic Annals” chronicle the major events involving each dynasty; “Tables” record changes in certain historical phenomena; “Treatises” describe economic and cultural phenomena as well as those pertaining to institutional order and are historical in nature; “Hereditary Houses” combine the annalistic and biographical format and record the clan history of feudal lords and eminent historical figures; and “Ranked Biographies” are for the most part dedicated to individual people. The *Records of the Grand Historian* combined these five generic styles into a unified whole and gave cardinal importance to humans, which was consistent with the traditional Chinese humanistic spirit. The text thereby established a new synthetic historiographical style: biographical historiography (*ji zhuan ti* 纪传体). Biographical historiography created by Sima Qian became the main genre within Chinese historical literature throughout its subsequent

development. The *Records of the Grand Historian* is a monumental comprehensive history of China characterized by a global perspective commensurate with the scale and magnanimity of the unified Han state.

Ban Gu 班固 (d. 92 C.E.), who was active at the beginning of the Eastern Han era, composed the *Han shu* 汉书 (History of the Han), the first dynastic history written in the style of biographical historiography. It recorded the two-hundred-year long history of the Western Han and is divided into four parts: “Annals” (*ji* 纪); “Tables” (*biao* 表); “Treatises” (*zhi* 志); and “Biographies” (*zhuan* 传). The *History of the Han* adapted and improved on the style of the *Records of the Grand Historian* in that the “Hereditary Houses” section was removed and merged into the “Biographies,” the genre was simplified and the contents were arranged more neatly. Notably, the addition of the *Dili zhi* 地理志 (Treatise on Geography), *Yiwen zhi* 艺文志 (Bibliographic Essay) and *Wu xing zhi* 五行志 (Treatise on the Five Processes) expanded the genre’s scope and provided a model for all later dynastic histories. Historiography has been the most stable branch of Chinese scholarship and remained free from inter-faction controversy and conflict. Indeed, disputes within the other branches of knowledge were frequently resolved by recourse to historiography, which gradually became the backbone of Chinese scholarship, even though, as part of the complex web of Chinese scholarship, it was constrained by Classical Learning and its associate values. Be that as it may, classical Chinese historiography, with its rich content, diverse form, meticulous systematicity and theoretical refinement, is a rare phenomenon within classical culture globally. As Liang Qichao 梁启超 (d. 1929) once said: “Among the various countries in the world, historiography was the most advanced in China” As can be seen from the above, Chinese historiography can be seen as a major contribution to the history of human civilization.

The Han period began long after the formation of the Six Classics. By that time much of the vocabulary employed in the classical canon was no longer easily understood. The problem was further exacerbated by changes in orthography that had occurred throughout the canon’s transmission process. This led to the emergence, as early as the Western Han, of China’s oldest lexical aid, the *Er ya*, which later became one of the Thirteen Classics. The *Er ya* features over 4300 terms grouped in 2091 entries. It is the first glossary organized according to the meaning of the terms glossed and the classification of the phenomena included. Due to the glossary’s immense contribution to exegetical scholarship, later works in glossing, phonology, etymology and grammar followed its basic style. As Classical Learning flourished, another work designed to meet its interpretive needs emerged: the *Shuo wen jie zi* 说文解字 (*Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*).<sup>5</sup> It is the first systematic work in Chinese grammar and one which marked the beginning of this field. Its author, Xu Shen 许慎 (d. ca. 147 C.E.), was an Old Text Confucian scholar who held that the Chinese script was “the root of the classics and the beginning of kingly governance.” He compiled the *Shuo wen* Dictionary in

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<sup>5</sup>Throughout the chapter I will refer to this work as the *Shuo wen* Dictionary.

order to clarify the provenance of ancient graphs for the purpose of correctly glossing the classical canon as well as to remedy frivolous interpretation of characters and to accurately understand their origin and development. The work summarized and advanced the Six Principles theory of the formation and structure of characters (*liu shu* 六书), laying a solid foundation for the establishment and development of Chinese grammar. Notably, Xu Shen successfully applied the theory in his analysis of particular graphs. The *Shuo wen* Dictionary also introduced a system for organizing the Chinese script according to radicals (*bu shou* 部首), that is, graphic components frequently shared by groups of characters: Xu Shen extracted a number of radicals from the body of Chinese characters and then organized that body based on the radicals he had identified. The introduction of this method was an important and pioneering undertaking. Apart from that, the *Shuo wen* Dictionary preserved the entirety of Qin and Han small seal script as well as a portion of Pre-Qin script, providing an important basis for the future study of early writing. Research into the *Er ya* and the *Shuo wen* Dictionary later became an important component of Chinese scholarship.

### 3.6 The Broader Literary Corpus

By the end of the Warring States period the Pre-Qin literary corpus was rather considerable. However, much of it was destroyed in the Fire of Qin and the war which ensued after the fall of the Qin dynasty. The early years of the Han marked an effort to recover lost material and to consolidate the extant corpus. This involved the completion by Liu Xiang 刘向 (d. 6 B.C.E.) of the *Bie lu* 别录 (Detached Abstracts), based on which Liu Xin 刘歆 (d. 23 C.E.) later prepared another summary and classification of the literary corpus known as the *Qi lue* 七略 (Seven Epitomes). The work divided the textual corpus into several sections: the Six Arts (*liu yilue* 六艺略); the masters (*zhu zilue* 诸子略); *shi* poetry and rhapsody (*shi fulue* 诗赋略); military literature (*bing shulue* 兵书略); calculation and divination (*shu shulue* 术数略); and medicine and hygiene (*fang jilue* 方技略). The catalogue listed books in a total of 13,269 scrolls, the majority of which stem from the Pre-Qin period, while the remainder date to the Han era. Together, they show the extent of Chinese intellectual culture at the time. The Six Arts literature recorded in the *Seven Epitomes* is equivalent to Classical Learning; the masters section is the same as master literature, or philosophy; and *shi* poetry and rhapsody section is mainly devoted to Warring States and Han era rhapsody (*fu* 赋). These constitute the main bulk of the catalogue. Since the status of the *Analects of Confucius* and the *Classic of Filial Piety* during the Han era surpassed master literature, they were not classified under the masters but under the Six Arts. The remaining three categories—military literature, calculation and divination, and medicine and hygiene—covered the more technical writings: the calculation and divination included mainly astronomy and calendrics, and medicine and hygiene, medical texts and prescriptions. The *Seven Epitomes* is the earliest classification of the body

of Chinese scholarship. The *History of the Han Bibliographic Essay* retained and employed this classificatory schema. The system fit the state of the literary corpus and the body of knowledge at the time.

In the Wei-Jin period, Zheng Mo 郑默 (d. 280 C.E.) and Xun Xu 荀勖 (d. 289 C.E.) gathered more existing literature and divided it into four groups: one (*jia* 甲), two (*yi* 乙), three (*bing* 丙), and four (*ding* 丁). Group one included literature related to the Six Arts, or Classical Learning; group two the masters; group three historiography; and group four *shi* poetry and rhapsody. They were arranged in precisely this sequence: classical literature (*jing* 经); master literature (*zi* 子); historiography (*shi* 史); and belletrist literature (*ji* 集). This was the precursor of the fourfold categorization of literature which became prevalent later in history. The schema in question differed from the Han dynasty *Seven Epitomes* in that here military literature, calculation, divination, medicine, and hygiene became subsumed under master literature, while historiography was singled out as an independent category, which clearly marked its importance. The work recorded 29,945 scrolls, more than twice the amount featuring in the *Han shu History of the Han Bibliographic Treatise*. During the Eastern Jin, Li Chong 李充 (dates unknown) compiled another fourfold catalogue which featured the same taxonomy—one (*jia* 甲), two (*yi* 乙), three (*bing* 丙), and four (*ding* 丁)—albeit in an order closer to the later fourfold schema: classical literature (*jing* 经); historiography (*shi* 史); master literature (*zi* 子); and belletrist literature (*ji* 集). By the time of the *Sui shu jingji zhi* 隋书经籍志 (*History of the Sui Bibliographic Treatise*) edited during the early Tang era, the numbering convention was abandoned and the four groupings were referred to based on the subject matter as classical literature (*jing* 经); historiography (*shi* 史); master literature (*zi* 子); and belletrist writing (*ji* 集). The work reinforced this classificatory schema and naming convention. As can be seen from it, traditional Chinese scholarship focused predominantly on Classical Learning, historiography, philosophy, and belletrist literature. Also worth noting is a dramatic increase in Buddhist and Daoist literature in this period, which had an impact on the classificatory practice. For example, in the *Qi lu* 七录 (Seven Registries) compiled by Ruan Xiaoxu 阮孝绪 (d. 536 C.E.) of the Liang, we find the following characterization: “The first is the classical registry (*jing dian lu* 经典录), where (literature pertaining to) the Six Arts is arranged; the second is the historiographical registry (*ji zhuan lu* 纪传录), where histories and biographies are arranged; the third is the master and military registry (*zi bing lu* 子兵录), where master works and military writings are arranged; the fourth is the belletristic registry (*wen ji lu* 文集录), where *shi* poetry and rhapsody are arranged; the fifth is the technical registry (*ji shu lu* 技述录), where astronomical and divinatory writings are arranged; the sixth is the Buddhist registry (*fo lu* 佛录); the seventh is the Daoist record (*dao lu* 道录).” The addition of Buddhist and Daoist literature beside classical literature, historiography, master literature, and belletrist literature, that is to say the addition of religion, reflects the rapid growth of the body of Buddhist and Daoist writings at the time. The *History of the Sui Bibliographic Treatise* recorded 4190 existing and lost titles in 49,467 scrolls, over twenty thousand more than the corpus attested to during the Wei-Jin period. With the addition of the Buddhist and Daoist registries, the total



volume count goes up to 56,881. All this shows the state of Chinese intellectual culture at the time as well as the characteristics of its organization.

The declaration made by Cao Pi 曹丕 (d. 226 C.E.) during the Wei-Jin period that “literature (*wen zhang* 文章) is a great enterprise which can hold the state together and an everlasting fine affair” showed the awareness on the part of Chinese culture regarding the status of literature. Belletrist literature continually grew in importance in pre-modern China and as proportion within the Chinese literary corpus. The belletrist literature section in the fourfold schema ultimately far outgrew those dedicated to Classical Learning, historiography, and master literature. Literary theory developed as well, including the completion by Liu Xie 刘勰 (b. 465 C.E.) of his *Wen xin diao long* 文心雕龙 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons), an epoch-marking work of Chinese literary criticism and an important achievement in Wei-Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties literary theory whose impact on future scholarship has been immense. Apart from that, the *Wen xuan* 文选 (Anthology of Literature) compiled by Xiao Tong 萧统 (d. 531 C.E.), Crown Prince Zhaoming of the Liang 梁昭明太子, collected in one book the most outstanding works representing each significant literary form to have occurred in China throughout the preceding seven or eight centuries since the Zhou era. It went on to become a model for literary education whose impact lasted for another thirteen hundred years.

### 3.7 Wei-Jin Era Neo-Daoism and Religious Daoism

The Wei-Jin era Northern and Southern Dynasties era was an extended period of fragmentation and social unrest, and the time from the War of the Eight Princes to the Sixteen Kingdoms was marred by frequent upheaval and chaos. The Jin court was forced to move south of the Yangtze while the northern clans also fled to seek shelter in the south. In the wake of these political developments there was a cultural shift.

Classical Learning had slid into tedious pedantics during the Eastern Han era, and during the Wei-Jin period an important change occurred. He Yan 何晏 (d. 249 C.E.) and Wang Bi 王弼 (d. 249 C.E.) took a rational stance against superstition and replaced convoluted with simplicity, which transformed the intellectual climate. He Yan and Wang Bi founded so-called Neo-Daoism (*xuan xue* 玄学) which became the dominant scholarly mode during the period. Neo-Daoism was an intellectual current oriented around Lao-Zhuang thought and which sought to propose a system that might incorporate both Daoism and Confucianism. As far as textual material is concerned, Wei-Jin thinkers focused mainly on the *Changes of Zhou*, the *Laozi* 老子 (Laozi) and the *Zhuangzi*, which were collectively referred to as the Three Darkesses (*san xuan* 三玄) at the time—hence the name Neo-Daoism, retrospectively given to Wei-Jin scholarship. The foremost question discussed in Neo-Daoism was whether primacy should be given to presence or non-presence (*you wu ben mo* 有无本末), the question of the foundation and

functioning of the world and the myriad things. Neo-Daoism thinkers stressed the primacy of nonpresence (*yi wu wei ben* 以无为本): they valorized nonpresence over presence (*gui wu qing you* 贵无轻有) and considered it to be the foundation of the world and the myriad things. They advocated “going beyond institutional morality and following spontaneity” (*yue mingjiao er ren ziran* 越名教而任自然) and even “demeaning Tang and Wu and disparaging the Duke of Zhou and Confucius” (*fei Tang Wu er bo Zhou Kong* 菲汤武而薄周孔). They discarded Classical Learning and venerated Lao-Zhuang thought. All this bears a distinctly Daoist flavour. In reaction to this, scholars who valued the Confucian standpoint defended the “primacy of presence” view (*chong you lun* 崇有论) against the “primacy of nonpresence” view (*gui wu lun* 贵无论). They claimed that “there is joy in institutional morality” (*mingjiao zhong zi you yue di* 名教中自有乐地), which was meant to counteract the defamation and abandonment of the ritual system. During the period under consideration, Xiang Xiu 向秀 (d. 272 C.E.) and Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312 C.E.) authored the *Zhuangzi zhu* 庄子注 (Commentary to the Zhuangzi) which opposed the notion that nonpresence is the origin and foundation of the world and proposed an alternative conception according to which “each of the myriad things is self-generated (theory)” (*wan wu jie zi sheng shuo* 万物皆自生说). The work harmonized the standpoint which valorized presence with the one which gave primacy to nonpresence, and proposed a spiritual ideal of “following spontaneous action” (*ren ziran* 任自然) where one could “wander outwardly to inwardly vanish [into things], following [whatever is] present without deliberation” (*you wai yi ming nei, wu xin er shun you* 游外以冥内, 无心而顺有). This was the peak achievement of Wei-Jin Neo-Daoism.

Neo-Daoism was focused primarily on Daoism and greatly developed the spiritual aspect of Lao-Zhuang thought. Its pursuit of existential, psychological, and spiritual freedom as well as its predilection for spontaneity broadened and deepened the Chinese spiritual outlook. It also deepened the influence of Lao-Zhuang thought on Chinese literature and art. Neo-Daoism exceeded Classical Learning in its speculative level as well as the spiritual realm; however, it proved less compatible with China’s core value system in that it overly pursued profundity (*xuan yuan* 玄远) and was too far removed from interpersonal ethics and everyday practice. Wei-Jin thought was dynamic and open-minded and it also yielded philosophical works outside the Neo-Daoism classification. They include the *Wu li lun* 物理论 (On the Pattern of Things), the *Yan jin yi lun* 言尽意论 (On the Exhaustibility of Intent by Speech), and the *Shen mie lun* 神灭论 (On the Perishability of the Spirit).

Scholarship flourished and science, literature, and art developed considerably during the Wei-Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties period. It was also a relatively long period of partition and mutual isolation during which the North and the South developed clearly distinct cultural characteristics: Southern scholarship was clear, straightforward and concise, while Northern scholarship was broad, synthetic and profound. We find the following characterization in the *Sui shu Rulin zhuan xu* 隋书儒林传序 (Preface to the Biographies of the Literati): “By and large, Southerners are concise and straightforward and get to the gist (*ying hua* 英华), while Northerners are profound but unkempt and invested in peripheral phenomena

(*ji ye* 枝叶).” Northern and Southern Classical Learning gradually began to communicate and unify as early as the Sui and the Tang era. However, they remained distinct in style, contributing considerably to the richness of Chinese intellectual history.

The historical and cultural origins of religious Daoism (*dao jiao* 道教) lie in the ancient Chinese belief in ghosts and spirits (*gui shen* 鬼神) and immortal beings (*shenxian* 神仙), as well as in sacrificial and shamanistic practices, and arts of healing and divination (*fang shu* 方术). Its theoretical sources are Pre-Qin Lao-Zhuang thought and Qin-Han Huang-Lao thought. The original popular form of the Daoist religion was the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice (*wu dou mi dao* 五斗米道), which emerged during the Eastern Han era and whose scripture was the *Laozi*. Another form was the Way of Supreme Peace (*taipingdao* 太平道) organized around the *Taiping jing* 太平经 (Scriptures of Supreme Peace). During the Jin era, Ge Hong 葛洪 (d. 343 C.E.) composed the *Bao pu zi nei pian* 抱朴子内篇 (Inner Chapters of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity), where he elaborated his conception of immortal beings and the arts of healing and divination. This text developed and enriched religious Daoism, and is considered a “master work” in this sect of Daoist religion. At the time of its writing, there existed two 257 Daoist scriptures (*dao jing* 道经) and books of charms and omens (*fu tu* 符图) in 1179 scrolls, most of which are lost. The writing of Daoist scriptures continued past the middle of the Eastern Jin era and according to the statistics recorded during the Southern Dynasties period by Ruan Xiaoxu, there were 425 Daoist texts in 1138 scrolls. In religious Daoism, great importance is attached to life and the body; the cultivation of life and good health is emphasized, as is the pursuit of longevity and the Way (*dao* 道), which has resulted in the creation of numerous cultivation techniques. Over time, early religious Daoism gradually unified into the Way of the Celestial Masters (*tian shi dao* 天师道). During the Northern Wei era, Kou Qianzhi 寇谦之 (d. 448 C.E.) reformed the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice and established the Northern Way of the Celestial Masters (*bei tian shi dao* 北天师道). Lu Jingxiu 陆静修 (d. 477 C.E.), on the other hand, who was active during the Liu-Song period, absorbed Buddhist ceremonial and founded purgation ritual. His reforms led to the foundation of the Southern Way of the Celestial Masters (*nan tian shi dao* 南天师道). Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (d. 536 C.E.), who was influenced by Confucian and Buddhist thought, reconstructed the genealogy of Daoist immortals and clarified the transmission of religious Daoism. He compiled the *Zhen gao* 真诰 (Declarations of the Perfected) in twenty scrolls. The *Huang ting jing* 黄庭经 (Scripture of the Yellow Court) is a noteworthy religious Daoist text dedicated to inner alchemy (*nei dan* 内丹). Another three corpora which had an immense impact on later generations are the *San Huang jing* 三皇经 (Scriptures of the Three Emperors), the *Ling bao jing* 灵宝经 (Scriptures of the Numinous Gem) and the *Shang qing jing* 上清经 (Scriptures of Upper Clarity) collected and collated by Lu Jingxiu and Tao Hongjing. The catalogue of Daoist literature written by Lu Jingxiu recorded 1228 scrolls of scriptures and books of charms and omens; it also pioneered the classificatory schema of “three caves, four auxiliaries and twelve categories” (*san dong si fu shi er lei* 三洞四辅十二类) which deeply influenced the subsequent Daoist tradition. Religious Daoism developed

particularly dynamically during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period. Also noteworthy is the fact that there is considerable scientific content to be found in Daoist literature.

### 3.8 Buddhism and Literature During the Sui and the Tang

The introduction of Buddhism was an important event in the history of Chinese culture. Buddhism first spread into China from India and via the Western territories during the late Western Han period. It had gained much popularity by the time of the Northern Wei dynasty under whose patronage over thirty thousand Buddhist temples were built and over 1900 scrolls of Buddhist scriptures were translated. The Great Vehicle (*da sheng* 大乘) and the Small Vehicle tradition (*xiao sheng* 小乘) were both introduced when Buddhism first arrived in China; however, it was the Prajnaparamita conception of “dependent co-arising and no-nature” (*yuan qi xing kong* 缘起性空) that became the foundation of Chinese Buddhism. While explaining emptiness thought, Eastern Jin era monks combined Buddhism with Neo-Daoism, forming the “six schools and seven lineages” (*liu jia qi zong* 六家七宗). The development of Buddhism after its introduction into China during the Han reached its peak during the Sui and the Tang, which is when Chinese Buddhist schools emerged: Tiantai 天台宗, East Asian Yogacara (*fa xiang zong* 法相宗), Huayan 华严宗, and Chan 禅宗. The founding of Sinified schools marked the independence and maturity attained by Chinese Buddhism which thereupon became an integral part of traditional Chinese culture. Tiantai Buddhism was founded by Zhiyi 智顓 (d. 597 C.E.), who combined Northern Chan and Southern teachings and proposed two principles of Buddhist practice: the twofold opening of meditation and wisdom (*ding hui shuang kai* 定慧双开) and the equal importance of concentration and contemplation (*zhi guan bing zhong* 止观并重). He worshipped the *Fahua jing* 法华经 (Lotus Sutra). The fundamental doctrine of Tiantai Buddhism is based on two notions: that “the three truths are perfectly integrated” (*san di yuan rong* 三谛圆融) and that “the three thousand quiddities are inherently entailed in each [moment of] thought” (*yi nian san qian* 一念三千). The meaning of the first notion is that the reality of every phenomenon in the world is the unity of emptiness (*kong* 空), provisional positing (*jia* 假), and the mean (*zhong* 中); the sense of the latter is that all phenomena in the world are contained in one another and seamlessly interconnected. East Asian Yogacara Buddhism was established during the early Tang era by Xuan Zang 玄奘 (d. 664 C.E.), who travelled to India in pursuit of the dharma and who brought back to China and translated seventy-five scriptures in over 1300 scrolls. The major Yogacara scripture was the *Cheng wei shi lun* 成唯识论 (Discourse on the Perfection of Consciousness Only). The school advocated the doctrine of eight consciousnesses (*ba shi lun* 八识论) and maintained that “the ten thousand dharmas are consciousness only” (*wan fa wei shi* 万法唯识), that is to say, that all phenomena are mere modifications of consciousness (*shi* 识), hence the school’s other name: “Consciousness Only” (*wei shi* 唯识). Huayan Buddhism was

founded by Du Shun 杜顺 (d. 640 C.E.), who worshipped the *Huayan jing* 华严经 (Flower Garland Sutra) and held that, regarding the myriad things, nature and phenomenal characteristics interpenetrate (*xing xiang neng rong* 性相能融) without obstruction (*wu zhang wu ai* 无障碍). The school's real architect was its third patriarch Fa Zang 法藏 (d. 712 C.E.), according to whom all phenomena are formed and mutually differentiated by so-called six characteristics (*liu xiang* 六相): that they come to be simultaneously, mutually penetrate and are unobstructed. This is called the "perfect integration of the six characteristics" (*liu xiang yuan rong* 六相圆融). The fundamental tenet of the Huayan school, the "dependent co-arising of the dharma realm" (*fa jie yuan qi* 法界缘起), heavily influenced Song-Ming Neo-Confucian thought. Chan Buddhism arose at the end of the Northern Wei era and its founder was Bodhidharma 菩提达摩 (d. 535 C.E.). The Chan school integrated the tenuousness and tranquility motif (*xu jing sixiang* 虚静思想), which was developed within Neo-Daoism and later proposed the concise teaching of "directly pointing to the human mind" (*zhi zhi ren xin* 直指人心) and "seeing (or manifesting) nature and becoming a Buddha" (*jian xing cheng fo* 见性成佛) and opened up a new avenue for the Sinification of Buddhism. The canonical text recording the Chan doctrine is the *Tan jing* 坛经 (Platform Sutra), which contains transcribed teachings of the sixth Chan patriarch Huineng 慧能 (d. 713 C.E.). Huineng thought emphasized "taking no-thought as the doctrine (*yi wu nian wei zong* 以无念为宗), no-characteristic as the substance (*wu xiang wei ti* 无相为体) and non-dwelling as the root (*wu zhu wei ben* 无住为本)." Chan taught that mind nature is originally pure and that Buddha nature is originally within and should not to be sought without. It rejected established letters and words (*bu li wen zi* 不立文字) and favoured special transmission outside the scriptures (*jiao wai bie chuan* 教外别传). According to Huineng thought, every person originally has Buddha nature and the purpose of Chan practice is to "clarify the mind and see (or manifest) [Buddha] nature" (*ming xin jian xing* 明心见性). The characteristic feature of Chan is its integration of the Buddha realm into everyday life: Huineng's doctrine of Buddha nature expanded the domain within which Buddhahood could be attained, which also gave Chan a broad and solid social basis. During the early Tang era, Chan became divided into the Northern and the Southern sects. Shenxiu 神秀 (d. 706 C.E.) of the Northern lineage propagated gradual enlightenment (*jian wu shuo* 渐悟说), while Huineng of the Southern lineage, championed sudden enlightenment (*dun wu shuo* 顿悟说). The northern lineage advocated gradual practice (*jian xiu* 渐修), maintaining that only through long-term cultivation can one gradually master the dharma, attain enlightenment, and become a Buddha. The southern sect advocated sudden enlightenment, holding that every person's mind originally has Buddha nature and thus there is no need for any lasting practice, extensive charity, or elaborate religious ceremony. All one needs to do in order to attain enlightenment and become a Buddha is to recognize that one is originally equipped with Buddha nature.

Following the introduction of Buddhism into China, Chinese monks compiled a total of 582 Chinese-language Buddhist canonical texts in 4172 scrolls, a truly extraordinary feat. Each school of Chinese Buddhism integrated into its system

both the Confucian humanistic spirit and the Daoist ideal of spontaneous action, thus forming an intellectual tradition and cultural orientation different from those found in India. In Sinified Buddhism much attention is paid to lived reality; experiencing mind nature and liberation are highlighted and an easy and simple method of attaining enlightenment is stressed. All this is different from Indian Buddhism and bears Chinese cultural characteristics, making Chinese Buddhism an important aspect of Chinese intellectual history. Chan Buddhism became embedded in traditional Chinese society and assimilated the essence of Indian Buddhism to indigenous Chinese culture. It won over members of different social classes, especially the literati, with its succinct and lively manner, vivid and evocative rhetorical style, and the typically Chan non-attachment consciousness. After the Middle Tang era, the southern Chan sect quickly came into vogue and became the mainstream of Chinese Buddhism. During the final stage of the Tang and the Five Dynasties period the following five sects of Chan Buddhism emerged: Guiyang 沩仰宗; Linji 临济宗; Caodong 曹洞宗; Yunmen 云门宗; and Fayen 法眼宗. The *Kai bao zang* 开宝藏 (Kaibao Canon) compiled at the beginning of the Song era is the earliest Chinese Buddhist Canon. It consists of 1076 texts in 5048 scrolls carved on one hundred thirty thousand tablets, and its sheer size affords a glimpse into the extent of Buddhist scholarship in China up to and during the Tang era. The introduction and development of Buddhism is an excellent example of the Sinification of an initially foreign cultural phenomenon. The maturation of Chinese Buddhism was the result of an ethnic as well as cultural amalgamation and fusion. Over time, Chinese Buddhism spread widely into East Asia, making China the uncontested global centre of Buddhism at the time.

The quality of Chinese literature and poetry was already high during the Wei-Jin period. Poetry reached its peak during the Tang era, which came to be the golden age of this branch of literary writing in China. The *Quan Tang shi* 全唐诗 (Complete Tang Poems) compiled during the reign of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing (d. 1722 C.E.) collected nearly fifty thousand Tang poems composed by more than 2300 authors, including the period's greatest poets: Li Bai 李白 (d. 762 C.E.), Du Fu 杜甫 (d. 770 C.E.), and Bai Juyi 白居易 (d. 846 C.E.). Tang poetry represented a stylistic shift compared with the gentle and charming writing style of the Wei-Jin period, evoking a more straightforward and expansive ambience. While Tang poetry reflected various aspects of the spirit of the times, it also manifested the typically Chinese mentality and aesthetic taste: the love of peace and the natural world, the pursuit of freedom, resistance to gloom and despair, and active involvement in the world. Han Yu 韩愈 (d. 824 C.E.) and Liu Zonyuan 柳宗元 (d. 819 C.E.) initiated the Ancient Prose Movement (*guwen yundong* 古文运动), holding that "the goal of writing is to clarify the Way" (*wen zhe yi ming dao* 文者以明道). Their thought deeply impacted the subsequent writing style reform and it also resonated with new developments in Confucian thought. The movement's objective was to continue the Pre-Qin and Han tradition: to treat literature as the essential part of culture, a means by which to maintain social and historical unity, and an as an expression of the author's ideals. The Ancient Prose Movement sought to integrate writing (*wen* 文) and the Way (*dao* 道) and it became a model

for the future study of literary writing. Its Tang and Song proponents were influenced by Confucian thought; they claimed that “writing is the vehicle of the Way” (*wen yi zai dao* 文以载道), stressed the educational role of literature and sought to fill it with political enthusiasm, enterprising spirit and a sense of social mission. Song literature carried on the Tang tradition. The goal of Ouyang Xiu’s 欧阳修 (d. 1072 C.E.) prose was to “clarify the way” (*ming dao* 明道) and to “allow for its practical application” (*zhi yong* 致用). The *ci* poetry (*ci* 词) of Su Dongpo 苏东坡 (d. 1101 C.E.) and Xin Qiji 辛弃疾 (d. 1207 C.E.), in turn, abandoned mellow sentimentality in favour of boldness and unrestraint, intensity and vigour, and abundant emotion. Lu You’s 陆游 (d. 1210 C.E.) *shi* poetry was rich in emotion and reflection and steeped in the deeply felt love of the country. All this reflected a shift in the center of culture during Tang and Song from the aristocratic land owning class to the more common scholar-official class.

Chinese poetry has always been interlinked with philosophy: it has been deeply influenced by the Confucian familial and patriotic sentiment as well as the Daoist ideal of spontaneity. The Chinese literary tradition has emphasized that literature should not be detached from human life and that the highest realm in both literature and art should coincide with the highest attainment in human cultivation and the highest ideals in life. Classical Chinese literature employed vivid imagery to reflect the spirit of Chinese culture and the cultural consciousness of the Chinese people. The imperial examination system, which began during the Sui and the Tang dynasties, was an important invention as far as recruitment to government and state administration was concerned. The curriculum featured prominently classical exegesis and interpretation and *shi* poetry and rhapsody, all of which were seen as important components of humanistic education. The examination system thus helped promote the dissemination of the classical canon and the flourishing of *shi* poetry and rhapsody.

### 3.9 Song-Ming Neo-confucianism and the Structure of Scholarship

During the Northern and Southern Dynasties period there were so many commentaries to the classics that it was impossible to maintain an interpretive unity within Classical Learning or to grasp its overarching sense. During the Tang era, Kong Yingda 孔颖达 (d. 648 C.E.) wrote, on an imperial order, the *Wu jing zheng yi* 五经正义 (Correct Meaning of the Five Classics) which reduced exegetical complexity and gave Classical Learning a degree of interpretive cohesion as well as providing a basis for the examination system.

From the Han to the Tang, the fundamental value outlook shared within Chinese culture became saturated with reverence for humaneness, preference for harmony, esteem for virtue, and the imperative to benefit the people. However, since the Five Classics were compiled even before the time of Confucius, their underlying ethical

and moral outlook was not yet expressed in a condensed manner but was scattered throughout the narrative. There was also relatively little interest in pursuing existential truth in the classical canon. Confucius summarized Xia, Shang, and Zhou cultural heritage and, on its basis, created the Confucian philosophical system. Confucian thought was later developed by other great figures, including Mencius, Xunzi 荀子 (fl. third century B.C.E.), and Dong Zhongshu, who further elaborated the political and ethical thought found in the Five Classics.

Following the systematic development of Daoist thought during the Wei-Jin period and an even greater flourishing of Buddhism during the Sui and the Tang era, the two began to pose a serious challenge to the mainstream position of Confucian Learning. Sheer reliance on the original classical canon and early Classical Learning was no longer sufficient in light of these new intellectual cultural developments. In order to synthesize and develop Confucian thought as well as to meet the challenge from Daoism and Buddhism, Confucianism absorbed the more expedient elements of both, which gave rise to a new intellectual formation: Neo-Confucianism (*li xue* 理学), also referred to as Dao Learning (*dao xue* 道学). Or, in contrast to earlier Confucianism, it is also known as Song Learning (*Song xue* 宋学).<sup>6</sup> Since it emerged during the Northern Song period, fully developed during the Southern Song and the Yuan, and reached the peak of popularity during the Ming, the formation is also known as Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism. Unlike Classical Learning hitherto, where much importance was attached to politics and the classical textual canon, Neo-Confucianism vigorously expounded and developed the conception of human mind and nature (*xin xing lun* 心性论) and the perspective on practice (*gongfu lun* 功夫论) implicit in a newly selected core corpus comprised of the *Analects of Confucius*, the *Mencius*, the *Daxue* 大学 (Great Learning) and the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (Doctrine of the Mean)—collectively known as the Four Books (*si shu* 四书). Neo-Confucianism paid more attention to self-cultivation and existential truth than its predecessor, and held the Four Books in an esteem higher than the Five Classics. All this gave rise to an intellectual system based on a new kind of Classical Learning. Song, Ming, Yuan, and Qing Confucian Learning represented mainly by Neo-Confucianism, regained a central position within China's society and culture and became, once again, its mainstream intellectual formation.

Neo-Confucianism carried on the ideals and pursuits shared by former Confucians such as Han Yu and Fang Zhongyan 范仲淹 (d. 1052 C.E.). Its foundation was laid during the Northern Song period by Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 (d. 1073 C.E.) and Zhang Zai 张载 (d. 1077 C.E.), and it was further established by Cheng Hao 程颢 (d. 1085 C.E.), Cheng Yi 程颐 (d. 1107 C.E.) and their disciples. The great Neo-Confucian synthesis was accomplished in the Southern Song period by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (d. 1200 C.E.). Zhou Dunyi and Zhang Zai advocated *qi* monism

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<sup>6</sup>Translator's note: The term *li xue* 理学 literally means "Principle Learning" and can also refer to one strand within the broader formation bearing this name. I translate *li xue* in the broad sense as "Neo-Confucianism" and *li xue* in the narrow sense as "Principle Learning."



(*qi yiyuan lun* 气一元论) based on the notions of *tai ji* 太极 and *tai xu* 太虚, and maintained the reality of the universe. They adopted a cosmological model derived from the *Changes* tradition and construed an onto-cosmology rival to that found in Buddhism or even the *Laozi* tradition. However, in their cosmology they failed to establish a close relationship between human nature (*ren xing* 人性) and the way of heaven (*tian dao* 天道). Additionally, they failed to provide a direct argument in support of their professed value system. The Cheng Brothers challenged the narrowly exegetical pursuits of traditional Classical Learning and put forward the notion of Dao Learning, which gave primacy to the pursuit of the Way. They reinterpreted the classical canon in light of the threefold notion that “heaven is the principle” (*tian zhe li ye* 天者理也), “[human] nature is identical with the principle” (*xing ji li ye* 性即理也) and “the investigation of things is identical with the examination of the principle” (*ge wu ji qiong li* 格物即穷理). They held that heaven is not a spiritual entity (*shen* 神) but a principle (*li* 理), that human nature is the particular portion of the cosmic principle shared by humans, and that to investigate things is to exhaustively understand that principle. They firmly established Neo-Confucianism as far as ontology, epistemology, and the conception of human nature are concerned. Zhu Xi continued the Northern Song Dao Learning tradition in his writing, including the *Si shu ji zhu* 四书集注 (Collected Commentaries on the Four Books). He developed Neo-Confucianism into a broad yet nuanced overall system woven around the problematic of principle and vital stuff (*li qi* 理气), mind and nature (*xin xing* 心性), and the investigation of things (*ge wu* 格物). Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism can be divided into two broad schools: Cheng-Zhu Principle Learning (*Cheng Zhu li xue* 程朱理学) represented by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, and Lu-Wang Mind Learning (*Lu Wang xin xue* 陆王心学) represented by Lu Jiuyuan 陆九渊 (d. 1193 C.E.) and Wang Shouren 王守仁 (d. 1529 C.E.). Cheng-Zhu Principle Learning saw ethical principles as universal rules (*pubian guilü* 普遍规律) and the substance of the universe (*yuzhou benti* 宇宙本体). Although this gave classical Confucianism an ontological foundation, when it came to moral practice, it construed ethical principles as more akin to an external authority, which downplayed the subject’s agency (*neng dong xing* 能动性). Zhu Xi’s contemporary Lu Jiuyuan, as well as Wang Shouren, who was active during the Ming era, stressed “the identity of mind and principle” (*xin ji li* 心即理), “the unity of knowing and acting” (*zhi xing he yi* 知行合一) and “the attainment of an inner sense of right and wrong” (*zhi liang zhi* 致良知). In opposition to Zhu Xi, they established and developed Mind Learning. The school equated the moral subject with the human mind, which it saw as capable of determining moral norms. This approach highlighted the role of subjective principles in moral practice. The controversy and mutual interaction between Mind and Principle Learning permeated and promoted the development of Neo-Confucianism.

Neo-Confucianism attached much importance to moral norms and moral cultivation. It insisted that human desire should be constrained by the heavenly principle, that the human mind (*ren xin* 人心) should take guidance from the Dao mind (*dao xin* 道心), and that the goal of individual cultivation should be the attainment of worthiness and sagehood. The lofty ideals underlying Song-Ming

Neo-Confucianism, an intellectual movement aimed at a Confucian revival, found appropriate expression in Zhang Zai's fourfold imperative: "To set a mind for the world, to set a mandate for the people, to restore the interrupted teaching of the sages of the past, and to bring about great peace for the myriad generations."

During the Song era, academies (*shu yuan* 书院) began to develop where teaching, lecturing, and mentoring took place. These academies focused on both doctrinal explication and personal cultivation. Their existence promoted the development of Neo-Confucianism as well as regional education and culture. This was followed by the gradual development of primary schools (*xiao xue* 小学) and preschools (*meng xue* 蒙学) spurred by the Neo-Confucian ethos. All this effectively contributed to the dissemination and popularization of Confucian morality within broader society. During the Song, the Jin, and the Yuan era, religious Daoism, influenced by Neo-Confucianism, shifted its focus and began to explore mind and nature. It absorbed relevant elements of Chan cultivation practice and developed the Daoist art of inner alchemy (*nei dan xue* 内丹学). This marked a new development in the Daoist tradition and reinforced a trend toward the integration of the Three Teachings (*san jiao* 三教): Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Starting during the Yuan era, Neo-Confucianism gradually spread into Korea and Japan, where it emerged as an important cultural factor that shaped the subsequent development of East Asian civilization, becoming an intellectual-cultural complex of global significance and impact.

The Song era saw new developments in historiography as well, partly due to the scholar-official and historian Sima Guang 司马光 (d. 1086 C.E.), who was deeply involved with Neo-Confucianism. He is the author of the chronologically organized comprehensive history of China titled *Zi zhi tong jian* 资治通鉴 (Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government). The work spans from the Warring States to the Five Dynasties period, which makes it one of the most extensive Chinese histories since the compilation of the *Records of the Grand Historian*. It was an epoch-marking historiographical masterpiece that exerted an immense influence on subsequent historical scholarship.

The Song era also yielded relatively advanced achievements in science and technology. This included printing, gun powder, and the magnet which did not originate during the Song era but advanced considerably in that period and later spread to Europe, providing an extraordinary impetus to the development of European civilization. Shen Kuo's 沈括 (d. 1095 C.E.) *Meng xi bi tan* 梦溪笔谈 (Dream Pool Essays), which is a record of knowledge pertaining to astronomy, calendrics, mathematics, optics, physics and geography, is a synthetic and historically influential scientific text. More relevant literature appeared during the subsequent Ming era, which represented a peak in classical Chinese science and technology. These include Li Shizhen's 李时珍 (d. 1593 C.E.) *Ben cao gang mu* 本草纲目 (Compendium of Materia Medica); Xu Guangqi's 徐光启 (d. 1633 C.E.) *Nong zheng quan shu* 农政全书 (Complete Book on Agricultural Activities); Song Yingxing's 宋应星 (d. 1666 C.E.) *Tian gong kai wu* 天工开物 (Exploitation of the Works of Nature); Xu Xiake's 徐霞客 (d. 1641 C.E.) *You ji* 游记 (Travel Diaries);

and Fang Yizhi's 方以智 (d. 1671 C.E.) *Wu li xiao shi* 物理小识 (Fine Observations of Nature). It should be noted that there was a positive feedback mechanism between the intellectual focus on the investigation of things and the examination of the principle (*ge wu qiong li* 格物穷理) and the development of science and technology during the Song and the Ming.

At the turn of the Ming and the Qing era, Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 (d. 1695 C.E.) completed two works devoted to Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism: *Song-yuan xue an* 宋元学案 (Intellectual Biographies of Song and Yuan Thinkers) and *Mingru xue an* 明儒学案 (Intellectual Biographies of Ming Confucians). The first work consists of 100 scrolls and is divided into ninety-one sections dedicated to the discussion of individual thinkers and intellectual lineages, including Anding 安定, Taishan 泰山, Gaoping 高平, Yinchuan 伊川, Huiweng 晦翁, and Shuixin 水心. It recorded the biographies, views and intellectual goals of over two thousand Song and Yuan dynasty scholars. The latter work is in sixty-two scrolls and its main motif is the birth and development of Wang Yangming's Mind Learning. The book recorded a total of two hundred and ten Ming dynasty scholars, sketched their biographies and provided excerpts and quotations from their important works. These two compendia are the earliest Chinese works in intellectual history and they amply show the expanse of Neo-Confucianism and the Neo-Confucian scholarly community.

The nearly eight-hundred-year-long history of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism continued the Chinese intellectual history, which can be characterized in the following way. In the Han period, Classical Learning contributed to the development of Confucianism and its establishment as the dominant intellectual current. In the Wei-Jin period, Neo-Daoism facilitated the development of Daoist thought, at the same time the complementary relationship between Confucianism and Daoism formed. In the Sui and the Tang era, indigenous Buddhist Learning led to the Sinification of Buddhism, which had been introduced into China earlier, and to its flourishing on the Chinese soil; at the same time, the binary Confucian-Daoist pattern gave way to the more complex interaction between Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Following this, Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism helped Confucian Learning regain its mainstream intellectual position and as it continued to absorb elements of Daoist and Buddhist thought, the interfusion of the Three Teachings—with Confucianism taking up the central role—emerged as the organizing pattern of Chinese social and intellectual culture. This pattern suited the development of Chinese society from the Song dynasty on. Since the Sui and the Tang era, the Three Teachings influenced one another; they also shared an emphasis on peace, tolerance and rationality typical for Chinese culture, fostering a rarely seen inter-religious harmony. To use Buddhism to manage the mind, to use Daoism to manage the body, and to use Confucianism to manage the state, became the cultural consensus in China from the Song and the Yuan dynasties on.

Overall, the traditional Chinese intellectual system from the Song era on was fourfold: Classical Learning (*jing xue* 经学) was its core, historiography (*shi xue* 史学) its foundation, Master Learning (*zi xue* 子学) its speculative aspect, and literature (*wenxue* 文学) its rhetorical aspect. Historically, the content of Chinese scholarship has also been divided into speculative learning (*yili zhi xue* 义理之学),

evidential learning (*kaoju zhi xue* 考据之学), and rhetorical learning (*cizhang zhi xue* 辞章之学), speculative learning referring to Neo-Confucianism, evidential learning to Han Learning,<sup>7</sup> and rhetorical learning to literature. Not unlike other phenomena, the development of Chinese scholarship (in addition to external social factors) was also facilitated by an internal force: its diversity and inner contradictions along with the resulting debates and mutual criticism. During the Song era, it became clear that the evolution of Chinese scholarship was informed by the interrelation and tension between literature, Classical Learning, and Neo-Confucianism. When literature was reduced to ornamental rhetoric it was checked by Classical Learning calling for a return to the original meaning of the classics. When Classical Learning slid toward an overly technical textual reconstruction, where the moral and speculative aspects were obscured by parsing and glossing, Neo-Confucianism voiced its criticism and demanded a change in orientation. During the Song, Yuan, Ming, and the beginning of the Qing era, traditional Chinese scholarship generally preferred intellectual and speculative import over the study of the classical canon, and the study of the classical canon over prose and poetry. This is the pattern that marked the interaction between speculation, evidential learning and rhetoric, or Neo-Confucianism, Classical Learning, and literature. The origins of many scholarly debates and schisms are traceable to this fundamental dynamic. To summarize, Chinese intellectual culture during the Song, the Yuan, and the Ming featured speculation, textual research, and rhetoric, with the central position occupied by the first.

### 3.10 Qing Dynasty Han Learning and Large-Scale Compilation Projects

During the early Qing period, Gu Yanwu 顾炎武 (d. 1682 C.E.) and Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 (d. 1695 C.E.) called for a shift away from the Ming Neo-Confucian preoccupation with mind and nature and toward practical statecraft (*jing shi zhi yong* 经世致用) rooted in the Six Classics. Practical statecraft had been an important ancient intellectual tradition which reflected the Confucian emphasis on and valorization of social practice. Its significance had gradually been recognized and during the Qing dynasty scholars proposal to reconstitute the pattern of Chinese intellectual culture by adding statecraft learning (*jing shi zhi xue* 经世之学) alongside of speculative learning, evidential learning, and rhetorical learning. However, since Qing rulers strengthened cultural dictatorship and carried out a large-scale “literary inquisition” (official persecution of intellectuals for their literary output) (*wenzi yu* 文字狱), during the middle Qing period many scholars turned toward studying antiquity, evidential learning, and textual exegesis. Because their scholarship was close in style to Han dynasty Old Text Classical Learning, it

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<sup>7</sup>Han Learning will be characterized later in the chapter.

came to be called Han Learning (*Han xue* 汉学). Han Learning became especially prominent in the scholarship of the Qian-Jia period which held in high esteem the Han Confucian exegetical tradition based on textual research and criticism and disregarded the more speculative mode of interpretation prevalent during the Song era. Soon a controversy broke out between Han and Song style scholarship. Han Learning emphasized philological exegesis and textual criticism, while Song Learning paid greater attention to intellectual content and speculation. Qing era Han Learning can be seen as a reaction to Song scholarship, which had developed under different historical conditions.

During the reigns of Emperors Qianlong 乾隆 (d. 1799 C.E.) and Jiaqing 嘉庆 (d. 1820 C.E.), scholars engaged in evidential learning moved away from the overall sense of the classics and toward their exhaustive analysis and historical verification (*qiong jing zheng shi* 穷经证史). This included character by character exegesis, textual research aimed at detecting forgeries, and scholarship on the political and administrative nomenclature employed in ancient literature.

The Qian-Jia School was divided into the Wu Faction (*Wu pai* 吴派) and the Wan Faction (*Wan pai* 皖派). The first was founded by Hui Dong 惠栋 (d. 1758 C.E.) and its main members included Wang Mingsheng 王鸣盛 (d. 1797 C.E.) and Qian Daxin 钱大昕 (d. 1804 C.E.). The latter was headed by Dai Zhen 戴震 (d. 1777 C.E.) and included Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (d. 1815 C.E.), Wang Sunnian 王念孙 (d. 1832 C.E.), and Wang Yinzi 王引之 (d. 1834 C.E.), and later, Jiao Xun 焦循 (d. 1820 C.E.) and Ruan Yuan 阮元 (d. 1849 C.E.). The two factions shared a focus on the historical reality behind the studied vocabulary and an emphasis on evidence. They engaged primarily in philological and phonological exegesis which served as the basis for their subsequent interpretation of the classical canon. They also collated and reconstructed master literature and historical writing, salvaged and compiled fragments of lost documents partially preserved in the surviving corpus, and identified forgeries. They differed in that the Wu Faction accorded greater importance to the Han dynasty interpretation of the classics and focused on the *Changes of the Zhou* and the *Ancient Documents*, while the Wan Faction specialized in the three *Rites* and excelled in philology and astronomical calculation. Representative works of the Qian-Jia School include: Hui Dong's *Zhou Yi shu* 周易述 (On the Changes of the Zhou), Qian Daxin's *Ershi er shi kao yi* 二十二史考异 (Examination of Variances in Twenty-Two histories), Wang Mingsheng's *Shiqi shi shang que* 十七史商榷 (Discussion of Seventeen Histories), Duan Yucai's *Shuo wen jie zi zhu* 说文解字注 (Commentary to the *Shuo wen* Dictionary), Wang Sunnian's *Guang ya shu zheng* 广雅疏证 (Annotations and Proofs to the *Guangya*), and Wang Yinzi's *Jing yi shu wen* 经义述闻 (Recorded Studies on the Meaning of the Classics). The Qian-Jia School greatly contributed to the collation of ancient literature as well as historical research. Its approach was to "derive textual exegesis by studying phonetics and script, and to speculate based on textual exegesis." This approach gave precedence to phonological and philological research, which provided criteria for correctly judging and understanding the content and meaning of ancient literature. In short, research into the classical canon carried out by the Qian-Jia School was guided by linguistics and grammatology. The school's accomplishments in this respect were

considerable and so was its influence on *guoxue* studies of the end of the Qing and the beginning of the Republican era. However, Qian-Jia Han Learning was mostly restricted to commentarial work. Furthermore, clarity in textual exegesis did not always translate into clarity in speculation. And there was not enough emphasis on the philosophical aspect or the realities of life among the school's concerns. Qian-Jia Han Learning was a kind of book knowledge which ultimately became fragmented and pedantic. In the wake of this perversion, late Qing figures such as Zeng Guofan 曾国藩 (d. 1872 C.E.) once more emphasized the importance of practical statecraft and the idea that the goal of scholarly and intellectual activity should be to solve social problems.

There is also a connection between Qing era Qian-Jia scholarship and the compilation of the *Si ku quan shu* 四库全书 (Complete Library of Four Branches of Books). The *Zhi zhai shu lu jie ti* 直斋书录解题 (Explanations and Remarks on the List of Books from the Studio of Straightness) dating from the Southern Song era recorded 3096 books belonging to the four literary branches in 51,180 scrolls. The Ming era *Yongle da dian* 永乐大典 (Vast Documents of the Yongle Era) compiled during the reign of Emperor Yongle of the Qing 永乐 (d. 1424 C.E.) was an enormous work which preceded Diderot's *Encyclopedia* and the *Encyclopedia Britannica* by over three hundred years. It is the world's largest encyclopedia to date.<sup>8</sup> It was compiled "to edit and gather in one edition all literature extant today, from the classics, historiography, the masters, belletristic literature, books from the hundred schools, to astronomy (*tian wen* 天文), geography (*di zhi* 地志), *yinyang* writing (*yin yang* 阴阳), medicine and divination (*yi bu* 医卜), Buddhism and Daoism, discourses on arts and skills, without any revulsion at the enormity and complexity [of the task]." The collection preserved Chinese historical, geographical, literary, art related, philosophical, religious and miscellaneous works written up to the fourteenth century. It contained 22,937 scrolls, including sixty scrolls of the index, bound into 11,095 volumes (*ce* 册). According to rough statistics, the *Vast Documents of the Yongle Era* selected and preserved over eight thousand ancient texts, about five thousand more than was recorded during the Song era. During the reign of Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (d. 1722) of the Qing, the *Gu jin tu shu ji cheng* 古今图书集成 (Completed Collection of Graphs and Writings of Ancient and Modern Times) was compiled. The collection boasted over ten thousand scrolls, including forty scrolls of the index, and was divided into six major groups (*bian* 编) and thirty-two canons (*dian* 典). It is currently the most extant and substance rich of the classified books (*lei shu* 类书). The *Complete Library of Four Branches of Books* was a large-scale collection compiled under the patronage of Emperor Qianlong in cooperation from scholars specializing in textual criticism. It cataloged

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<sup>8</sup>Translator's note: The term used by the author, *baike quanshu* 百科全书, is normally translated as "encyclopedia" and I do so here. However, the *Vast Documents of the Yongle Era* is not an encyclopedia in the modern European sense but an example of what the Chinese traditionally referred to as *lei shu* 类书, or "classified books." *Lei shu* did not synthetically present existing knowledge, but compiled and organized existing literature. The *Vast Documents of the Yongle Era* purported to preserve all literature known in China at the time.

over ten thousand texts filling 170,000 scrolls, almost double the Song era count, and covered all major classical Chinese literature. The collection preserved a considerable number of documents, including many valuable rare books such as Song and Yuan block printed editions and old manuscripts. It also included texts which had previously been considered lost, and were only recovered during the compilation as well as material reconstructed from fragments and citations surviving throughout the extant corpus. For example, there are 385 texts salvaged from the *Vast Documents of the Yongle Era*. The *Complete Library of Four Branches of Books* had an immense impact on later scholarship as far as compilation, salvaging, collation and bibliography are concerned. That said, Qing rulers used its compilation as an opportunity to seize textual material nationwide and to restrict private ownership (*yu jin yu zheng* 寓禁于征). Material seen as detrimental to the Qing regime was destroyed, expurgated or redacted, whereby much literary heritage was obliterated or tampered with. Over three thousand titles were decreed to be burned during the compilation process—truly a tremendous number.

The *Zheng tong dao zang* 正统道藏 (Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Era) and the *Qianlong da zang jing* 乾隆大藏经 (Buddhist Scriptures of the Qianlong Era) compiled during the Ming and the Qing period were two comprehensive collections of Buddhist and Daoist literature. The *Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Era* filled 5305 scrolls, and the *Buddhist Scriptures of the Qianlong Era* included 1669 scriptures as well as legal, doctrinal and miscellaneous works in 7240 scrolls and carved into 79,036 printing blocks. As pointed out by the French Sinologist Jacques Gernet, literature published in China before the mid-eighteenth century exceeded the combined material published elsewhere during the same time period. This speaks to the Chinese contribution to world culture.

Classical Chinese literature was the medium through which classical Chinese civilization and intellectual production expressed itself throughout history. Although the vast Chinese cultural corpus is only partly preserved today, the rest perished naturally or due to deliberate destruction. Nevertheless, the extant portion is sufficient to showcase the tremendous cultural legacy created by the distinguished persons of China's past.

### 3.11 Early Modern Chinese Learning, Western Learning, and Guoxue

The defeat in the Opium Wars caused great shock to China and spurred an investigation among the patriotically inclined scholar-officials as to the reason why such a “heavenly dynasty and great state” (*tian chao da guo* 天朝大国) should fail. They began to target Neo-Confucianism, which emphasized moral and spiritual self-cultivation, as well as Han Learning, which attached much importance to research into ancient literature, and to advocate practical statecraft and “engaged

governance” (*li jing tu zhi* 励精图治).<sup>9</sup> In Guangzhou, Lin Zexu 林则徐 (d. 1850) established a translation office (*yi guan* 译馆) which presided over the translation and editing of Sir John Francis Davis’s *The Chinese: A General Description of the Empire of China and Its Inhabitants* and Hugh Murray’s *Encyclopædia of Geography, a Description of the Earth, Physical, Statistical, Civil, and Political* with an eye to promoting a better understanding of the world.<sup>10</sup> Apart from that, Lin Zexu commissioned Wei Yuan 魏源 (d. 1857) to compile and edit the *Haiguo tuzhi* 海国图志 (Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms). Wei Yuan also proposed the idea that China should “learn foreign technology in order to overpower foreigners” (*shi yi zhang ji yi zhi yi* 师夷长技以制夷). Wei Yuan’s interest in the West was restricted to military prowess at sea, science, and technology and did not encompass political organization and culture. However, his call to master the West’s strong points in order to resist Western aggression constituted a major step forward with respect to any reform program based solely on traditional thought.

After Feng Guifen’s 冯桂芬 (d. 1874) proposed to “selectively [adopt] Western Learning” (*cai xi xue* 采西学) and to “manufacture foreign machinery” (*zhi yang qi* 制洋器), Western Learning (*xi xue* 西学) began to be continually introduced into China and a debate arose regarding the relationship between Western Learning and Chinese Learning (*zhong xue* 中学). According to Wang Tao 王韬 (d. 1897), “Weaponry should be adopted from the Western states; and the Way should be provided from within [China].” In response to this, Zheng Guanying 郑观应 (d. 1922) claimed that “Chinese Learning [should] be the substance (*ti* 体), and Western Learning [should] be the branches (*mo* 末); Chinese Learning [should] be the core, and Western Learning, an auxiliary.” In August 1896, Sun Jianai 孙家鼐 (d. 1909) claimed in his *Zun yi kaiban Jingshi Daxuetang zhe* 遵议开办京师大学堂折 (Remarks on the Inception of the Imperial University):

Now that China has established the Imperial University, it should take Chinese Learning as the core and Western Learning as an auxiliary, Chinese Learning as the substance (*ti* 体) and Western Learning as function (*yong* 用). What is lacking in Chinese Learning should be supplanted from Western Learning and what has been lost in Chinese Learning should be returned via Western Learning. Chinese Learning should include Western Learning but should not be overridden by it.

Zhang Zhidong 张之洞 (d. 1909) claimed in his *Quan xue pian* 劝学篇 (Exhortation to Study): “Both the new and the old should be studied. The Four Books, the Five Classics, Chinese history, governmental affairs and maps constitute old learning; and Western governance, arts and history constitute new learning. Old learning should be the substance and new learning, the function.” This was the debate regarding the relationship between Chinese Learning and Western Learning which took place under the rule of the Qing and which contributed, some voices more than others, to an extensive introduction of Western Learning into China

<sup>9</sup>The literal meaning of this expression is something like “to brace oneself up and run one’s country well.”

<sup>10</sup>*Inhabitants* (the Chinese title: 华事夷言) (the Chinese title: 四洲志).



during that time period. It promoted an active interest in the contemporary West, ranging from material culture to institutional organization.

Early modern Chinese scholarship featured the translation of Western writing which began in the 1860s. The introduction during that time period of a large body of Western literature in natural and social sciences initiated the modernization of Chinese scholarship. All major changes which occurred in China's intellectual life were directly linked to the influx of Western thought, one prominent example being the theory of evolution. Yan Fu 严复 (d. 1921) presented Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*<sup>11</sup> in his *Yuan qiang* 原强 (On the Origin of Strength), stating the following:

Two of the book's chapters are especially noteworthy. They can be discussed by all reputable scholars in the West, and those engaged in natural science choose them for conversation. The first chapter is: "Struggle for Existence" (Chinese: *wu jing* 物竞), and the other is: "Natural Selection" (Chinese: *tian ze* 天择). Struggle for existence means that species compete in order to survive. Natural selection means that the most fitting kind will prevail.

Yan Fu also translated Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*.<sup>12</sup> Yan Fu emphasized that evolution was an irresistible law and that, having learned about it, one should not complacently stay behind, waiting for the nation to perish, but should instead make an effort to strengthen the country in order to achieve the "survival of the fittest" and to avoid elimination. He encouraged self-reliance, an eager pursuit of autonomy, and a striving for superiority and victory and against inferiority and defeat, so that the country and the nation could survive and develop. The spread of evolutionary thought in China not only equipped the reformist camp with a new intellectual weapon, it also played an important enlightening role within society at large.

The repeated humiliation the Chinese people suffered between the Opium Wars and the First Sino-Japanese War resulted in an unprecedented national crisis at the turn of the Qing and the Republican era, which aroused an intense awareness of the pressing need to save the nation. Figures associated with the National Essence School (*guo cui pai* 国粹派) such as Deng Shi 邓实 (d. 1951) put forth the notion of National Learning (*guoxue* 国学). They stressed the symbiotic relationship and interdependence between a state's existence and national learning: the state relied on national learning for its survival, while national learning needed the state to flourish. Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (d. 1936) was another thinker who referred to the notion of National Learning before the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 in order to boost the patriotic spirit of the Chinese people.

The first meaning of the term *guoxue*, as it was used in China at that time, conceptualized the phenomenon in opposition to Western Learning. The term referred to indigenous Chinese intellectual culture and body of scholarship prior to

<sup>11</sup>The Chinese title is *Wuzhong qi yuan* 物种起源.

<sup>12</sup>(the Chinese title: 天演论, where *tianyan* 天演 refers to natural evolution, now termed *jinhua* 进化).

the cultural shock brought about by China's encounter with the West. Here, the character *guo* 国 signified China, while the character *xue* 学, "scholarship" or "body of learning." According to Zhang Taiyan's formulation from before the Xinhai Revolution, *guoxue* could be rendered as "uniquely Chinese learning" (*Zhongguo du you zhi xue* 中国独有之学), and in Liu Shipai's 刘师培 (d. 1919) wording, as "native Chinese scholarship" (*Zhongguo gu you zhi xueshu* 中国固有之学术). In the *Yanjiuyuan yuanqi* 研究院缘起 (Founding the [Tsinghua Guoxue] Institute), Wu Mi 吴宓 (d. 1978) wrote: "The so-called *guoxue* refers to the entirety of Chinese intellectual culture, and its research method (*yanjiu zhi dao* 研究之道) is characterized by an emphasis on accuracy and precision." Here, Wu Mi defined the reference and scope of the notion of *guoxue* in its first sense, and he did so with considerable clarity. The second sense of the term is much broader: it is shorthand for traditional Chinese culture in general. The difference between *guoxue* understood as traditional Chinese scholarship or learning and *guoxue* understood as traditional Chinese culture is that the first is narrower and tends to refer to scholarship only, while there is hardly anything not encompassed by the latter. There is also a third sense *guoxue*, where the term is short for *guoxue* studies (*guoxue zhi yanjiu* 国学之研究), that is, research into traditional Chinese intellectual culture and the traditional Chinese body of knowledge, including philosophy, the classical canon, historiography, literature, religion, language, and art.

*Guoxue* studies carried out in China during the early modern period can be divided into three currents. The first current best represented by Zhang Taiyuan flourished toward the end of the Qing and at the beginning of the Republican era. Methodologically, it was a continuation of Qing era evidential learning (*kaoju xue* 考据学) and textual exegesis (*xungu xue* 训诂学), while conceptually it shared the cultural orientation of the new epoch. The second current was associated with Peking University (Beijing Daxue 北京大学) and scholars such as Hu Shi 胡适 (d. 1962). It emphasized the empirical method and advocated skepticism toward antiquity (*yi gu sichao* 疑古思潮). It also stressed a scientific approach to classical culture. The third strand was associated with Tsinghua University's *Guoxue* Institute, best represented by scholars such as Wang Guowei 王国维 (d. 1927) and Liang Qichao 梁启超 (d. 1929). It developed with some connections to international Sinology. For instance, the threefold method proposed by Chen Yinke 陈寅恪 (d. 1969) and adopted by Wang Guowei, which sought to "mutually explain unearthed artifacts and extant texts," to "mutually reference imported concepts and indigenous material" and to "mutually complement and correct foreign writing and classical Chinese literature," was in keeping with contemporary Sinology. The intellectual orientation and achievements of scholars such as Wang Guowei and Liang Qichao matched in quality the best international research of their time.

The *Ershi er zi* 二十二子 (Twenty-Two Masters) compiled during the reign of Emperor Guangxu of Qing 光绪 (d. 1908) contained twenty-two works representative of the Zhou, the Qin, and the Han era, ready for convenient reading. More ancient literature was collated during the Republican era, the most eminent example being the *Si bu cong kan* 四部丛刊 (Collectaneum of Literature from the Four Categories) published by Commercial Press. The collection, totaling three tomes of

two hundred fifty, eighty-one and seventy-two titles respectively, featured carefully selected Song and Yuan old editions (*jiu ben* 旧本), Ming and Qing fine carved editions (*jing ke* 精刻), copied editions (*chao ben* 钞本), proofread editions (*xiao ben* 校本) and manuscripts (*shougao ben* 手稿本). The *Si bu bei yao* 四部备要 (Ready Library of Important Literature from the Four Categories) published by Zhonghua Shuju is another important collection gathering three hundred thirty-six titles frequently used in research on classical scholarship. The collection will come handy to any average researcher.

### 3.12 The Contemporary *Guoxue* Craze

After over half a century of criticism and rejection of traditional culture in China, the mid-1990s witnessed the first wave of a “*guoxue craze*” (*guoxue re* 国学热), which coincided with the initial implementation of a socialist market economy. However, that so-called craze was just a preamble to a major cultural revival in China, both in nature and scale. An all-round *guoxue* craze broke out at the beginning of the twenty-first century and has been gaining momentum since. Although it was significantly helped by the participation of the media, the need and passion for traditional culture among the populace was its major driving force. The fundamental reason for this lasting *guoxue* craze in the new century has been the pace and success of China’s modernization since the 1990s and the change it has brought about in the national cultural psyche.

Historically, many now modernized countries went through some enlightenment style cultural movement, some critique of the indigenous tradition and the introduction of Western culture in the early stage of the modernization project. And when the modernization process suffered setbacks, the native cultural tradition would often face wholesale denial symptomatic of the collective anxiety caused by the failure to modernize. And conversely, once the modernization process entered the stage of fast-paced development and the economy began to grow successfully, the people’s cultural self-confidence would gradually recover, resulting in a stronger sense of cultural identity. Starting in the mid-1990s, the Chinese people, who had been, to a greater or lesser degree, cut off from their traditional culture, regained cultural self-confidence and became eager to understand the splendid culture created by their ancestors. This generated an overall demand for *guoxue* related material. Seen from this perspective, the *guoxue* craze is an inevitable cultural reflection of China’s successful modernization.

The following is clear from the *guoxue* craze: Chinese modernization since the 1990s should be analyzed in light of the overall development of the Chinese nation and its checkered history during the early modern period. It should be linked to the life and vitality of the people. It should be viewed as another chapter in their struggle as well as a new opening in the history of Chinese civilization. In short, the recent modernization program should be considered part of the Chinese people’s spiritual development and its success should be understood from their perspective.

To put it another way, China's successful development since Reform and Opening has made more and more people realize that this enormous achievement is due to the hard work and creativity of the Chinese people, their culture, and its ethos. The contemporary *guoxue* craze signals an awakening in the nation's self-consciousness as well as an increase in its self-esteem and self-confidence. It has fostered a national cultural awareness and played an important role in a major revival of the Chinese nation.

Chinese civilization is the living root of the Chinese nation. The nation's spirit has been nourished and fostered over several millennia of China's civilizational history, which is why the shape and characteristics of the Chinese spiritual orientation are inseparable from Chinese traditional culture, the very soil and environment within which it has grown. That spiritual orientation has persevered, although its manifestation has been affected differently, rendering it palpable and fully exercised or obscured and rather flat, depending on the specific social factors. It should be mentioned that the Chinese national spirit has tended to manifest more amply and completely whenever there was increased levels of cultural self-awareness among the people. As evidenced by the recent *guoxue* craze, China's rise in the world has been accompanied by a fundamental change in the Chinese people's familiarity with and attitude toward their traditional culture. The Chinese national spirit is undergoing a transition from mere existence to self-awareness: now is a truly critical period as far as its enhancement is concerned. The *guoxue* craze signals the beginning of Chinese cultural self-awareness. To be culturally self-aware is to be familiar with the origins, growth, and historical development of one's home culture as well as to recognize its uniqueness, value, and universal significance. It is to develop a cultural identity by relating oneself to and immersing oneself in a broader historical and cultural context. As far as an old civilization such as China is concerned, cultural self-awareness is an important precondition for a cultural revival. In China today, newly regained cultural self-confidence has already fostered cultural self-awareness, increased the vitality of the people, and boosted the national spirit. In this sense, the contemporary *guoxue* craze should be seen as the initial phase as well as a cultural marker of the revival of Chinese civilization.

The contemporary *guoxue* craze has clearly reflected the enormous demand on the Chinese populace for indigenous traditional material with which to construe a new spiritual homeland. Social transformation and revolution are two different phenomena and they require a different the kind of ideology. The cultural shift that took place in China in response to this challenge has provided the backdrop for the contemporary cultural landscape. As the modern market economy continues to develop in China, the need for a social-moral order as well as individual security and prosperity have become increasingly prominent. Creating a social-moral order is inseparable from traditional moral culture—this is the consensus reached by the ruling party and the people during the transitional period following the “Cultural Revolution.” Individual security and prosperity, on the other hand, require psychological and spiritual grounding, which is why psychological needs are now considered more important than in the past. The development of a market economy has changed the realm of human relations. It has also compelled the young

generation to turn their gaze toward old humanistic wisdom for advice on how to manage interpersonal interaction. The treasure house of classical Chinese culture has become the resource for modern people regarding the treatment of others, personal conduct, and self-discipline. As far as social and psychological stability is concerned, the standard for a good life, value outlook, and sense of cultural belonging offered by traditional culture are playing a role irreplaceable by any culture or religion introduced into China from abroad. Regarding “psychological nourishment, emotional comfort, spiritual enhancement and humanist education” the millennia long human-oriented Chinese culture has proved to be a major spiritual resource for the Chinese people, who are now participating in a contemporary market economy and society. It has been an important positive source of psychological stability, spiritual enhancement, and social harmony.

The current *guoxue* craze is focused mainly on general education and the dissemination of respective knowledge and, unlike *guoxue* studies, it is mostly visible on the level of pop culture. However, General education and popularization alone cannot facilitate the development of *guoxue* studies. The cultural atmosphere surrounding the craze for traditional culture has improved the attitude toward traditional culture among the general public and has considerably influenced China’s youth. Early exposure to traditional culture should deepen the desire for *guoxue* among the young generation, which should help perpetuate Chinese culture and create a better and more supportive cultural environment in which to pursue *guoxue* studies. In fact, the historical development of the Chinese national spirit has never been restricted to scholarship but has also relied, to a considerable extent, on cultural beliefs and values absorbed by the broader populace through popular channels. These beliefs and values were enacted and sustained in practice. They were also passed down from generation to generation through striking stories, some joyous and some tragic, about China’s past. These popular cultural beliefs also influenced cultural scholars engaged in theoretical discourse. In this sense, the dissemination of traditional Chinese culture should not be assessed purely in terms of its massification—its role in facilitating cultural continuity and cultivating the national spirit need to also be properly understood.

To summarize, the emergence and spread of the contemporary *guoxue* craze is not only reasonable and beneficial but also necessary as far as the revival of the Chinese nation, the deepening of China’s modernization and the realization of social harmony are concerned. Of course, traditional culture is by no means a panacea capable of curing all life’s ills and solving all its problems. It is a cultural foundation and it will take all the creativity and effort that society can muster to develop it: to vigorously assimilate the advanced cultural phenomena brought by global civilization; to construct a modern political, economic, legal and cultural complex fitting the needs of the people; to develop political culture; to continue the economic growth; to improve the legal system; and to facilitate cultural flourishing. At the same time, timely guidance is also needed to help the people distinguish between the flower of traditional culture and the dross, and lasting values from dated content, so that the finer parts of traditional culture can better serve the needs of the Chinese nation’s great revival and participate in it more actively.

### 3.13 The Basic Characteristics of Chinese Civilization and Culture

The Basic Characteristics of Chinese civilization and culture can be briefly summarized in the following way:

Broad and long-lasting, unified yet diverse: this is the fundamental characteristic of Chinese civilization;

Robust and ceaseless, confident in the efficacy of virtue: this is the fundamental spirit of Chinese culture;

Reverence for humaneness, preference for harmony, esteem for virtue, and the imperative to benefit the people: this is the fundamental value outlook of Chinese culture;

Harmonious cooperation between all states and one great global community: this is the fundamental world ideal of Chinese civilization.

The finer parts of traditional Chinese intellectual culture has played an extremely important role in the formation and millennia-long unbroken development of Chinese civilization, the formation and maintenance of China's unified political landscape, and the formation and consolidation of integrated multi-ethnic Chinese society. It has helped shape and enrich the Chinese national spirit and has encouraged the Chinese people to safeguard national independence and to resist foreign aggression. It has also helped advance China's social development and progress and promote China's social interest and balanced social relations.

Chinese culture is a repository of the Chinese people's spiritual experience and a source of the nation's nourishment, advantage, and cultural strength. This is why Socialism with Chinese characteristics must be rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese culture and take the best of that culture as its deepest historical source. The Chinese people, in turn, must loyally carry on and further traditional Chinese culture. Culture is the nation's lifeblood. In China, over the five millennia of its history, many peoples became closely integrated and strove unremittingly, jointly creating a broad and profound civilization, which goes back to the dim and distant past. They provided a powerful spiritual impetus for the growth and development of the Chinese nation and made an important and indelible contribution to the advancement of world civilization. Culture is also the nation's spiritual homeland. The best of traditional Chinese culture has bound together the people's spiritual pursuits and enduring spiritual wealth. It is a solid foundation for developing a socialist culture and an important pillar as far as constructing a common spiritual homeland for the Chinese people is concerned.

The rich philosophical thought, humanistic spirit, educational thought, and moral ideas found in the exemplary works of traditional Chinese culture can be useful inspiration for understanding and transforming the world, governing the state, and developing a moral ethos. The best of traditional Chinese culture holds in its store significant insights which may help solve the difficult problems faced by humanity today. We need to carry on and develop that within Chinese culture which is

conducive to ameliorating social relations and individual betterment. At the same time, we need to adapt that content to current conditions and to give it a new significance and meaning.

We must extensively understand China's indigenous traditional culture, to select out its essence and to discard the rest, to apply past experience to the present, and to innovate. Traditional culture must be persistently protected and applied, popularized and carried forward. The thought and value outlook contained in the exemplary traditional culture must be further recovered and elucidated. The basic elements of the nation's culture must be safeguarded so that the traditional culture can become a spiritual impetus for the people to move forward in a new era. Today, we need to work harder to uncover and explicate the best of Chinese traditional culture, to understand, more deeply and actively, the enduring spiritual world shared by the Chinese people, and to bring about, as best we can, a creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese culture. We must promote those elements of Chinese culture that transcend time, place, and national boundaries and which carry both timeless charm and contemporary value. Finally, China must offer the world its contemporary cultural innovations which carry on its fine cultural legacy but also embrace the spirit of the times, which have a national basis but also look out to the world, for the benefit of the people around the world and world civilization.

## Chapter 4

# The Rise and Development of Modern “Guoxue”

Recent scholars have gone back through the concept of *guoxue* 国学 (“National studies”) since the modern age, sorting through it and piecing it together, which has gathered together an extremely abundant array of information. Yet, because the concepts and theories at stake have been left largely unanalyzed,<sup>1</sup> this book develops the theoretical treatment of them in several important respects. First is an analysis of the consciousness of *guoxue*. We will be attending to the ideas and the awareness of the era out which the use of the word “*guoxue*” arose, focusing on its connection to early changes and trends of society and culture, and identifying three key phases of development. Second is an explication of the basic connotations of the concept of “*guoxue*.” In defining *guoxue*, past scholars mainly looked at the range objects it studies, whereas here I underscore the meaning of *guoxue* as a modern body of research. I do so because, clearly, discussions of so-called “new *guoxue*” naturally reference bodies of research, as nothing new or old could be said in reference to the range of objects of research. Third is an analysis of several phases of the modern evolution of the body of *guoxue* research. What needs to be clarified is this book only details the journey of *guoxue* from the beginning to the end of the 20th century, i.e., ending with the later phase of the National Heritage movement. The fourth issue discussed herein is concerned with the several main modes of modern *guoxue*, which correspond step by step with the evolutionary phases of *guoxue* research.

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Translated by Chad Meyers.

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<sup>1</sup>See for reference: Luo Zhitian 罗志田, *Guojia yu xueshu: Qingji Minchu guanyu “guoxue” de sixiang lunzheng* 国家与学术:清季民初关于“国学”的思想论争 (The State and Academia: Debates over the Thought of *Guoxue* at the End of the Qing and the Beginning of the Republic) (Beijing: *Shenghuo dushu, xinzhi sanlian shudian*, 2013); Sang Bin 桑宾 et al. eds. *Jindai zhongguo xueshu sixiang* 近代中国学术思想 (Modern Chinese Academic Thought) (Beijing: *Zhongguo shuju*, 2008); Sang Bin et al. eds. *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of *Guoxue*) (Beijing: Guojia Tushuguan Chubanshe, 2010).



## 4.1 The Birth and Development of the Idea of *Guoxue*

In order to bring into relief the complexity of the idea of *guoxue* in its various contexts since the modern age, what follows is an attempt to present it from three sides: the politically motivated idea of *guoxue*, the guiding thread of which is the awareness of losing and rescuing the country; the cultural awareness of *guoxue*, the guiding thread of which is the enlightenment trend of thought; and finally the idea of *guoxue* as academic research with reference to the greater field of Sinology (and Asian studies). Corresponding with the course of modern Chinese history, these three sides unfold as three phases of development.

At the crossroads of the late Qing dynasty and the Republic of China, the Chinese people suffered a variety of humiliating losses from the Opium War up to the Sino-Japanese War, and stood face to face with a country in a crisis. However, this was not simply a crisis destabilizing a particular sphere like the economy, the political field, or foreign relations. Rather, this was a total crisis in which China, after suffering a series of embarrassing concessions over lost sovereignty under the greedy domination of world powers grabbing up anything that would fall, faced the possibility of degenerating into a colonial outpost of Western power. This national crisis was already widely recognized by the Chinese people immediately following the Sino-Japanese War, and so incited a strong sense of awareness of the need to rescue the nation from the fate of total deterioration. Under such circumstances, reflection on the concept of *guoxue* became intimately bound to the fate of the nation of the Chinese people, and *guoxue* became a way of expressing the thought of the people of those times, whose representatives were none other than Deng Shi 邓实 and the nationalists of the late Qing dynasty.

As Huang Jie 黄节 posed it,

If [a people] are to take a stand on the surrounding earth with the name of one nation, they need to possess the mentality inspiring that establishment; even though shaken to the core with contamination, and yet this cannot wipe it out. To wipe it out would only be possible after first extinguishing its ethnic race. To wipe out its ethnic race would only be possible after first eliminating its *guoxue*. In the past, the British buried the Hindu nation, and the Russians fractured the Polish, in each case it was only possible after first turning their languages into a mess, and only after that did their ethnic race slowly deteriorate and weaken.<sup>2</sup>

The crisis afflicting the people of the entire nation at that time was extraordinarily grave, and the nationalists reckoned that the nation faced the threat of annihilation, in the face of which they brought forward the relationship between nation (*guo* 国) and learning (*xue* 学).

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<sup>2</sup>Huang Jie 黄节, “Guocixue baoxu” 国粹学报叙 (Report on *guocixue*), in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The history of *guoxue*) (Beijing: Guojia Tushuguan Chubanshe, 2010), 17.

Similarly, Deng Shi asserted, “the nation is preserved with the existence of learning, and learning is advanced with the existence of the nation.”<sup>3</sup> He also pointed out,

China, from ancient times onward, has many times seen the misfortune of the nation falling, and in each case the nation fell but the learning survived. In the present day, the nation has not yet fallen but the learning has fallen first. Thus, the losing of *guoxue* in recent times is especially embittering, more so than the disaster of the Mongol invasion... So, a nation in between heaven and earth must necessarily take its stand with learning [*xue*]. Learning is that out of which political education and ritual customs emerge. If the learning is lost, then the political education and ritual customs of a nation equally go with it; if the political education and ritual customs are all lost, then the nation-state cannot stand alone... The ancient rituals of the Brahman caste weakened and were forever the property of another. This demonstrates that a nation that has lost its learning is a nation that will of necessity perish, and if the desire is a plan to save the nation, one must first save the learning.<sup>4</sup>

He also points out the old strategy and trenchant calculations of European colonialism:

Its hopes are high, and its strategy is trenchantly considered. To make other humans fall, it must first wipe out their language, wipe out their characters and literature, and then wipe out their race.<sup>5</sup>

These assertions by Huang Jie and Deng Shi bring into relief the twofold worry they feel in relation to China as a nation-state and Chinese history and civilization. According to this view, a nation’s survival goes hand-in-hand with the survival of its national learning (*guoxue*), each depending on the other. A nation survives upon the support of its national learning, and national learning flourishes with the support of an existing nation.

This position was held by many at that time. Xu Shouwei 许守微, for example, also states,

Therefore, if a nation has learning, then it may be reborn after falling, and if a nation has no learning, then it is gone forever once it falls. Why is this so? If a nation has learning, then its learning doesn’t disappear even if the nation does; and if the learning isn’t lost, then the nation can be reconstructed; if a nation has no learning then learning disappears once the

<sup>3</sup>Deng Shi 邓实, “Guoxue jiangxi ji” 国学讲习记 (Record of lectures on *guoxue*), in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 81.

<sup>4</sup>Deng Shi, “Nishe guocixue tangqi” 拟设国粹学堂启, in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 89. Luo Zhitian thought that this text might be Liu Shipai’s draft, see Luo’s *Guojia yu xueshu: Qingji Minchu guanyu “guoxue” de sixiang lunzheng* 国家与学术:清季民初关于“国学”的思想论争 (The state and academia: Debates over the thought of *guoxue* at the end of the Qing and the beginning of the Republic), 63.

<sup>5</sup>Deng Shi, “Renzhong duli” 人种独立, *Jiming fengyulou dulishu* 鸡鸣风雨楼独立书, in *Zhengyi tongbao* 政艺通报, no. 23 (1903). A similar idea can be seen in Yao Guang 姚光, “Guoxue baocunlun” 国学保存论 (Theory of the preservation of *guoxue*), in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 96.

nation disappears, and with learning lost then the loss of the nation is final and a thing of the past.<sup>6</sup>

In such statements, the sense of urgency regarding the loss of the nation is quite pronounced, showing that in the face of the crisis of the nation’s circumstance, there were many at that time who reckoned that the nation falling was already inevitable. For this reason they studied the thoughts of Gu Yanwu 顾炎武 of the late Ming dynasty. Through the preservation of learning they sought to avoid the permanent loss of the nation, hoping that if the nation were to be lost but the learning survived, the nation could still be reborn. If *guoxue* was also lost then the nation would have no way to be reborn again. The nationalists tied the rise and fall of *guoxue* to the rise and fall of the nation, putting forth this political conception of *guoxue* in doing so. Here, conservation of China’s existing native culture had profound political implications.

Such deep concern regarding *guoxue* reflected an intense fear towards the loss of the nation and the wiping out of the Chinese people. Such discussions about *guo* 国 (“state” or “nation”) and *xue* 学 (“study” or “learning”) could not help but influence the understanding and usage of these two Chinese characters.

Fully self-aware of this grave ethnic crisis, Deng Shi stated, “Of the people of one’s nation, none do not love the learning of their nation.”<sup>7</sup> Deng Shi particularly emphasized the connection between *guoxue* and the affective mind of patriotism. Seeing the culture of a people as the foundation and source of a people’s thought, he states, “If *guoxue* survives, then the affective mindset of being patriotic has something to belong to, and the spiritual territory might be reconstructed.”<sup>8</sup> Xu Zhiheng 许之衡 wrote, “The spirit of the nation originates from the learning of the nation. If the learning of the nation were to disappear, how would the spirit of the nation survive.”<sup>9</sup> Huang Jie went further, asserting, “Alas, not ruling one’s nation by oneself and being a slave to another’s nation is called national slavery.”<sup>10</sup> Liang Qichao 梁启超 also thought:

Any nation that stands between heaven and earth must necessarily have its singular constitution that enables it to stand. Those who want to better their nation cannot do so outside of this singular constitution; one must dip into it and enrich it ... this is so as in the superior person’s (*jun* 君) love of the nation, and if one wishes to awaken the affective mindset of being patriotic in their fellow countrymen, one must not look at this matter lightly.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Xu Shouwei 许守微, “Lun guocui wuzu yu Ouhua” 论国粹无阻于欧化 (On nationalism not preventing Europeanization), in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 60.

<sup>7</sup>Deng Shi, “Guxue fuxinglun” 古学复兴论 (Theory of the revitalization of ancient learning), in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 70.

<sup>8</sup>Deng Shi, “Guoxue jinlun” 国学今论 *The New Theory of Guoxue*, in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 49.

<sup>9</sup>Xu Zhiheng 许之衡, “Du guocui xuebao gan yan” 读国粹学报感言 (Feelings while reading the *Guocui* Journal), in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 56.

<sup>10</sup>Huang Jie, “Guocui xue bao xu,” 18.

<sup>11</sup>Liang Qichao 梁启超, “Lun Zhongguo xueshu sixiang bianqian zhi dashi” 论中国学术思想变迁之大势 (On the greater propensity of changes in the academic thought of Chinese *guoxue*), in *Yinbingshi heji* 饮冰室合集, collection seven, 3.

In the view of those like Liang Qichao, the learning of the nation is rooted in their affective mindset of being patriotic, which is the learning that extends and expands the nation and the life of the people. The reason China has endured for several thousand years to this day is because idealists championed the great right of the nation in history and influenced the affective mindset of the people. The journal started by Deng Shi and Liu Shipai 刘师培, *Guocui xuebao* 国粹学报 (Journal of nationalist studies), which explicitly pronounced “protect the race, love the nation, and preserve the learning,” mainly arose out of this direction of will. Deng Shi also points out:

What is the learning of the nation? It is the learning of the whole nation that one has ... if what rulers give birth to is the nation, then what rulers make consistent is learning, and in knowing and loving their nation none fail to know and love their learning.<sup>12</sup>

To love learning is to love the nation, and one loves the learning of the nation because one loves the nation; all of this, as Liang Qichao later states, is to found the modern “foundational source of nationalism”<sup>13</sup> and the so-called learning of the nation. These theories of the foundation of the establishment of the nation generally all looked at it this way. Late Qing nationalism’s claim to “invent the learning of the nation and preserve the purity of the nation”<sup>14</sup> is clearly in actuality the manifestation of the cultural outlook of nationalism.

Sang Bin 桑兵 points out that the word “*guoxue*” and its use in the modern sense began at the beginning of the 20th century, and was influenced by the academic transformation of the post-Meiji restoration of Japan. This is said with respect to the usage of the word, but the conscious idea itself that appears in the discourse of those advocates of late Qing *guoxue* was more greatly influenced by the cultural consciousness of Gu Yanwu, whose thoughts about the link between the loss of the nation and the loss of all under heaven (*tianxia* 天下) was regularly transformed into the link between losing the nation and losing the learning of the nation, therefore asserting that Gu Yanwu’s so-called “all under heaven” is originally the civilization of ritual customs and political education.

Obviously, the rise of the term “*guoxue*” at the end of the Qing dynasty and its subsequently established meaning was not the result of the anti-Manchu movement and although Deng Shi and Huang Jie did in fact support the anti-Manchu revolution, the concerns of those advocating the preservation of *guoxue* at this time were mainly directed at Western imperialism’s desire to wipe out China. What they insisted upon was not to “research” *guoxue* but to “preserve” Chinese culture, in order to strive to catalyze the affective mindset of being patriotic in the people.

<sup>12</sup>Deng Shi, “Guoxue jiangxi ji,” 81.

<sup>13</sup>Liang Qichao, “Xinhai Geming qian shinian shi lun xuanji” 辛亥革命前十年时论选集 (Collected selection of theories during the first ten years of the Xinhai Revolution), in *Xin min shuo* 新民说 (Doctrine of renewing the people), vol. 1, 122.

<sup>14</sup>Sang Bing 桑兵, “Wan Qing Mingui shiqi de guoxue” 晚清民国时期的国学 (Guoxue in the Late Qing and Early Republic period), in *Jindaishi yanjiu* 近代史研究 (Research of Modern History), no. 1 (1977).

Obviously, the promotion of the concept of *guoxue* at this time was mainly politically rather than academically oriented, and the doctrine of *guoxue* was a part of the era’s discourse about rescuing the national. Deng Shi states:

To not know and love the civilization of my ancestral nation, if unfolded and shed light upon, is to know and love the civilization of another nation, and to cherish and dance in it. Alas, I believe that in less than a century Asian civilization will be wiped out, and if this civilization is wiped out so will be the ancestral nation of 3,000 years out of which it emerged.<sup>15</sup>

We must understand that Deng Shi and those writing in *Guocui xuebao* were not advocating the rejection of Western civilization but the integration of two great civilizations, so their focus on the preservation of the learning of the nation was not directed against Europeanization. Xu Shouwei was the one who stated this most explicitly: “Nationalism is more strengthened with the help of Europeanization, and does not make an enemy of Europeanization for the sake of self-protection. In actuality, for patriots to separate from [Europe] even for a moment is impossible.”<sup>16</sup>

Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 had a similar viewpoint. From the history of the falling of Indian civilization he understood that “for a people to be independent, they must first stress the probing of nationalism as the core, and the core of nationalism is history.”<sup>17</sup> He even put forward the famous slogan, “Use nationalism to excite the people, and promote the fervor of patriotism.” The “Guoxue jiangxi hui xu” 国学讲习会序 (Foreword to the seminar on *guoxue*) published in *Min Bao* 民报 “The People’s Journal,” which Zhang Taiyan organized, also states:

So *guoxue* is the source out of which the nation is founded. It is not unheard of to me that solely relying upon *guoxue* to found a nation in a world of competing forces may be insufficient, but it is unheard of to me that a nation can found itself without the rise of *guoxue*. It is not unheard of to me that a nation falls while the learning of the nation remains, but it is unheard of to me that the learning of the nation is lost while the nation itself still stands.<sup>18</sup>

Zhang Taiyan was a member of the revolutionary party in which even those who championed Europeanization without holding to conservative nationalism were similarly patriotic figures who worried about the nation. Moreover, the position Zhang Taiyan took within the revolutionary party held profound influence.

The modern idea of *guoxue* underwent three stages of transformation from the beginning to the conclusion of the 20th century. As noted earlier, the first phase was

<sup>15</sup>Deng Shi, “Dong Xiyang er da wenming” 东西洋二大文明 (The Two Great Civilizations of the East and West), in *Renyan zhengyi congshu – zhengxue wenbian* 任寅政艺丛书·政学文编, vol. 5 (Taipei: Wenhai Chubanshe, 1976), 185–186.

<sup>16</sup>Xu Shouwei, “Lun guocui wuzu yu Ouhua,” 61.

<sup>17</sup>Zhang Taiyan, *Chongkan guyun biao zhun xu* 重刊古韵标准序, *Yinduren lun guocui* 印度人论国粹 (Hindu people on nationalism), in *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 章太炎全集 (Collected works of Zhang Taiyan), vol. 4 (Shanghai: Renmin Chubanshe, 1985), 203, 366.

<sup>18</sup>“Guoxue jiangxi hui xu” 国学讲习会序 (Foreword to the Seminar on *Guoxue*), in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 77.

from the late Qing to the revolution of 1911, a period during which *guoxue* principally expressed a political idea, not an academic one. *Guoxue* surely does refer in academic culture, but at the beginning of the 20th century when the word was first brought up, its starting point was rooted in patriotism and its focus was on a political rescue from extinction. The *guoxue* put forward by the late Qing nationalists was a concept based on patriotic ideas, and they also explicitly used the word patriotism. Their basic idea was that *guoxue* is the representative of a nation's culture and language; it is completely tied to the fate of this nation's rise or fall, and in order to rescue the nation, the learning of the nation (*guoxue*) must be saved.

Deng Shi and Huang Jie brought up the concept of *guoxue* in 1905, and Zhang Taiyan also employed this concept from 1907 to 1908 to motivate the affective mindset of being patriotic in the people. All of these late Qing conceptions of *guoxue* were for the sake of motivating in everyone the affective mindset of being patriotic, and possessed the clear intention to rescue the nation from falling and preserve it, that is, to rescue and save the nation and save the people and tradition of education by protecting *guoxue* and preserving *guoxue*. There is also another characteristic of this phase in which the nationalists, although emphasizing the need to preserve *guoxue* and protect culture, still did not oppose revolution; these people were all under the revolutionary wing of the movement. There is a clear analysis of this in Zheng Shiqu's 郑师渠 *Wan-Qing Guocui pai* 晚清国粹派 (Late Qing Nationalists).<sup>19</sup>

The second phase unfolded between the revolution of 1911 and the New Culture Movement. During this period, *guoxue* was used rather sparingly as a core term, yet was virtually turned into a pronoun for traditional Chinese culture, and its problematic theme of concern still attracted the attention of society. With respect to ideas this started specifically with the New Culture Movement, and from 1915 *Qingnian zazhi* 青年杂志 (Youth Magazine), the precursor of *Xin qingnian* 新青年 (New Youth), discussed Eastern and Western civilization and the strengths and weaknesses of Chinese and Western civilizations respectively; yet one could say that the problems of Chinese culture discussed therein were precisely those of *guoxue*. The fundamental values, the fundamental ideas, and the basic academic orientation of *guoxue* became the central items of discussion in what preceded and followed the New Culture Movement, and although *guoxue* at this time did not appear too commonly as a key term, it certainly did exist as problematic theme of concern. Therefore, the idea of *guoxue* at this stage is mainly of cultural rather than political significance; what people were concerned with was not so much making *guoxue* the cultural foundation of the nation's fate, but rather critiquing the existing culture and pulling Western cultural values into the mix in order to develop modern Chinese culture. The problematic theme concerning *guoxue* at this stage brought culture but not politics into the fore.

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<sup>19</sup>Zheng Shiqu 郑师渠, *Wan-Qing Guocui pai* 晚清国粹派 (Late Qing Nationalists) (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1997), 321.

At this stage, what could be cited as one of the most representative viewpoints is in the article “Guogu he kexue de jingshen” 国故和科学的精神 (National Heritage and the Spirit of Science) by Mao Zishui 毛子水, the representative nature of which can be seen merely from it being annotated by Fu Sinian 傅斯年 and the long letters in which Hu Shi 胡适 discussed this work. The national heritage about which Mao Zishui discussed is adjacent to the meaning of *guoxue* of which the late Qing writers spoke. His definition goes as follows: “National heritage is ancient Chinese academic thought and the past history of the Chinese people.”<sup>20</sup> But, differing from the late Qing nationalists, he did not assert that the national heritage of *guoxue* should be prized as the foundation upon which the people’s nation should be established; rather, he thought:

If we were to talk solely about academic thought, national heritage is but the dead things of the past and what is European is the stuff that is precisely alive and growing; national heritage is a random grab bag of miscellaneous wisdom, and the European stuff is systematic academic thought, and there is no reason whatsoever to put these two things on the same level.<sup>21</sup>

He even thought that “We Chinese people never had any important enterprise, and never really gave any big contribution to world civilization, and so our history should not be viewed as being in anyway important.”<sup>22</sup> Mao Zishui makes this evaluation of *guoxue* from the perspective of comparing Eastern and Western cultures at the height of the new culture movement differs entirely from that of the late Qing writers, being much more a critique of *guoxue* and traditional culture.

Naturally, in terms of ideas of culture, there were also other positions held at the same time that differed from such mainstream critiques of traditional thought. For example, immediately after Mao Zishui’s article was published, there were tense and heated articles published in response that countered it, nevertheless Mao Zishui’s viewpoint was the mainstream during this period. Although the new culture movement did not use *guoxue* as a key term, the cutting edge of its critique of old culture reveals that *guoxue* was still the main object of concern.

The debates during period of the new culture movement were the arguments of enlightenment thought and cultural conservatism, and what needs to be pointed out is that although the scholars who stressed the conservation of Chinese culture emphasized the value of Asian culture in general and Chinese culture in particular (such as when Liang Lianming went to Peking University and said he was speaking on behalf of Confucius and Sakyamuni), they did not oppose Westernization, and did not refuse or oppose Western civilization, just as the late Qing nationalists did not oppose revolution in politics. *Dongfang zazhi* 东方杂志 (The Asia Periodical), which differed in cultural ideas from *Xin qingnian* (The New Youth) periodical, and spoke for the fusion of Eastern and Western cultures was familiar to everyone.

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<sup>20</sup>“Guogu he kexue de jingshen” 国故和科学的精神 (National Heritage and the Spirit of Science) by Mao Zishui 毛子水, in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 142.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 143.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 144.

The emergence on the scene of the periodical *Xue Heng* 学衡 (Critical Review) just prior to the 1920s could definitely be said to be the continuation of the direction taken in *Dongfang zazhi*, and its belief in, and upholding of, Chinese civilization is also said in the cultural sense, but it by no means rejects or opposes Western culture. This is also an important feature of the second stage.

The third stage is from the beginning to the conclusion of the 1920s, in which the concept of *guoxue* started to become widely popular, and increasingly became an academic concept. In this type of *guoxue* politics and culture were not discussed, the focus was on academic research. This case is related to a movement that became popular at the time, that of piecing back together the national heritage. At the end of 1919, Hu Shi adopted the concepts of Mao Zishui and Fu Sinian, affirming the formulation of “piecing back together the national heritage.” Hu Shi’s influence at that time was significant, and he and those like him were still students. After undergoing Hu Shi’s confirmation “piecing back together the national heritage” gradually exerted a vast range of influence, which started with Peking University’s founding of the *Guoxue* Research Center, customarily referred to as the Peking University *Guoxue* Research Center, whose Department of *Guoxue* opened in 1922, after which in 1924 Dongnan University founded the *Guoxue* Institute and in 1925 Tsinghua University established the *Guoxue* Research Institute (the formal name at the time was the *Guoxue* Department of the Research Institute, but it was commonly called the Tsinghua Research Institute of *Guoxue*) and in 1928 Yanjing University founded the *Guoxue* research center, and many other areas all over founded schools and institutions for *guoxue*, among which the most famous was the *Wuxi* 无锡 Specialized School of *Guoxue*. One could say that a new movement emerged in the period following the new culture movement, which was the piecing together the national heritage movement, which to some degree is a bit like the today’s *guoxue* craze (of course it does not compare to the *guoxue* craze of today, it mainly stayed at the academic level and still didn’t shape up to a *guoxue* craze sweeping up the whole society). It should be said that the academic world of the 1920s was already gradually discovering the importance of researching *guoxue*, and the movement of piecing together the national heritage promoted the study of *guoxue*, and it is precisely in this context where a whole series of *guoxue* research centers and similar organizations emerged.

Related to founding *guoxue* research institutes was the academic world presenting all kinds of definitions of *guoxue*. Although different people had different wordings of the definition of *guoxue*, the understanding of *guoxue* that all of these definitions spoke to was on the academic level and not on the political (late Qing) or cultural (May 5th) levels; rather, it focused on how to develop academic research. The fundamental transformation of the idea of *guoxue* in three phases from the late Qing to the 1920s reflects the different periods of time at which people understood how to connect traditional culture to the distinct mission of the time.

In the 1920s the focus of *guoxue* entered the third phase, and although the two trends of cultural enlightenment and cultural conservatism were still battling, conservatism did not oppose Western culture but rather recognized the necessity of fully embracing Western culture across the board (Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 is a good



example). And also, cultural conservatism already integrated the world trends after the First World War, and the arguments that fused Eastern culture with Western culture were not easily knocked down let alone defeated. The enlightenment camp also differentiated the standpoint of piecing together the national heritage, but in the enlightenment camp itself the ideas of the new literature movement were inextricably interwoven into piecing together the national heritage, and the uniform way of thinking dominated most new schools, putting the enlightenment in opposition to *guoxue* (as Wu Zhihui 吴稚晖), thinking that if enlightenment is what is wanted then *guoxue* must be rejected. Therefore, in the movement of piecing together the national heritage it was really the scholars of the conservative bent that genuinely blossomed with results.

No matter what, the concept of *guoxue* of this period already differed significantly from that of Deng Shi’s era, and already gradually became an academic concept. The development of the doctrine of “academic *guoxue*” became increasingly apparent day by day, and differentiated itself greatly from Deng Shi’s era of the doctrine of “patriotic *guoxue*.”

## 4.2 The Employment of the Concept of *Guoxue*

The modern definition of the concept of *guoxue* should be broken-down into several types. As a modern cultural concept and not as the default of ancient education, “*guo-xue*” is paired in opposition with “West-*xue*,” and points to the academic system and culture of thought that China originally had before encountering the invasion of Western culture; this is the first usage of the concept of *guoxue* in modern times. Here, the term nation (*guo*) means native nation (China), while the term learning (*xue*) means academic learning. To put it in Zhang Taiyan’s wording of the 1911 revolution, *guoxue* could be called “the learning (*xue*) that is uniquely Chinese;”<sup>23</sup> To put it in the later wording of Liu Shipei, it could be called “the academic learning that is inherently Chinese;”<sup>24</sup> The wording that Dongnan University’s *guoxue* institute gave it was “the academic learning of China’s original possession.”<sup>25</sup> In the 1930s, Wang Chen’s “*Guoxue* Speaks” words it:

<sup>23</sup>Zhang Taiyan said, “The minor study and history of China, these two constitute the learning that is uniquely Chinese and is not common [to the rest of the world],” in, *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji* 章太炎政论选集 (*Selected Writings of Zhang Taiyan’s Political Theory*), (Shanghai: Renmin Chubanshe, 1985), p. 259.

<sup>24</sup>This is the main aim of the *Guoju yuekan she* 国故月刊社 (National Heritage Monthly Periodical).

<sup>25</sup>In Dongnan University’s *shidi xuebao* 史地学报 (*Journal of Historical Geography*), vol. 2, no. 4 (1923), there is a passage that states, “the meaning of *guoxue* as a name is originally hard to define; to talk of it with respect of its status in the world, it is the study of China, but to speak of it analytically it is the original academic study of China.” (p. 139).

The name *guoxue* did not exist in ancient times; a nation must be dealing with another nation for the idea of the nation-state to come into being, and so begin to make the academic learning of one's own nation-state become what *guoxue* is.<sup>26</sup>

Historically speaking, according to the thoughts of people like Zhang Taiyan, *guoxue* points to the academic learning that China inherently has, and *guoxue* in this sense was a matter of continuous popularity from late Qing to the beginning of the People's Republic.

In 1925 when Tsinghua University's *Guoxue* Institute was founded, Wu Mi 吴宓 expressed his understanding of it in *Yanjiuyuan yuanqi* 研究院缘起 (The Origins of the Research Institute),<sup>27</sup> and later on in "The Aims and Path of the Tsinghua Research Institute" he emphasized: "So-called *guoxue* is said in reference to the whole body of Chinese academic culture, and the path (*dao*) of research specifically focuses on [the issue of] precise method."<sup>28</sup> The concept of *guoxue* that Wu Mi used defined the object and range of *guoxue*, which was the clearest concept expressed by any *guoxue* institute at the time. This definition takes culture in academic form to be the main thread, and is therefore called "academic culture," which excludes non-academic content such as the cultural customs of the [Chinese] people; that aside, his main point stresses the "whole body" of academic culture, which is meant to imply that electing one of the traditional academic cultures (like Confucianism or Daoism, say) to substitute for the whole body is unacceptable. Up until the beginning of 1990, Professor Zhang Dainian 张岱年 was still speaking of *guoxue* as Chinese academic studies when he wrote in *Guoxue congshu* 国学丛书 (The *Guoxue* Series) which shows that this is the most widely popular definition of *guoxue*.

The second kind is the extended usage takes *guoxue* to be the abbreviation of traditional Chinese culture. Speaking of *guoxue* in the sense of traditional Chinese academy and speaking of it in the sense of traditional Chinese culture are two usages, the distinction between which consists in the extension of the former being smaller than that of the latter, which is all-encompassing, and the former only outlines the academic form of culture. The meaning of a concept continuously expands once it has been put forward, and different people employ different senses of it. In the general sense, by turning *guoxue* into traditional culture this "traditional culture" sense of the term is more extensive; it embraces not only the academic form of culture; it may also include non-academic forms of culture; from the cultural customs of people to all the other kinds of cultural levels; it is all inclusive. This concept of *guoxue* is precisely the concept of the entirety of traditional Chinese culture. The new culture movement concentrated on comparing Chinese culture to

<sup>26</sup>Wang Zichen 王缙尘, *Guoxue jianghua* 国学讲话 (Speaking about *Guoxue*), (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1935), p. 1.

<sup>27</sup>Qinghua zhouban 清华周刊 (Tsinghua Periodical), no. 360 (10-25-1925), 21-22.

<sup>28</sup>From Sun Dunheng 孙敦恒, *Qinghua guoxue yanjiuyuan shi hua* 清华国学研究院史话 (Speaking on the History of the Tsinghua *Guoxue* Research Institute), (Beijing: Qinghua Daxue Chubanshe, 2002), 15.

Western culture, so using *guoxue* to refer to Chinese culture is related to the focal point of the cultural battles of those days. For instance, when Fan Baihui 范百海 speaks about Eastern and Western culture, he says “what is *guoxue*? It is the representative of the entire culture of Asia.”<sup>29</sup> Those engaging in the critique of Chinese culture at the time were especially used to using the term *guoxue* in this sense.

Naturally, just like any other concept the word “*guoxue*” gradually had different senses once it gained in popularity after the 20th century. For instance, the two kinds previously mentioned are the generally understood and used concepts of *guoxue*. Aside from these two kinds, there are also many of those who use *guoxue* to refer to “the research of *guoxue*,” which speaks to the study of traditional Chinese academic culture, and the content of the academic body of the Chinese tradition including philosophy, the classics, history, literature, religion, language, and art.

The contemporary Yu Yingshi 余英时 states:

The *guoxue* I have been talking about is mainly said in reference to the systematic set of academic learning (or knowledge) of the Chinese tradition, which is the study of the four types of Confucian writings (classics, philosophy, history and literature); after being baptized by the *Qianjiapu* studies it already developed into a set of relatively complete methods of research including all the different techniques of making order out of classical texts from Chinese character elucidation and phonology to textual verification and textual correction. In the late Qing dynasty, this system could be the concrete representative of *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四库全书总目提要 (The Imperial Catalog of the Four Treasuries) and Zhang Zhidong’s 书目答问 (Answers to Questions About the Catalog).<sup>30</sup>

This standpoint understands *guoxue* to be the traditional academic system, and as regards its object, we ought to say that it is identical to Wu Mi’s. This aside, he also thinks that the end of the Qing and the beginning of the republic marks the period of the rise of *guoxue*, and that the *guoxue* of Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 and Liu Shipai 刘师培 at that time did not fully stand for the Chinese tradition, because it had already been influenced by the study of Western civilization, had already opened up the four divisions of Confucian learning up to the West, and had transformed them into the Western division of branches of learning in order to make *guoxue* communicable with the Western academic system, and so cannot simply be regarded as the continuation of *Qianjiapu* studies. This *guoxue* that he singles out—the one that has been transformed into the Western division of branches of learning—is not said purely with reference to the object of research and is already said in reference to the system of *guoxue* research.

Now, what I would like to highlight is that the actual employment of the term *guoxue* from the late Qing all the way up to the 20s and 30s has a very important

<sup>29</sup>Fan Baihui, “Qingnian guoxue de xuyao” 青年国学的需要 (The Needs of Young Guoxue) in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 263.

<sup>30</sup>“Guoxue gainian yu zhongguo renwen yanjiu” 国学概念与中国人文研究 (The Concept of Guoxue and Chinese Humanities Research), Keynote Speech of the 28th Meeting of Taiwan’s “Chinese Research Institute,” see Wang Fawang.

meaning, which is the third aspect of the meaning of *guoxue*. Namely, “*guoxue*” refers to a system of research or a system of academic research, which does not refer to a past cultural system like the system of Confucian thought or the academic system of Zhu Xi 朱熹, but to the system in which we now study these systems. *Guoxue* in this sense is not a concept to which temporality may apply. For example, to think that academia prior to the late Qing dynasty is *guoxue* is to understand *guoxue* to be traditional academia in the sense of time range and to delimit the range of *guoxue* with time limits. The concept of *guoxue* in the 20s then would be more of a concept of type of academia, referring to a system of research belonging to Chinese culture.

For example, the most typical is Hu Shi’s idea. Hu Shi asserts that “Researching all of the learning of past historical culture is the learning of the national heritage (*guoguxue* 国故学), which could be abbreviated as *guoxue*.” This learning of historical culture refers not to the ancient Chinese people’s research of the past, but specifically to one kind of way that we have been researching historical culture since the modern age. In the opening remark of the periodical “*Guoxue Quarterly*” that Hu Shi managed at the Peking University *Guoxue* Institute states, “*guoxue* is the abbreviation of the learning of the national heritage (*guoguxue*).” What is the learning of the national heritage (*guoguxue*)? He states, “All the past cultural history of China—this is the national heritage (*guogu* 国故); researching all of the learning of this past cultural history is the learning of the national heritage (*guoguxue*), which goes by the abbreviation ‘the learning of the nation (*guoxue*)’.”<sup>31</sup> This wording comes from Mao Zishui, who, in his 1919 article, “Guogu he kexue de jingshen” 国故和科学的精神 (National Heritage and the Spirit of Science), states, “the national heritage is precisely the past history of the Chinese people and the academic thought of China’s antiquity.” “We are now studying the academic thought of the ancients—this learning is called the learning of the national heritage (*guoguxue*).” Hu Shi adds one sentence, stating that the learning of the national heritage (*guoguxue*), when abbreviated, is called the learning of the nation (*guoxue*).<sup>32</sup> As regards the history of this word *guoxue*, Hu Shi’s statement does not accord with actual fact; it is not due to the fact that there was first a learning of national heritage (*guoguxue*) that became popular and was henceforth widely abbreviated that we come to have the concept of *guoxue*. But, Hu Shi’s opinion reveals the third meaning of *guoxue*, that is, *guoxue* is the study of the learning of past historical culture. Therefore, this concept of *guoxue* is a concept of a system of learning, referring precisely to the studying the learning system in Chinese historical culture.

This usage became widely popular after the 20s and permeated the everyday word bank of scholars. For example, one of the famous *guoxue* scholars at the time,

<sup>31</sup>Hu Shi, *Guoxue jikan* 国学季刊 (Guoxue Quarterly) “Issuing statement,” in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 194.

<sup>32</sup>Mao Zishui, “Guogu he kexue de jingshen” 国故和科学的精神 (National Heritage and the Spirit of Science), in *Guoxue de lishi* 国学的历史 (The History of Guoxue), 194.

Huang Kan 黄侃, was the student of Zhang Taiyan, and Zhou Zuoren 周作人 spoke of him in high regard, saying, “His *guoxue* counts as one of the best.”<sup>33</sup> This concept of *guoxue* refers not to its object, that is, traditional culture or traditional academia, but to the study of it. Lin Yutang 林语堂 states, “scientific *guoxue* is the goal of our present scholarship.”<sup>34</sup> The *guoxue* of which he speaks is also not said with reference to its object but to a system of research and a system of learning. Gu Xiegang 顾颉刚 thinks that *guoxue* is precisely “the use of the scientific method to study Chinese history and Chinese historical materials.” This is also to say that *guoxue* is a system through which we modern people study historical Chinese materials. Gu Xiegang also states: “*guoxue* is a branch of science.”<sup>35</sup> This science is precisely a concept of a system of research. During the 30s, Mao Zishui reconsidered this period of history of reordering the national heritage, and praised Hu Shi for the *Issuing Statement* that he wrote for the Peking *Guoxue* Department Periodical, reckoning “after 20 years since the republic (1923), the reason why *guoxue* within the country has been able to achieve some measure of success thus far is due in no small way to the power of this article, *Opening Statement of Guoxue Quarterly*.”<sup>36</sup> The use of *guoxue* in this sentence (the reason why *guoxue* within the country has been able to achieve some measure of success) refers not to *guoxue* as object of research but to this system of “research of *guoxue*.” Cao Juren 曹聚仁 later states: “simply put, scholars of *guoxue* posit the academia that my country possessed inherently as the object of research and treat it with the scientific method in order to make it become a science” (See Cao Juren’s *Guoguxue zhi yiyi yu jiazhi* 国故雪之意义与价值 (The Meaning and Value of *Guoguxue*)). So, the third meaning of *guoxue* refers to the research of *guoxue*.

In addition, as regards extension, because *guoxue* already started to emerge as meaning a branch of study, when Peking University established the *Guoxue* Research Institute in 1920, it started to enroll master’s students. Written for the preparation of the Peking University *Guoxue* Institute, “A Brief Article on the

<sup>33</sup>*Zhitang huixiang lu* 知堂回想录 (Zhou Zuoren’s reflections life), (Hong Kong: Sanyu Tushu, 1980), 482.

<sup>34</sup>Lin Yutang, “Kexue yu Jingshu” 科学与经书 (Science and the Classics), in *Nongbao wuzhounian jinian zengkan* 晨报五周年纪念增刊, December 1st, 1923.

<sup>35</sup>To look at Gu Xiegang’s two paragraph speech, see, *Yijiu erliu nian shi jici* 一九二六年始词 (Words about Beginning the Periodical in 1926), in *Guoxue men zhokan* 国学门周刊 (Guoxue Department Periodical), vol. 2, no. 13, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup>Mao Zishui, *Hu Shi Chuan* 胡适传 (Commentary on Hu Shi), quoted in Chen Yiai *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu yanjiu jigou de xingqi—yi beida yanjiusuo guoxuemen wei zhongxin de tantao* 中国现代学术研究机构兴起——以北大研究所国学门为中心的探讨 (The Rise of the Institutions of Modern Chinese Academic Research—A Discussion Focusing on the Peking University Research Institute’s Guoxue Department), (Nanchang: Jiangxi Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2002), *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu yanjiu jigou de xingqi—yi beida yanjiusuo guoxuemen wei zhongxin de tantao* 中国现代学术研究机构兴起——以北大研究所国学门为中心的探讨 (The Rise of the Institutions of Modern Chinese Academic Research—A Discussion Focusing on the Peking University Research Institute’s Guoxue Department), (Nanchang: Jiangxi Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2002), 196.

Institute” delimited the scope of the *Guoxue* Department, which already prescribed the scope of what *guoxue* engages in, that is, “Any kind of specialized knowledge of Chinese literature, history and/or philosophy falls under it.”<sup>37</sup> This determines the scope of *guoxue*, that is, *guoxue* refers not just to literature, nor solely to history or philosophy, but if one were to study any one among them, it would fall under the scope of *guoxue*. In 1925 Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Research Institute was established, and the “Article on the Procedural Standards of the Institute” also prescribes “first setting up *guoxue* as one branch of study, whose content is roughly the language, history, literature and philosophy of China.”<sup>38</sup>

### 4.3 The Development of the Study of *Guoxue*

The Peking University *Guoxue* Research Institute was established in 1922; its members and those presiding over it mostly rose up from under the wing of Zhang Taiyan and entered Peking University during the years of 1923–1915 to replace the remaining figures of the Tongcheng 桐城 school, and did not just become the mainstream of humanities education of Peking University, they also led the Peking University *Guoxue* Research Institute, even though in the “Issuing Statement of *Guoxue* Quarterly” that Hui drafted in 1923 still states that “the shadow of Zhang Taiyan is lurking.”<sup>39</sup>

*The History of Peking University* (revised edition), when narrating the course of history of Peking University since 1910, states:

Prior to this, Yao Yonggai 姚永概 presided as dean of liberal arts, and the Tongcheng school was the dominant trend of liberal arts at Peking University ... after Xia Xiqi 夏锡祺 replaced Yao Yonggai as chair of Liberal Arts of Peking University the Zhang Taiyan school was ushered in ... they concentrated on critical textual analysis, praised strict scholarship, and this trend thereafter gradually became the mainstream in Peking University’s liberal arts education and research.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup>*Gongbu beida yanjiusuo jianzhang bugao* 公布北大研究所简章布告 (Brief Report on the Publicization of Peking Research Institute), in *Cai Yuanpei wenji* 蔡元培 (Collected Texts of Cai Yuanpei), vol. 3, p. 50.

<sup>38</sup>Sun Dunheng 孙敦恒, *Qinghua guoxue yanjiuyuan shi hua* 清华国学研究院史话 (Speaking on the History of the Tsinghua Guoxue Research Institute), (Beijing: Qinghua Daxue Chubanshe, 2002), 26.

<sup>39</sup>Chen Yiai, *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu yanjiu jigou de xingqi—yi beida yanjiusuo guoxuemen wei zhongxin de tantao* 中国现代学术研究机构兴起——以北大研究所国学门为中心的探讨 (The Rise of the Institutions of Modern Chinese Academic Research—A Discussion Focusing on the Peking University Research Institute’s Guoxue Department), (Nanchang: Jiangxi Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2002).

<sup>40</sup>Xiao Chaoran et al. eds., *Beijing daxue xiao shi* 北京大学校史 (History of Peking University), (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1988), 48.

After The Imperial University of Peking opened, there were many who held teaching positions at the Tongcheng school, and the leader of the Tongcheng school, Wu Rulun 吴汝纶 stood as chief instructor of the Imperial University of Peking. After the founding of the republic, Yan Fu 严复 took a position at Peking University and Yao Yonggai presided as dean of liberal arts, both of them famous figures of the Tongcheng school. In 1913 Xia Xiqi came to stand as senior scholar of liberal arts, following which came those who rose up under the wing of Zhang Taiyan, including Shen Yimo 沈尹默, Zhu Xizu 朱希祖, Qian Xuanton 钱玄同, Ma Yuzao 马裕藻, Shen Jianshi 沈兼士, and Huang Kan, and later followed Liu Shipai, who publicly challenged the Tongcheng school's take on the classics, and championed the three dynasties and three kingdoms literary movement. In the first period upon entering the republic, Zhang Taiyan became the highest authority in the academic for world for some time, and humanities at Peking University was deeply influenced by him in relegating critical textual analysis, phonology, and character elucidation as the genuine techniques of learning.

After 1917, Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 took over as senior scholar of Peking University Liberal Arts, in came those like Hu Shi who greatly inspired the New Literary Movement and the Literary Revolution. Although those following Zhang Taiyan were all of one heart in the Common Language Movement and the New Literary Movement, Liu Shipai and Huang Kan openly opposed the partial attitude that the New Literary Movement adopted in relation to ancient and classical culture, but Zhang Taiyan's followers were always dominant in the liberal arts at Peking University. Hu Shi recognized this characteristic of Peking University liberal arts from the very beginning, and so maintained good relations with Zhang Taiyan's followers. In the New Literary Movement, although the social reputation that Hu Shi accrued always greatly superseded that of these liberal arts associates, Zhang Taiyan's followers still reigned dominant in lead roles at the liberal arts departments of Peking University.<sup>41</sup>

In 1921 Peking University organized an outline proposal through the research institute while planning the founding of the institute; the outline divides the liberal arts into four departments, namely *guoxue*, foreign literature, social sciences and natural sciences, and it was the budding of the *guoxue* department that advanced most rapidly, blossoming in the official founding of the department in the January of 1922. The case was identical for the Tsinghua Research Institute, which established the *guoxue* department first before the others. What differed in this regard was Peking University, which already established the different branches of the research institute in 1917–1918 (literature, law, natural sciences), but Cai Yuanpei later found the separated designing of each department too scattered and dis-coordinated, so in 1920 the evaluation committee decided to incorporate the old institute

<sup>41</sup>Chen Yiai, *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu yanjiu jigou de xingqi—yi beida yanjiusuo guoxuemen wei zhongxin de tantao* 中国现代学术研究机构的兴起——以北大研究所国学门为中心的探讨 (The Rise of the Institutions of Modern Chinese Academic Research—A Discussion Focusing on the Peking University Research Institute's Guoxue Department), (Nanchang: Jiangxi Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2002), 29.



into a new one with four departments, of which Cai Yuanpei took the helms as chair. This research institute was not established specifically for research students, but took a turn toward being designed for deeply devoted learning. The scope of its *guoxue* department was: any kind of scholar who specifically focuses on the literature, history, or philosophy of China belongs to it.

Chen Yiai points out that aside from Hu Shi, all of these professors of liberal arts who held committee positions in the *guoxue* departments were Zhang Taiyan's students who studied in Japan, and Shen Jianshi succeeded him in presiding over the *guoxue* department from 1922 to 1927. Unlike the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute, which focused on cultivating research students, the total number of research students in the Peking University *Guoxue* department from 1922 to 1927 was 46 people, but in the end only ten of them handed in graduation dissertations. This is obviously due to the fact that the *guoxue* department did not focus on cultivating research students; rather, its focus was on the activity of "three offices and five research societies," among which the research society of folk songs was established. It was the earliest of its kind, and launched a nationwide movement devoted to folk songs. The research society surveying Chinese customs interacted closely with the research of Chinese folk songs, and launched the research of Chinese dialects, which unleashed an expansive survey of regional dialects.<sup>42</sup> The Peking University *Guoxue* Department, with this slant towards ethnic customs and folk songs, was most certainly influenced by the New Literary Movement and its cultural ideas. Shen Jianshi, when assessing the work of the *guoxue* department of Peking University in 1926, also pointed out that the *guoxue* department "still could not fully proceed as regards the aspect of research."<sup>43</sup>

From the late Qing to the founding of the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Department, the modern evolution of *guoxue* research could also be divided into three stages. The first stage prolonged the Qing dynasty's critical textual analysis in terms of learning method, but braved a somewhat modern cultural awareness in terms of ideas. For instance, according to the traditional standpoint of the ancients, what is most important is the study of classics, but the academic ideas of the Qing dynasty already started to change this, and as the late Qing phase comes along, some, such as Zhang Taiyan and Liu Shipei, who made of *guoxue* research a system of research in one respect, continued the Qing dynasty model of making critical textual analysis and textual verification a method of research, and in another respect, as regards the mentality of research, modern ideas were already present such that the study of classics and the study of the pre-Qin masters were thought to be equal. Their research no longer emphasized "classics" but spoke of "masters,"

<sup>42</sup>Chen Yiai, *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu yanjiu jigou de xingqi—yi beida yanjiusuo guoxuemen wei zhongxin de tantao* 中国现代学术研究机构之兴起——以北大研究所国学门为中心的探讨 (The Rise of the Institutions of Modern Chinese Academic Research—A Discussion Focusing on the Peking University Research Institute's Guoxue Department), (Nanchang: Jiangxi Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2002), 81–89.

<sup>43</sup>"Yanjiusuo guoxuemen disici kenqin jihuishi" 研究所国学门第四次恳亲会纪事, in *Guoxuemen yuekan*, vol. 1, no. 1., p. 140.



and towards one of those “masters,” Confucius, they also had some criticisms.<sup>44</sup> All of this reflects the modern cultural consciousness, which lowers the status classics studies and evenly repositions the status of Confucius on equal footing with the others. This starts in the late Qing and proceeds to the beginning of the republic, and the *guoxue* of this period was made the basic form of system of research, which greatly influenced later generations. As soon as modern people bring up *guoxue* what comes to mind is critical textual analysis, textual verification and the other “minor studies,” which is actually the characteristic of solely the first stage of modern *guoxue*. There is a very interesting issue here, which is that already the *guoxue* of the first modern stage, constituted by the critical exegesis and textual verification of the Qing dynasty with the addition of modern academic ideas, is already no longer the old system. Combining critical exegesis and textual verification with the addition of consciousness of the modern age, as shown in *Guogu lunheng* 国故论衡, already the constitution of an academic system carrying a new flavor, which differs from the traditional academic system of the Qing dynasty. For example, although the author of *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (Interpretation of Xunzi’s Collected Writings), Wang Xianqian 王先谦 is already a modern person, and yet the academic form of this book is still rather traditional, and could be called traditional *guoxue*. Although new works of *guoxue* in modern times still included traditional *guoxue*, their topics already developed into new forms of research.

The core of the second stage is Peking University’s *guoxue*. However, to speak not in terms of the stage but in the sense of the model, Zhang Taiyan still shrouded over the scholarship of his followers, and it could be said that the distinctive feature of the truly new model of this second stage in general, and of Peking University *guoxue* in particular, was the emphasis placed on the scientific method and questioning of ancient trends of thought. These two features were of course related to Peking University. Under the influence of the new culture movement’s praise of “science and democracy,” it was not only Hu Shi specifically highlighting the significance of the scientific method, all the others (like Mao Zishui) did as well. Actually, “the scientific method,” as a general position was already common sense for the scholarly world at the time, but particular positions on how the scientific method showed great divergence. The “scientific method” that was espoused in this period differed somewhat from the textual verification and critical exegesis of the late Qing and early republic. Although Hu Shi often stated that textual verification and critical exegesis contained some aspects of the scientific method, as a whole, the scientific method about which he spoke was not Qing dynasty critical exegesis or textual verification, but rather a set of some new methods of treatment and analysis, particularly those that came from Western academia like experimentalism and the method of empirical proof. Aside from the scientific method, the skeptical consciousness of questioning antiquity and detecting falsity was a distinctive

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<sup>44</sup>Of course they changed later one, for example, Zhang Taiyan’s early years was marked by “editing Confucius,” which included accusations against Confucius, but in his later years he took such accusations back.

feature of this stage of *guoxue* research in general, and the research of Hu Shi and Gu Xiegang in particular.<sup>45</sup> The trend of questioning antiquity was related to the entire New Culture Movement's skeptical critiques of tradition at that time, when people were exposing much of what was doubtful in ancient Chinese historiography, classical texts and historical materials, and these doubts also opened up many new fields of research, catalyzing the development of historical studies. This is the distinctive feature of this stage of *guoxue* as a system of research.

At this stage, the trend of science and questioning antiquity, which included representatives such as Hu Shi of Peking University, became a new form of *guoxue* research, and went a step further than the first stage. Aside from science and questioning antiquity, this form of *guoxue* research also put emphasis on systematically rearranging the written culture of antiquity, and although this academic awareness of culture was a continuation of the first stage in some respects, it already belongs to a newer stage, whose form was a newer development in comparison with the form of Zhang Taiyan's *guoxue*. In the Zhang Taiyan era, although there was critical exegesis, textual verification and elements of modern academic consciousness, there were also Western things. The Western things were mostly "revolutionary" social elements, for instance, elements that called for lowering the status of the classics in general and Confucius in particular. But when it comes to the scientific stage of questioning antiquity, it was matched with the call for science and democracy and the values of Western humanities were ushered in from the standpoint of cultural enlightenment; Western culture was also largely called on as a reference when Chinese people were establishing the branches of modern research. However, on the whole, consciousness of "enlightenment" was the strongest element in the *guoxue* department of Peking university at this stage, and "scientific" reordering was insufficient.

In the third stage, the *Guoxue* Research Institute of Tsinghua University comes to the fore as the representative. Using a rather contentious concept to speak of it, this stage was that of "Sinological *guoxue*."<sup>46</sup> The "sinology" spoken of here was not the Qing dynasty sinology that Hu Shi stood for in continuing to embrace Zhang Taiyan,<sup>47</sup> but world sinology (and the Chinese part within the field of Asian studies). What does sinological *guoxue* mean though? Actually, it is a new *guoxue* research stemming from the convergence of Chinese research with the academia of

<sup>45</sup>Chen Yiai, *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu yanjiu jigou de xingqi—yi beida yanjiusuo guoxuemen wei zhongxin de tantao* 中国现代学术研究机构之兴起——以北大研究所国学门为中心的探讨 (The Rise of the Institutions of Modern Chinese Academic Research—A Discussion Focusing on the Peking University Research Institute's Guoxue Department), (Nanchang: Jiangxi Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2002), 182, 205.

<sup>46</sup>Gong Pengcheng 龚鹏程, in *Guoxue rumen* 国学入门 (Introduction to Guoxue), thinks the Tsinghua Guoxue Institute's class curriculum and education is close to Western and Japanese sinology, see *Guoxue rumen* 国学入门 (Introduction to Guoxue), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2007), 228–229.

<sup>47</sup>About this aspect of Hu Shi continuing Zhang Taiyan's sinology, see for reference, Chen Pingyuan's 陈平原 *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu zhi jianli* 中国现代学术之建立 (The Founding of Modern Chinese Academia), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 1998), 191, 223, 224.

the broader world.<sup>48</sup> For example, the three widely familiar methods that Wang Guowei 王国维 practiced and Chen Yinke 陈寅恪 formulated, namely “the cross verification of artifacts buried underground and traces written on the page,” “the reciprocal verification of foreign ideas with native materials,” and “the mutual supplementing of foreign classics and those of our own”—one could say these were the consistent methods found throughout French and Japanese sinology and Chinese studies. So, in the vein of Chen Yinke the Tsinghua *Guoxue* Department emphasized not only the aim but also the practice of utilizing new knowledge and new methods like comparative linguistics and ancient Asian languages to research Chinese culture. And the Europeans and Japanese had already been using these methods to produce new research on Chinese antiquity and came up with attention grabbing results. This third stage of world *guoxue*, whose representative was the Tsinghua University Research Institute, was an advanced development of new *guoxue* research, which one could say truly effectuated the development of the new *guoxue* movement. The scientific method and skeptical questioning of antiquity found in the second stage was still more of a liberation and enlightenment at the level of ideas. For example, Gu Jiegang’s hypothetical formulation of “the layer by layer accumulation of fabricated ancient Chinese history,” and none of it was practically effectuated to the level of being a superior development in academic practice. Li Ji 利济 later stated: “the fundamental idea behind the Tsinghua University Research Institute is to use the modern scientific method to systematically recompose the national heritage.”<sup>49</sup> Although this formulation fails to distinguish the unique characteristic of the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute from that of the Peking University *Guoxue* Department, the institute finally did produce significant results in terms of scientifically recomposing the national heritage,<sup>50</sup> if

<sup>48</sup>The Peking University *Guoxue* Department, including Hu Shi, had some awareness of this and failed to develop, the reason for which is multifaceted. An important point among those facets is that the outlook of cultural enlightenment dominated the direction of the Peking University *Guoxue* Department, which can be seen not only in its focus on the role of ethnic customs and songs, but also in Hu Shi’s lack of confidence in traditional culture, which is also grounded in the same reason. For reference, see, Chen Lai 陈来, *Qimeng pipan yu xueshu yanjiu de shuangchuang bianzou* 启蒙批判与学术研究的双重变奏 (The Enlightenment’s Critique, and the Two-Fold Change of Rhythm of Academic Research), *Qinghua daxue xuebao* 清华大学学报 (Journal of Tsinghua University), 2010, no. 4.

<sup>49</sup>Quotation from Xia Xiaohong 夏晓红 and Wu Linghua 吴玲华 eds., *Qinghua tongxue yu xueshu xinshuan* 清华同学与学术薪传 (Tsinghua Classmates and the Fueling of Academia), (Beijing: Shenghuo-Dushu, Xinzhi Sanlian Shudian, 2009), 388.

<sup>50</sup>Wu Mi stated, “This institute’s so-called *guoxue*, if the definition is a broad one, refers to any use of the scientific method, the results of the Western sinology, and also everything within the legitimate scope of *guoxue*, like the study of dialects, the study of ethnicities, Sanskrit, etc.” (“Yanjiuyuan fazhan jihua yijianshu” 研究院发展计划意见书 (Thoughts on the Plans for the Institution’s Development) in *Qinghua Zhoukan* 清华周刊 (Tsinghua Periodical), no. 371, 3-19-1926). However, in fact, because Hu Shi and Fu Sinian’s 傅斯年 so-called science mainly refers to natural science, Chen Yinke seems to understand science as being beyond humanities, and therefore does not accept the wording of “recomposing the national heritage with the scientific method,” thinking that this is the newer school’s or foreign students’ assertion, which naturally

scientific here is understood as including the Western theories of social science like sociology, historiography, linguistics, and anthropology.<sup>51</sup> This is also the reason why the Tsinghua University Research Institute came out on top later on.<sup>52</sup> Those in charge of the Chinese Academy also posited the outstanding achievers of the Tsinghua University Research Institute as the mainstream.

#### 4.4 The Great Figures of *Guoxue*

The reason why the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute came to represent the third stage of modern development of *guoxue* research, was due to the fact that the central figure of the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Department at the first stage of development, professor Wang Guowei, was embraced as the best *guoxue* researcher across the globe. This broaches the issue of the great figures of *guoxue*. Not only was the development of *guoxue* research as a system inseparable from *guoxue* thinkers, it was also manifested generation by generation through the work of *guoxue* scholars. As stated above, in the first stage of modern *guoxue* research, textual verification and critical exegesis was put in combination with modern consciousness by such representative figures as Zhang Taiyan, who stood not only for revolution and for intense patriotism, but also academically for a new form of research that at the time differed markedly from past ages. In the second stage, that is, the mainstream research of Peking University from 1913 to 1920. Those leading the entirety of Peking University Liberal Arts during this period were none other than Zhang Taiyan's students, who therefore represent the *guoxue* scholarship of this period. Speaking with reference to the New Culture Movement as a cultural movement, Hu Shi was the promoter, who influenced young students the most; but, when it comes to the Peking University *Guoxue* Institute, the leading figure was not

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(Footnote 50 continued)

engenders deviations. For reference, see, Xia Xiaohong and Wu Linghua eds., *Qinghua tongxue yu xueshu xinchuan* 清华同学与学术薪传 (Tsinghua Classmates and the Fueling of Academia), (Beijing: Shenghuo-Dushu, Xinzhi Sanlian Shudian, 2009), 439.

<sup>51</sup>Zhou Chuanru 周传儒 in his *Shixue dashi liang qichao he wang guowei* 史学大师梁启超和王国维 (The Great Masters of Historiography Liang Qichao and Wang Guowei) stated, "with the riches of Tsinghua University's facilities and with the hopeful voices of Liang Qichao and Wang Guowei, Tsinghua University's Research Institute gradually came to surpass by wide margin the likes of Shanghai's Hatong Academy 哈同学院, Wu Xi's Specialized Institute of Guoxue, and even Peking University's Research Institute. See Xia Xiaohong ed., *Huiyi liang qichao* 追忆梁启超 (Reminiscing Liang Qichao), 320.

<sup>52</sup>Lu Yi points out that, "Looking at what walked later into the mainstream institutes of history and philology, the biggest powerhouse was obviously the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Research Institute, which set up three groups, led by Chen Yinke, Zhao Yuanren 赵元任, and Li Ji." (*Zhengli guogu yundong yu zhongguo xiandai xueshu zhuanxing* 整理国故运动与中国现代学术转型 (The Sorting Out the National Heritage Movement and the Modern Academic Shift of China), (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Chubanshe, 2008), 89.).

Hu Shi but the students of Zhang Taiyan. So, in 1922 when the Peking University *Guoxue* Institute was founded, Shen Jianshi presided over it, but the members were basically all Zhang Taiyan’s students. Compared with Zhang Taiyan himself, his students displayed a progressive feature, for instance, they agreed with promoting modern vernacular language (*baihuawen* 白话文), which went hand in hand with the New Culture Movement; they also stressed the importance of ethnic folk culture, which was confluent with the New Culture Movement as well. But, generally speaking, their methods of *guoxue* research were heavily shrouded over by Zhang Taiyan’s emphasis on the textual verification methods of scholarship, so one could say that they still did not bring new things in from the whole academic world as the great figures of the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute successfully did in the third stage. One example is Zhang Taiyan’s resistance and even opposition to the research of shell and bone inscription writing (*jiaguwen* 甲骨文),<sup>53</sup> which was Wang Guowei’s expertise. Here, we can see that the *guoxue* of Zhang Taiyan can no longer represent the direction of *guoxue* research by the time of the 1920s, and that the development of a new form of *guoxue* must look forward, branch out, and absorb the methods and results of research from across the globe in every respect, so as to stand at the forefront of research.

Beginning in 1913 Peking University’s entire liberal arts scene was in the hands of Zhang Taiyan’s students, but looking at it today, what academic contribution and which scholar among them deserve to be treated as especially important in the history of academic research? For example, the achievements of Shen Jianshi, when considered from the perspective of the history of academic research, obviously do not compare to those of Wang Guowei and Chen Yinke. Although the academics of Zhang Taiyan’s students were already modern in form, the pace of their academic research still could not catch up to the needs of the times. European and Japanese research in sinology during this period had already maturely developed and in many respects went beyond Chinese research. In fact, Hu Shi and Chen Yuan 陈垣 were sighing at this, and later Fu Sinian took up the struggle to be at the head of every corner of sinology from top to bottom,<sup>54</sup> but Zhang Taiyan’s students could not keep up with this academic drive and concern.<sup>55</sup> When it comes to the Tsinghua

<sup>53</sup>Liang Qichao in his *Xianqin zhengzhi sixiangshi* 先秦政治思想史 (History of Pre-Qin Political Thought) pointed out that the newness of new *guoxue* research is found in plunging into foreign academic methods. Liu Mengxi 刘梦溪 also showed that Peking University’s *Guoxue* Department is new *guoxue*, while Tsinghua University’s *Guoxue* Institute is newer *guoxue* in comparison with that of Peking University. See, “Lun *guoxue*” 论国学 (On *Guoxue*), in *Zhongguo wenhua* 中国文化 (Chinese Culture), Autumn 2006.

<sup>54</sup>See *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu yanjiu jigou de xingqi—yi beida yanjiusuo guoxuemen wei zhongxin de tantao* 中国现代学术研究机构兴起——以北大研究所国学门为中心的探讨 (The Rise of the Institutions of Modern Chinese Academic Research—A Discussion Focusing on the Peking University Research Institute’s *Guoxue* Department), (Nanchang: Jiangxi Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2002), 291.

<sup>55</sup>Like Huang Kan, who thought that understanding foreign texts not was definitively necessary in order to study *guoxue*, arguing that Wang Niansun 王念孙 did not understand a foreign language and was still a great scholar. See, Xia Xiaohong 夏晓红 and Wu Linghua 吴玲华 eds., *Qinghua*

University *Guoxue* Institute, the big four—Wang Guowei, Liang Qichao, Chen Yuan, and Zhao Lijun—were all of this stripe. For example, Wang Guowei, who was already one of the preeminent researchers in the world, which Bo Xihe and every other important scholar in the world at the time acknowledged. Wang Guowei often corresponded with sinologists from across the world, and gained a lot of respect through such correspondences.<sup>56</sup>

Of the great figures of *guoxue*, the first generation is represented by Zhang Taiyan, whose students that went on to become scholars at Peking University, which represents the second generation. The *guoxue* of the latter was still tied to textual verification and critical exegesis as the main methods of research, and although these scholars had some new cultural ideas, for instance, in their support for the modern vernacular movement (*baihua yundong*), as regards academics, none of them steered in the direction of the new current of *guoxue* research. The third stage was represented by Wang Guowei and the scholars from the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Department, whose academic vision and achievements were of the highest order in the world. *Guoxue* research cannot develop behind closed doors, but rather must adequately understand the methods, achievements, and tendencies of the greater world of Chinese studies. Actually, at that time Hu Shi held this belief. However, because he was so deeply influenced by the New Culture Movement, he was unable to freely engage the academic research of *guoxue* and never made any outstanding achievements in this sphere. So, just as we have observed above, Wang Guowei is the most suitable representative for the third stage of modern *guoxue*.

When Chen Yinke arrived at Tsinghua University, his vision, ideas, and methods were the same as those of Wang Guowei. Both of them were markedly influenced by the foreign and domestic fields of sinology and Asian studies. Leaving aside their shared beliefs in the aspects of society and culture, another important reason that made their work converge consisted in their mutual agreement about methodology and their shared vision of academic development. It is for this reason that only Chen Yinke was able to fill-in for the role that Wang Guowei had played in the 1930s, namely, that of a world renown sinologist who would become internationally recognized as the top new scholar of *guoxue*. Although the achievements of Chen Yinke in the sphere of research only showed later on, his research methods and thought were consistent with those of Wang Guowei. His path was to always stand at the forefront of the world in academia. So academics at the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute was always an outwardly open field that rejected neither sinology nor the research of foreign scholars, who told their own stories. The Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute thus established its status in an

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(Footnote 55 continued)

*tongxue yu xueshu xinchuan* 清华同学与学术薪传 (*Tsinghua Classmates and the Fueling of Academia*), (Beijing: Shenghuo-Dushu, Xinzhi Sanlian Shudian, 2009), 397.

<sup>56</sup>See Sang Bin, *Wan wing min guo shiqi de guoxue yu xixue* 晚清民国时期的国学与西学 (Native Chinese and Western Studies of the Late Qing and Early Republic), in *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究 (Historical Research), 1996, no. 5.



academic community by embracing the entire world. When scholars use “sino-logical *guoxue*” to characterize the academics of the Tsinghua *Guoxue* Institute, the “sinology” spoken of here is not the sinology of the Qing dynasty, but of international sinology; this wording although not necessarily correct, still shows a distinctive feature of the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute at that time, which was that the academic horizon of the scholars there was not closed off to the world of sinology at large.

As an academic system of research modern *guoxue* historically contained two parts, one of which was traditional *guoxue* research (for example, Sun Yirang’s 孙诒让 *Zhou li zhengyi* 周礼正义 (The Justice of Zhou Rites) and Wang Xianqian’s *Hanshu bu zheng* 汉书补正 (Supplementary Correction of the Book of Han), the other of which was new *guoxue* research. After the New Culture Movement, new *guoxue* research gradually became the mainstream, as exemplified by works such as Wang Guowei’s *Guantang jilin* 观堂集林 (Selected Works of Wang Guowei) and Chen Yuan’s *Yuan xiyuren huahuakao* 元西域人华化考.

Chen Pingyuan thinks that the late Qing scholars and the scholars of the May 4th Movement (like Zhang Taiyan and Hu Shi) collectively forged a new world for modern Chinese academics,<sup>57</sup> but looking at it from the perspective of the academic history of *guoxue* research, the research of Wang Guowei, Liang Qichao, and Chen Yinke already surpassed the May 4th movement and opened up the new field of *guoxue* research after the May 4th movement. This may be said not only in terms of time, but much rather in terms of the logical relation of types. For instance, Wang Guowei and Liang Qichao were both notable figures of the May 4th movement, but their research was not done in the vein of the Qing dynasty sinology that Zhang Taiyan and Hu Shi stood for. Their type of learning went beyond that of the May 4th scholars, who would fail to encapsulate them in any association. For this reason, Chen Pingyuan actually only spoke of what we have been calling the first two stages, and neglected the third stage, but Wang Guowei and Liang Qichao could not be grouped under the label “May 4th scholars,” because only they were the true founders of modern Chinese academia.

In the 1920s those like Liu Xia 刘夏 and others, including Japanese scholars, all thought that the piecing together the national heritage movement was the birth of new *guoxue*. Hu Shi later drafted his “*fakan xuanyan*” 发刊宣言 (“Issuing Statement”), calling it the “research proposal of new *guoxue*.” Still studying abroad at the time, Liu Xia said:

All we have to do is look at the work done by the Peking University *Guoxue* Department and we may determine at once that the Chinese field of *guoxue* hereafter will necessarily be able to open up a new world, and even if we cannot expect to obtain very many achievements for some time, we will at least be able to open up many good avenues that would have been unimaginable for the ancients. We research literature but determinedly, unlike the yes-men of antiquity; we research characters but determinedly do not go prostrate ourselves before the god of writing; we research language but determinedly do not grope

<sup>57</sup>See Chen Pingyuan’s 陈平原 *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu zhi jianli* 中国现代学术之建立 (The Founding of Modern Chinese Academia), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 1998).

around in the dark unscientific cage of antiquity; we research folklore song but decidedly do not speak of ghost stories in the Book of Five Elements; we research history and historiography but decidedly no longer do memorandums of the daily life of emperors long dead; we even more decidedly do not engage in the superstitious belief in great emperors because of such [nonsense]... In conclusion, the purpose of our “new *guoxue*” is to make refined observations and conclusions about each aspect of the Chinese people on the basis of facts, and discover the many beginnings and ultimate end of a five thousand year evolution of civilization.<sup>58</sup>

Clearly, the concept of new *guoxue* had already arrived on the scene by the 1920s, at which time *guoxue* research entered a new development. New *guoxue* refers of course to a system of research that already has developed a new form and new methods. So, as we discuss *guoxue* today, we have to make a conclusion about the process, stages, and experience of the development of new *guoxue*. One could say that the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute was the final, representative, and blossoming phase that took place in the new *guoxue* movement of the 1920s.

In the New *Guoxue* Movement, there was a strong correlation between the cultural values of *guoxue* figures and their academic achievements. The importance that the cultural outlook of *guoxue* figures had for *guoxue* research is becoming clearer and clearer for us today 100 years later. The reason that the Peking University *Guoxue* Institute (including Hu Shi) did not make great strides in *guoxue* research is due at least in part to the cultural values of the New Culture Movement. The cultural values of the New Culture Movement were predominantly guided by the tendency to critique and oppose traditional Chinese culture, which, although necessary at the time, did have an influence on academics, one which prevented scholars from straightforwardly studying Chinese culture; this means that the study of Chinese culture did not have the cultural values to support it. The sorting out the national heritage movement was originally a movement towards research and the achievement of academic results, but the New Culture Movement’s anti-traditional thrust influenced it from the very beginning; the thought was not that *guoxue* was totally meaningless, but that it wasn’t largely significant. The more radical scholars, such as Chen Duxiu, thought that studying *guoxue* and sorting through the national heritage was like looking for perfume in a pile of manure, and that what we need is to import perfume from the West. Hu Shi originally praised the effort of sorting out the national heritage, because Hu Shi was a scholar who understood the state of development of sinology at the time, and knew that *guoxue* research should make a big development, so he raised the notion of sorting out the national heritage movement. But later he submitted under the pressure of the newer school’s criticism, and wanted to maintain his status as a leading figure in the New Culture Movement, so he turned towards expressing his call to sort out the national heritage as the need to “smash the ghosts” and “hunt the monsters” in order to dissect the cultural sickness of Chinese culture. Under influence of this sort of cultural outlook,

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<sup>58</sup>*Dun huang duosuo xu mu* 敦煌掇琐叙目 *Narrative of DunHuang Duosuo Xumu*, in *Beida guoxuemen zhoukan* 北大国学门周刊 (Peking University’s *Guoxue* Department Periodical), no. 3, 10-28-1925.



there was no straightforward cultural outlook to serve as the foundational support of *guoxue* research, which became a very serious problem. Practice proves that *guoxue* research requires a suitable cultural outlook to serve as the foundation; the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute is a perfectly typical example. For example, Wu Mi was the founder of the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute, and the main leader of the *xueheng* 学衡 movement, who advocated for “promoting nationalism and integrating new knowledge.” From his perspective, the West must be integrated but there no sense of cultural inferiority. The other advising professors of the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Department similarly did not suffer the constraints of radical cultural outlooks. Liang Qichao focused on fusing China and the West, Wang Guowei highlighted the importance of consistently combining the cultures of China and the West, and Chen Yinke stressed not forgetting the fundamental position of the ethnic people. In terms of cultural outlook they were all one and the same. So, the experience of modern cultural history tells us there must first be a cultural outlook that stresses the importance of ethnic culture to embolden support for *guoxue* research, and only by adding on new methods of research can the study of *guoxue* truly yield results.

It could be said that the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute halted in the summer of 1929, after which humanities at Tsinghua University developed according to a system of divided branches, set up a research institute of divided branches of study, and no longer had a monolithic *guoxue* institute. Following the branching out of the research departments, the branches of the Tsinghua University College of Humanities developed from the 1930s to the 1940s, during which time it created its own magnificence. In this sense, one should say that the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute forged the golden age of Tsinghua University humanities research, and as an opening stage, it constituted a foundation and model for the magnificent development of Tsinghua University humanities that followed. After 1929, the development of the branches of Tsinghua University continued to unfold according to this model. Although the humanities of Tsinghua University composed a branching development in the organizational form of the Humanities Institute, its academic spirit, goals of learning, and cultural outlook still embraced the path of the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute in seeking excellence by fusing China and the West. Academics during the age of the Humanities Institute of Tsinghua University could also be seen as prolonging the rise and continuing the magnificence of the academic learning of the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute.

Since the opening economic reforms, the academic research of China’s humanities in general and of the cultural history of China in particular progressed significantly. In accompaniment with the rise of the position of China in the world, our status as a major nation demands that we strengthen our position and influence in the academia. From this perspective, the aim of the new Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute must in one respect embrace the tradition of the old Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute, and in another respect go further in developing the tradition of the old Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute. Today the Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Research Institute is of course the continuer of the old Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Research Institute; it is the prolongation of it in spirit; we use

the term *guoxue* as a symbol to emphasize the importance of the self-awareness of ethnic culture and to stress the agency of culture. Foreigners have undoubtedly made achievements in researching sinology, but they will never have the self-awareness or subjective consciousness that Chinese researchers have to the point where one could say that Western sinology is a part of Western academics. Today's Chinese people researching Chinese culture and Chinese history must emphasize our self-awareness and self-understanding of being Chinese agents and be resolute in the construction of the agency of Chinese culture.

How does the new Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute hope to continue and develop? We use two phrases to express our position: Agent of China, Vision of the World. "Agent of China" emphasizes that Chinese people research the agency of understanding, underscores the Chinese people's knowledge of the culture of Chinese history, and straightforwardly highlights our own methods of understanding and studying ethnic culture. I think that the era of the Chinese people leading the study of China is slowly arriving. But, this Agent of China is not an isolated subject. We do not reject what is foreign, deny the outside world, or seal the door shut. "Vision of the World" is also the viewpoint of the old Tsinghua University *Guoxue* Institute that we adopt, and this vision makes us not only open to world sinology, but open to the entire academic world. As we study Chinese culture today, we not only have to absorb the fruits of sinology research and reach the level of sinology, we also have to absorb all of the nutrients that the top streams of Western humanities, philosophy, and sociology have to offer. We can use them to produce our own fruits of research, and guide the currents of the world, which means that we have to make our own streams confluent with those of the world, and become the mainstream. This is the will and aim that we should have for the new era of Chinese *guoxue* research.

# Appendices<sup>1</sup>

## Appendix A: Confucian Thought and Contemporary Society<sup>2</sup>

I'd like to thank the host for the introduction. Friends, everyone, good morning. Today, the topic I will be discussing is called "Confucian Thought and Contemporary Society." I think that among the thinkers of antiquity, it would be best to start with Laozi and Zhuangzi. The thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi is rather eccentric, it spurs one to consider questions from unthinkable places. For example, we all consider things from the positive side, they however remind us to consider things from the opposite side. This way of thinking can challenge our thinking habits and give us a fresh sense of things.

Confucian thought is not like this. One could say that it is bland and ordinary. When we speak of it, it is often considered commonplace. But why do we have to talk about these blandly ordinary and commonplace things today? There remains in all of this a principle of "the mean" or *zhongyong* 中庸? Everyone might think, is not "the mean" precisely the principle of the mean? Actually, there is a philosophical understanding of the word *zhongyong*. The character *yong* (庸) mostly means "mediocre," but the thinkers of the Han dynasty explain: *yong* refers to "function or use" (*yong* 用). In other words, it points to how you use it, and the using of the principle of the middle (*zhong* 中) is called *zhongyong*. "The middle" is a fundamental principle, which is China's ancient and very important wisdom. How to use this "middle" is precisely the mean (*zhongyong*). There was a great philosopher of the Song dynasty, Zhu Xi, of whose birth this year is the 880th anniversary. He explains the character *yong* in the following way: *yong* means common. Actually, in ancient texts *yong* also means enduring and constant. Zhu Xi emphasized the sense of common, thinking that only what is common can constantly endure, and only blandly ordinary things endure for long. He illustrates an example, stating that only plain tea and bland food can be consumed at every meal,

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<sup>1</sup>Translated by Chad Meyers. All translations from classic texts in this section follow James Legge, accessed from ctext.org, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup>Editor's (of the original Chinese version) note: This text is the compiled record of the author's keynote address at the State News Publishing Center.

everyday, every month, and every year without making one sick; so, only the most ordinary common things are the most long lasting things. This is a philosophical principle. Similarly, Confucian thought might seem to be composed of the most ordinary principles like respecting one's teachers and esteeming *dao* 道, being respectful to one's father and filial to one's children; who doesn't know these things? But it is these principles that are long lasting. Why is this point in Confucianism simultaneously easy and difficult to talk about? It is because we have to continuously analyze ordinary things, which is not easy to do. For instance, "to strengthen character, to set an example (*biaolü* 表率)" is an element of Confucianism, and *biaolü* is a Confucian concept; this element already marks in our thoughts and beliefs the presence of many things Confucian, it is just that we are all unaware of it.

## A.1 Confucian Culture

Confucian culture is a culture whose origins stem back from long ago and continues to endure. Confucianism is a school that was created by Confucius, who was born in 551 B.C.E. and who passed away in 479 B.C.E. More than 2500 years has passed since that time, because of which the school of Confucianism has a history of more than 2500 years. Such a long-enduring cultural tradition is rarely seen in the cultural history of the world. It is generally thought that a cultural tradition that has been passed down for so long must have the kernel of something classic within it or be a systematic set of classics, and this systematic set of classics also determines the principal features and character of this school. I think that this should be a distinctive feature that fits the Confucian tradition, so I begin my discussion about the distinctive feature of Confucian culture from the issue of its system of classics.

The first component of the Confucian system of classics is composed of the "five classics." The first of the five classics is *Shijing* 诗经 (Book of Poetry), which everyone knows about to some degree, specifically the love poems within the *Book of Poetry*, for instance, those of the type "for our prince she is a good mate." The second of the five is the *Shujing* 书经 (Book of History) also known as the *Shangshu* 尚书, which involves mainly the political texts of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties, but which later became the history of high antiquity that everyone reads. The third of the five is the *Yijing* 易经 (Book of Changes), which 20 some years ago was unheard of to most save a few, but today vendors line the streets up with books dedicated to it. It is an ancient book of divination that contains ancient philosophical thoughts. The fourth of the five is the *Lijing* 礼经 (Book of Rites); the "rites" at the time this book was written referred to rituals, etiquette, and social norms. The fifth of the five is the *Yuejing* 乐经 (Book of Music), which everyone knows the least about, because the *Book of Music* was not passed down further than the Qin empire, when Qin Shihuang 秦始皇 burned and banished Confucian texts. "Music" is a general concept here that contains songs and dances. The *Book of*

*Music* mainly affirms the importance of the “musical” part within the ritual and musical culture. Finally there is *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals), which is also called the *Chunqiujing* 春秋经 (Classic of Spring and Autumn); it records the history of the state of Lu, and as everyone knows, some of the most notable cultural events around Confucius’s life were his editing of the *Book of Poems* and his emending of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Do not these six literary contributions make “six classics” though? Actually, from pre-Qin to the later Han dynasty, there was originally the concept of “six classics,” but by the time of Han Wudi 汉武帝 the *Book of Music* did not exist, so Han Wudi established the five classics and formally devoted the powers of the state to acknowledge this set of our cultural classics and to assign specialists to research it.

Now what do the “five classics” or “six classics” have to do with Confucianism? What do the songs, music and dance, politics, history, and ancient thought of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties have to do with Confucianism? Why do they count as Confucian classics? It is because these texts were emended and recomposed by Confucius himself, who taught his students to treat the six classical works as their heart and marrow. If you were to compare Confucianism to the other schools of thought, you would discover an extremely important characteristic, which is that Confucianism posits the transmission of the six classics as the most essential cultural responsibility and mission. One cannot observe this phenomenon in Laozi or Zhuangzi, who have a thread of anti-civilization in them, which is not to say that their thought is entirely inaccessible. For instance, they stand for “returning to the simple and pure,” which is affirmable in many respects, but they think that civilization gets further removed from this pure essence the more it develops, because of which they oppose such things as the *Book of Poetry*, *Book of History*, and *Book of Rites*, which represent the development of civilization. Clearly, Daoism does not speak for the transmission of culture and civilization. Among the schools of pre-Qin philosophy, only Confucianism speaks of the transmission of culture. Confucius along with his students discussed such things as the “six classics” everyday. Before we did not know very much, but the last 20 years has seen a vast quantities of previously unknown unearthed materials that attest to this. For example, in the 1990s bamboo strips were discovered, which are records of Confucius, Zi Gong 子贡 and other students discussing the *Book of Changes*. Later, the Shanghai Museum publicly revealed unearthed writings of the warring states era that were bought back from Hong Kong. Including the first volume of Confucius’s *Book of Poetry*, where Confucius and his students discussed issues related to the *Book of Poetry*.

Confucianism is the main school that transmits the Xia, Shang, and Zhou civilizations. What did the early 70 Confucians and their followers speak about everyday? They spoke precisely about the issue of transmitting culture. This is very important. If culture was not transmitted, how would the history of this nation be written? So, a nation has history, but what is most important for a nation is not the continuous breathing of human beings on its soil, but a continuously consistent historical memory, which is the distinctive feature of our Chinese history. No other nation in the cultural history of the earth could compare to the Chinese nation when it comes to the enduring, continuous transmission of culture. What goes along with

this continuity is the political body upon which the carrying of this unbroken transmission of civilization and culture depends, and it has maintained its basic unity for several thousands of years. These two achievements are unique in the world. Some speak of Chinese culture being enduring, but in the world there is also another example which is long enduring, and that is Jewish culture, which has continued unbroken to the present day. But, has Jew culture had a fixed political body upon which it depends? No. The Jewish people have continuously migrated to various places in the world up to 1948, when the Zionist restoration of a Jewish state came about. The political body of Chinese civilization, whose foundation is the fertile areas around the Yangtze and Yellow River, has continuously broadened and integrated other areas, and although it has suffered wars it has never entirely been fractured or occupied by foreign peoples for any considerable length of time. This is hard to come by. Only a civilization with a massive force of fusion and cohesion can arrive at such results. Where does this force of fusion and cohesion come from? It comes precisely from our flatly ordinary Confucian culture. So, no one should look lightly at Confucianism discussing the issue of being humane and righteous, of observing ritual propriety, and being wise. No one should look lightly at Confucianism speaking about observing filial piety and loving one's kin. These are precisely the fundamental things out of which the Chinese people gain this force of cohesion and fusion. Compared to the canonical texts of other schools, the Confucian classics also have another distinctive feature, which is that the five or six classics forming the core system of classics that Confucianism transmits are not a religious canon of one school or trend but a canon of civilization, that is, the canon of the Chinese civilization, and this point has very important significance.

The “five classics” system gradually started to expand after the Han dynasties from “seven classics” and “nine classics” to “thirteen classics,” in the process of which the *Liji* 礼记 (Record of Rites) was added. *Book of Rites* was preserved in the form of “rituals” during the Han dynasties, and the peoples of the Han dynasty also gathered together the pre-Qin interpretations of the *Book of Rites*, which tied together became the *Record of Rites*. What were called “records” (ji 记) were not called “classics” (jing 经), but were supplementary readers on the classics. For the *Spring and Autumn Annals* there were three *zhuan* 转, which are interpretations and explanations. Later, the three *zhuan* of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* slowly entered the system of classics. In addition, although the *Lunyu* 论语 (Analects of Confucius) and *Xiaojing* 孝经 (Book of Filial Piety) were not considered classics in the Han dynasties, they did however have the status of classics. *Er Ya* 尔雅 was a dictionary, and because studying the classics requires the use of an ancient dictionary, it also entered the systematic body of classics. When the Song dynasty came about, the *Mengzi* 孟子 (Mencius) entered the system of classics as well. Today we see thirteen classics, which aside from including the five previously mentioned classics also includes the *Record of Rites*, the *Chunqiu sanzhuo* 春秋三传 (Three Commentaries on the Spring and Autumn Annals), the *Er Ya* dictionary, *The Analects*, *Book of Filial Piety*, and the *Mencius*. Among these, the *Record of Rites* was a set of explanations of the *Book of Rites*, the *Three Commentaries on the Spring and Autumn Annals* were explanations of *The Spring and Autumn Annals*,

and *The Analects*, *Book of Filial Piety*, and the *Mencius* were all pre-Qin Confucianism, which aside from adding a little bit of new content were founded on the culture of the core “five classics.”

This situation persisted up through the Song dynasty, after which there was a slight change. For 2500 years our systematic body of classics was composed predominantly of Confucian classics up until the Tang dynasty. These classics were matched with a representative persona and character that we call “Confucius of Zhou.” When we speak today of Confucianism as “the *dao* [way] of Confucius and Mencius,” this is a wording that arose later. From the Han dynasties to the Tang dynasty, people did not talk about the *dao* of Confucius and Mencius, but of the *dao* of Confucius of Zhou, where Zhou means Duke of Zhou. The main part of the thought of the Duke of Zhou was preserved in the *Book of History*. But after the Song dynasty, in parallel with the five classics of Confucianism there emerged a new systematic set of classics whose status transcended even that of the five classics themselves. We are speaking here of the “Four Books,” that is, *The Analects*, *Daxue* 大学 (The Great Learning), *Zhongyong* 中庸 (The Doctrine of the Mean), and the *Mencius*; they were put in this order not without reason, because *The Analects* were the teachings of Confucius, *The Great Learning* is thought to have been written by the student of Confucius, Zengzi 曾子, who wrote this work in the effort to unfold the thought of Confucius, *The Great Learning* is some of the basic thought of the nephew of Confucius, Zi Si 子思, and Mencius himself was the student of the student of Zi Si. It was Zhu Xi of the Southern Song who first integrated these four works under the name of “Four Books,” which went unchanged after the Yuan dynasty. It was Zhu Xi himself who wrote the famous book called *Sishu jizhu* 四书集注 (Collected Commentaries on the Four Books); it was a great achievement, but in his later years Zhu Xi was miserable, because the court attacked him at the time, labeling him the chief of false teaching. Ten or so years after his death, Song Lizong 宋理宗 told the son of Zhu Xi that his father had written the most excellent book. Later the Yuan dynasty would officially make his *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books* the answers to the official examination questions, which did not change through the Ming and Qing dynasties. This was not only the case for China but for Korea as well. Continuously up to the 19th century, the entire canonical thought of the Korean Wang dynasty was Zhu Xi’s explanations found in the *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books*. Throughout the four dynasties—Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing—the status of *The Four Books* rose higher and higher. Where is the principle behind this? We know that the *Bible* is composed of two distinct books, *The Old Testament* and *The New Testament*, and in some ways the distinction between “the five classics” and “the four books” is like that between *The Old Testament* and *The New Testament*. *The Old Testament* contains a lot of songs, rituals and historical things, while *The New Testament* focuses entirely on moral instructions, which is the same in the case of “the four books.” Zhu Xi had spoken about this, likening the “five classics” to coarse grains and the “four books” to the cooked food; one must refine the “five classics” before consuming them. The “five classics” contain a lot of inessential things, while the “four books” are the essentials. Such a transformation would happen to any religion, which is to say that the parts containing the core values will be emphasized while the parts that do not bear any

direct relation with the core values will slowly fade out of the system. This is why the *Four Books* have acquired such status. This is also the reason why we may say that the *Four Books* embody the core values of the Chinese people.

Confucian thought represents the core values of the Chinese people, values which correspond to the historical-cultural circumstances and existential conditions of the Chinese people. Confucian thought is fused together with the historical environment, historical conditions, means of production, and means of affiliation of the Chinese people's existence, which makes it suited to the social needs of China at the time and is the reason it became the subjective part of Chinese culture. But then again, what would it mean not to suit the needs of Chinese culture? Some cultures, it is true, cannot be said to be entirely unsuitable to such needs, but comparisons could be made. For example, when Buddhism as a religion was brought into Chinese culture, it was not native to China, but this is not to say that things that are not native to a culture cannot be accepted by the native culture; such things simply have to undergo a process of selection to see if they suit the needs of this culture or not. Since Chinese society has been an agricultural society for a long time, and moreover, a rural patriarchal clan society, it was a living community in the main form of the family. China has also been a centralized state. Buddhism is a monastic religion and Chinese people call Buddhists "those who leave the family" because they have to leave the community of the family, which for Chinese culture offers quite a challenging blow. Because of this, after Buddhism entered China it always conflicted with the native culture, but it also integrated into the native culture at the same time; one of the most important parts of this process was Buddhism slowly nodding to Chinese culture and accepting "filial piety" and "loyalty." At first Buddhism did not accept "filial piety," which represents the cultural values of the family, because Buddhism did not accept any values of entering the social world; its aim is to leave "this world," which is precisely your social relations. The essence of human beings is precisely social relations, but Buddhism wants human beings to free themselves of all social relations, to leave one's parents, to abandon one's wife and children, to detach oneself from political society, and to recede into the mountains to cultivate one's path. Of course, Buddhism has its principle, that is, one can only reach the highest state of mind by first detaching oneself from these social relations and purely cultivating oneself; this is to speak about it from the perspective of cultivating one's path. If we were to speak about it from the ontological perspective, then we would say that Buddhism believes these relations are not real things, that they are fake illusory things, and even that human life is illusory and empty. Does this set of thoughts suit the needs of the mainstream of Chinese society? Could such values become the mainstream values of Chinese society? If Chinese society were originally empty, then perhaps Buddhism could enter it and become the main thought of this society, but Chinese society has its own native culture, which is predominantly that of Confucianism, which continuously critiqued Buddhism with great intensity, emphasizing that Confucianism itself speaks about cultivating oneself, bringing order to the family, regulating the nation, and balancing the world, while Buddhism only speaks about



cultivating oneself, and for that reason does not suit Chinese society. This is the reason I argue that Confucianism suits the needs of Chinese society, and therefore became the main subject of Chinese culture. Beginning from pre-Qin and the two Han dynasties Confucianism continuously transmitted the classics of Chinese civilization all the way until the latter part of the 19th century, so Confucianism plays an important role in the transmission of Chinese culture. If we were to look at it from the perspective of the spirit of the people, the spirit of the Chinese people could be said to be made out of the cultural commonality of different brotherhoods of people, but if we look at it with regard to the guiding of the spirit of the Chinese people, then we would have to say that it has been the culture and values of Confucianism that has played the most important and indispensable role in the shaping of the spirit of the Chinese people.

The last point is that in the last several thousand years of development of Chinese culture the founder of Confucianism, Confucius, has already become the mark of the spirit of Chinese civilization; specifically in the remaking of Chinese civilization since the modern age. If we were to ask the millions of overseas Chinese people about what is the mark of the spirit of Chinese civilization, the answer would basically be the same across the board, which is that it is Confucius. The issue of Confucius is already more than just one about a single person, for he has already been given the connotation of being the mark of the spirit of the Chinese people in history. So, we are very serious when we deal with Confucius today, and cannot simply treat him as a general historical figure.

## A.2 The Political Thought of Confucianism

As regards the political thought of Confucianism, we may talk about five distinct points: first, it is based on human beings; second, it is based on the people; third it is based on governing with virtue; fourth, it is based on cultivating oneself; fifth, it is based on the family.

As regards the first point of “being based on human beings,” this wording was not actually first brought up by the Confucian school, but is first found in the *Guanzi* 管子 (Book of Master Guan), which is a rather scattered text containing a lot of Confucian thought. We could say that the thought of “being based on human beings” continuously developed since the Western Zhou dynasty, and encompassed several meanings. First it concerns the relation of human beings and spirits, which is a very important development, because at that early age the trend of humanism was able to conquer the forces of religion, which was an important source that made the continuous development of Chinese civilization possible. All ancient religions deal with respecting heaven and gods above all else, but during the few hundred years between the Western Zhou dynasty and the Spring and Autumn period, the thought that ended up developing continuously was rather that human beings were more important than gods. In the Spring and Autumn period there was a saying: “the people are the masters of the gods” which means that the people are the agents

of the gods and that gods depend on human beings, that the gods have to do things in accordance with human demands and human will, which is the precise embodiment of what the thought of “being based on human beings” means in terms of the relationship of gods and human beings. Secondly, in early Confucian thought there were also discussions about the relationship of institutions and human beings, the most typical of which is found in the *Xunzi* 荀子 (Book of Master Xun) which states “there is regulating human beings, but no regulating laws.”<sup>3</sup> (12.1) This is to say that even if laws are nearly perfect [social order] still depends on people. The *Xunzi* also states, “laws cannot stand on their own, statutes cannot carry themselves out,”<sup>4</sup> (12.1) which means laws cannot enforce themselves. They survive if they catch on in the lawful human being and disappear when the lawful human being is lost, which means that only when there is the superior human being to enforce the law can the best law exercise a positive role. This is also a form of “being based on human beings,” what we call “human rule.” Today we say that the thought of human rule must be critiqued in many respects, but we have to say that it is a thought of “being based on human beings.” Finally, the evaluative orientation of positing human beings as the basis is the tendency to treat as important interpersonal relationships rather than just speaking about individual persons. This is also to say that a person not only must govern herself, but must also consider interpersonal relationships. These three cases are the three connotations of positing human beings as the basis in Confucian political thought.

The second point of being “people based” demonstrates that only speaking about positing human beings as the basis is still rather abstract. For example, the relationship between humans and gods is a religious relationship. The relationship between humans and institutions is a political relationship. And interpersonal relationships are sociological relationships. But in ancient China the emphasis was on actual relationships and specifically the aspect of political regulation, so the issue of “the people” was more pronounced. Everyone still talks about this issue today. In our new age of centralized leadership we have a way of wording it. For example, Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 worded it “love the people,” and recently everyone finds importance in the issue of “the livelihood of the people” and political policies that “treat the people as family,” which shows that the political values that today’s collective leadership esteems are directly related to the “people based” thought of traditional Confucianism. This “people based” thinking is ancient. In the *Book of History* there is a chapter called “*tai shi*” 泰誓, which is based on Shang dynasty thought that may have been modified by those in the Zhou dynasty. It states, “the heavens must follow that which the people desire,” which means that god must necessarily go along with what the people desire. We accepted that there was a god, but rather than possessing an independent will, this god’s will was the will of the people. This religious understanding of heaven already made it into the will of the people, which is a distinctively Chinese characteristic. There is an even more

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<sup>3</sup>Translator’s translation.

<sup>4</sup>See Footnote 3.

ancient chapter in the *Book of History* that is called “*wuzi zhi ge*” 五子之歌, which states “the people are the only basis of the city-state,” which means that the basis of the state is in the people; this is the embodiment of people based thinking as well.

Confucianism inherited these three dynasties of people based thinking, which is most pronounced in the *Mencius*. Everyone knows about the one story where Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 reads the *Mencius* and gets extremely angry, because in the *Mencius* there are so many places where “people based” thinking appears, and relatively speaking the role of the prince is somewhat marginalized. The most typical example is that saying, “the people are the most valuable, the god of the land is second, and the prince is less important.” As soon as Zhu Yuanzhang saw this he had to stop reading and found an important minister to delete such discussions from the *Mencius*. He originally wanted to take the memorial tablet of Mencius out of the Confucius temple, but the great ministers filling the court kneeled on the ground but would not get up, saying that this would not do. This is precisely the contrast of political authority and moral values. Zhu Yuanzhang wanted to use political authority to cut moral values out of the picture, but this would not work, none of the great masters would not have it, and ultimately had to reedit a new version of the *Mencius* called *Mengzi Jiewen* 孟子节文 (Selected Writings of the Mencius), but this of course did not last long; later, the Ming dynasty emperor no longer made a big deal about these issues. Clearly, “people based” thinking is a foundation of Confucian political thought with deep historical sources rooted deeply in the human heart.

The thought of separating good governance and good teaching in the *Mencius* also manifests the people based thinking of Confucianism. He states that good governance is less important than getting a hold of the people with good teaching. Good governance means regulating in perfect order, while good teaching means being good at cultivating the people, which are two different kinds of ways of political governing. The “good” in good governing is effective regulating that can make people fear and obey the order and obey the order, but good teaching is to make people love the order. He states that the property of the people is acquired through good governing while the hearts of the people are acquired through good teaching. There is an old saying, that “he who gets the hearts of the people acquires the world,” which is an ordinary and bland statement, but this is also precisely an extremely important belief of Confucianism. This belief sees attaining hearts of the people and obtaining the support of the people as the highest state of mind and greatest accomplishment of political governance, which is different from simply controlling the people in the instrumental sense and establishing a political order. We today of course do not necessarily have to do whatever Confucius and Mencius said no matter what, but the influence of their thought on Chinese people is extremely significant, and the people will also judge political success and failure and highs and lows from this perspective. This is precisely an influence and constraint that political culture, as values, has on politics. So the significance of traditional culture should not be underestimated.

The third point is positing the “rule of virtue” as the basis. “Human based” thinking and “people based” thinking already emerged during the Western Zhou

and the Spring and Autumn period, but “the rule of virtue based thinking” was only explicitly brought about by Confucius. The model of political regulation underwent a big transformation, and I think this transformation in thought started to be brought about with Confucius. He stated, “If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good.” (2.3) The “led by” in the first part means using political orders and policies to lead the people. Uniformity here refers to normativity, and to bring about uniformity by means of punishment, but what would the result be if punishment was used to regulate society? The people will try to avoid it but have no sense of shame. “Avoiding” here means that the people might not do things that are out of line, but they will not develop a sense of shame. Clearly, Confucius always thinks that the good regulation of society not only depends on stipulations and punishments to make society orderly. The people also need to develop a sense of shame. How would such a society be reached? He asserts that leading by virtue and seeking uniformity through observing ritual propriety will bring about a sense of shame and good character in the people. This is to say that using morality to lead the people is to instruct people with teaching. Observing ritual propriety is precisely following the ritual order, which could be slowly internalized and used to order society while developing in people a sense of shame and good character, which means not being out of line in one’s behavior while also having a sense of shame inside. Confucius’s method of regulating the state with virtue and ritual propriety is an appeal to non-legal means that use rituals and moral cultivation as the main avenues for regulating society. Why use these means? Because his ideal of political governance is not pure and simple order, but a society with a sense of shame, which is certainly very plain and ordinary, but this is the Confucian ideal that stresses the significance of spiritual civilization in a political society.

Today this type of thinking seems to everyone rather commonplace, but at the time it was a paradigm shift. Prior to Confucius, the main train of thought in political governance was always to issue political orders and laws of punishment to control society, which changed with Confucius, whose words were pointed directly against this system. Since the Shang dynasty, the majority of cases involved the issuing of stipulations to lead and the model of punishment as means of prohibition to control society. The stipulations were modified when this system ran into problems, but theoretically speaking no normative models were posited until Confucius, who asked shall we “rule the state with virtue” or “rule the state with punishment?” As we look at Chinese history and specifically the era of Confucius, in the period following the Spring and Autumn age the majority of states’ reforms were directed at using punishments to rule the state and though this gradually transformed into the reliance on laws to regulate society, for Confucius, this made people develop no sense of shame. For this reason, Confucius’ thought not only had actual meaning it also had transcendent meaning, transcending the model of using punishment to rule the state. From a broader perspective, in this thought one can see a relationship between virtue and force, namely, the question of whether to make

people submit with virtue or make people submit by force. In the *Mencius*, it states, “When one by force subdues men, they do not submit to him in heart. They submit, because their strength is not adequate to resist. When one subdues men by virtue, in their hearts’ core they are pleased, and sincerely submit.” (2A3) In *The Analects* Duke Ai 哀公 asks, “What should be done in order to secure the submission of the people?” (2.19) Theories of Western political science believe that submission is an important issue of political science, and that the relationship between command and submission is the main political relationship. But the path of Confucianism challenges this thought of seeing command and submission as the predominant political relationship, and revolves around the notion that good governance is not as important as good teaching, that making people submit by force is not as good as making people submit with virtue. Xunzi later stated that “he who combines people with virtue is a king; he who combines people by force is weak, and he who combines people with wealth is base.” This early Confucian political thought based on the rule of virtue was actually paradigm shifting at the time.

The fourth point is thinking based on self-cultivation, which was also a paradigm shift. There is a saying in *The Analects*, “To govern means to rectify,” (12.17) which seems to set a definition for political governance: political governance is rectifying and prescribing. Confucius continues, “To govern means to rectify. If you lead on the people with correctness, who will dare not to be correct?” (12.17) Leading is precisely setting an example or precedence. The one he is speaking to is a ruler of a vassal state, so what he means is that as a ruler who first sets things right, who would dare to not be right. Later he states, “When a prince’s personal conduct is correct, his government is effective without the issuing of orders. If his personal conduct is not correct, he may issue orders, but they will not be followed.” (13.6) And “If a minister make his own conduct correct, what difficulty will he have in assisting in government? If he cannot rectify himself, what has he to do with rectifying others?” (13.13) This is a rhetorical question; Confucius means that if one can rectify oneself then they should be able to govern without great difficulty. When he says, “If he cannot rectify himself, what has he to do with rectifying others?” (13.13) Confucius means that if you cannot rectify yourself, what business do you have rectifying others?

This thought still seems bland and commonplace when we speak of it. Sun Zhongshan 孙中山 once defined political governance saying it is precisely the issue of regulating the masses of people, politics is precisely an affair of the masses of people. A similar wording is found in Ancient China. The *Zuo Zhuan* 左传 (Commentaries of the Zuo) states, “politics is for regulating the people,”<sup>5</sup> (1.11.2) but this wording is not entirely the same as that of Sun Zhongshan, who speaks about the issue of regulating the masses of people, while “politics is for regulating the people” speaks of controlling the people; these are two different concepts. Controlling people is to make people obey the letter of the law, and the issue of regulating the masses of people means taking care of their affairs in the sense of a

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<sup>5</sup>See Footnote 3.

government in public service. But the ancient politics prior to Confucius engaged politics in order to rectify the people and govern the people, which are notions from the middle and early periods of the Spring and Autumn Era. Confucius however speaks of things of the late Spring and Autumn Era, which represent a shift, and this saying that politics is about setting things right is actually not necessarily an invention of Confucius but rather Confucius explicating a previously existing understanding of politics, the Spring and Autumn Era's understanding of politics. But, what does setting things right mean? What does political governance set right in this understanding? Political governance corrects the people. The idea that "political governance is setting right" is originally a traditional concept of politics that thinks the essence of politics is prescribing, regulating, and correcting the people, but Confucius' interpretation is the reverse. He thinks what should be set right is oneself, which means that the ruler should correct himself. This transformation from correcting other people to correcting oneself is a new interpretation of the *dao* of political governance. For Confucius essence of political governance is no longer understood as correcting other people, but as correcting oneself, and rectifying oneself means first setting an example. This thinking based on self-cultivation is stated in even clearer fashion in *The Great Learning*, which states, "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." (2) For Confucianism setting an example and expressing a model is a most fundamental belief, which means that the leader is able to posit himself as the standard, and plays the role of setting an example. Accordingly, those led will naturally act inline with the ruler's model. Obviously, this thought is based on self-cultivation, which seems flatly ordinary, but from the perspective of the development of its history, it is historically revolutionary, even though after passing through the revolution it sedimented into the tradition of Confucian political thought.

The fifth point is "family based thinking." With respect to political regulation, Confucianism also finds the role of the family central. Mencius states, "The root of the kingdom is in the State. The root of the State is in the family." (*Mencius* 4A5) Here Mencius sees the family, the state, and the united world as a continuous structure, where the principle of the family is used in the state and the principle of the state is applied to the unified world. In antiquity, and in particular during the Spring and Autumn Warring States Period, the family is a big family; the ancients carried out the institutional system of enfeoffment, whereby the Son of Heaven granted territory to ministers, who granted territory to senior officials, who granted land to officers, who granted land to families. Because of this the family was a territorial unit of enfeoffment, which had the same political structure as those of the bigger units. The family prior to this was responsible for the aristocratic clan of the next higher class, but after the Han dynasties, every family changed status to stand face to face with the central government, this gene of culture was continuously strengthened, and the family was always seen as the foundation of the state. The political thought of antiquity did not see the family as the private domain and the state as the public domain nor did it strictly separate the private and the public; rather it always saw the family as something isomorphic with the state. We

commonly say “the loyal minister grows out of a family of filial sons.” If you are not filial to your father how could anyone expect you to be loyal to your ruler or nation in activities of state? Although filial propriety is only practical family morals, it shows that this person has more universal awareness of what is morally right; on the surface, it is loyalty to one’s family, but in actuality it is that kind of self-dedication to moral commitments, which, when in a different arena, makes one capable of giving oneself to moral commitments.

These five features of Confucian political thought make us reflect on the political ideas of the Daoists, who state, “govern through non-assertive action (*wuwei er zhi* 无为而治).”<sup>6</sup> I think this “govern through non-assertive action” is not a concept that Confucianism rejects, but Confucianism has its own understanding of what it means.<sup>7</sup> Confucius states: “May not Shun be instanced as having governed efficiently assertive action?” (15.5; Legge’s translation slightly modified) Confucius thinks that Shun is an example of “governing through non-assertive action.” Confucianism posits Yao and Shun as the paradigm sage kings. Yao and Shun possess the affective mindset of humanity, and it is Shun that governs through acting non-assertively; later he states, “What did he do? He did nothing but gravely and reverently occupy his royal seat.” (15.5) For Confucius “to govern by acting non-assertively” means not letting oneself interfere with people. The old type of thinking was based on correcting people by interfering with them, and Confucius is demanding a shift from correcting people to correcting oneself; playing the positive role of setting an example under the condition of not interfering with the people. This is “acting non-assertively” in Confucianism’s understanding. In addition, Mencius also proposes, “Let a man not do what his own sense of righteousness tells him not to do, and let him not desire what his sense of righteousness tells him not to desire - to act thus is all he has to do,” (7A17) which is obviously a response to Daoism. Here, acting non-assertively means putting no effort into doing things that one should not do, it does not mean not doing nothing at all. This is precisely Confucianism’s understanding of acting without effort (or non-assertively); on the one hand it means reverently rectifying oneself, cultivating oneself, and promoting virtue by setting a moral example; on the other hand, it means doing away with desires one shouldn’t have, not doing those things one shouldn’t do, etc. This is certainly a contrast.

Another contrast is Confucianism’s take on the ruler. Many people have a commonly held notion, believing that Confucianism talks about the ruler being a ruler, the minister a minister, the father a father, and the son a son, which is thought praising rulership, and this is untrue, which historical analysis will clarify. In *The Analects*, the line “There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son” (12.11) is actually Confucius’ response when faced with questions put forward by the ruler of a vassal

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<sup>6</sup>See Footnote 3.

<sup>7</sup>Translator’s note: This sentence actually first appears in *The Analects* (15.5), before it occurs in any Daoist texts.

state of that time, and this response includes a critique of this ruler. In those times, [some] rulers were not being rulers, [some] ministers were not being ministers, [some] fathers were not being fathers, and [some] sons were not being sons. The whole political order was falling apart along with all of the ethical relationships. The ruler who was questioning Confucius illegally destroyed the pre-existing political and ethical relationships in order to become the ruler. Confucius' statement thus actually carries an air of irony. In *The Analects*, he also discusses some doctrines of rulership relations. For example, the Duke Ding 定公 asked Confucius "whether there was a single sentence which could make a country prosperous" and Confucius responds "Such an effect cannot be expected from one sentence." (*Analects* 13.15) In other words, a saying could not so simply have such an effect, and one needs to consider the situation. For example, Duke Ding also says, "I have no pleasure in being a prince, but only in that no one can offer any opposition to what I say!" Confucius then responds: "If a ruler's words be good, is it not also good that no one oppose them? But if they are not good, and no one opposes them, may there not be expected from this one sentence the ruin of his country?" (*Analects* 13.15) In other words, if what you are saying is a good saying, and it is good for the state, and no one else dares oppose what you are saying, then of course this is acceptable. But on the other hand, if what you say is bad for the nation, and ministers and subjects dare not oppose, is this not one saying that destroys the country? Confucius is critiquing Duke Ding's mentality that allows him to think that the ruler can destroy the state with one saying. I am just using these two examples to respond to Daoism's idea of ruling the state and their critique of Confucianism.

### A.3 Confucianism's View of Human Life

In the history of China, Confucianism has had an important effect on the understanding of China's political system, political practice, and political culture. At the same time, Confucianism also offered fundamental values to Chinese society and the Chinese people, and values are predominantly embodied in an attitude towards human life and ideals of human life. Let us look at a few examples.

First is the issue of an attitude toward human life. We have a few sayings, act assertively, inclusive harmony, these express the *dao* of the mean, which is said in comparison with other thoughts. For example, these sayings are in contrast to Laozi, who did not speak of strong assertiveness but of another type of thought, namely, weak suppleness, which is also meaningful. However, the attitude toward life that Confucianism speaks of is actually strong assertive action. For example, in the *Classic of Changes* there are two statements: "The motion of the heavens is assertive, in accordance with which the superior human being strengthens his own activity ceaselessly. The propensity of the earth is what is denoted by *kun*, in



accordance with which the superior human being deepens his own virtue in supporting things.”<sup>8</sup> (1.1) The motion of the heavens is firmly assertive, and the superior person must imitate this in acting with firmly assertive effort, strengthening his own action ceaselessly; the propensity of the earth, being *kun*, is the heavy depth of the earth, and deepening virtue to support things means being broadly embracing and harmonious. This is the attitude towards life that Confucianism promotes. Confucianism does, of course, also speak of the *dao* of the mean, which means staying away from extremes, skewing things neither this way nor that, which is another distinctive feature of the thought and attitude towards life that Confucianism speaks about. Some very deep thoughts we call one-sidedly deep, while Confucian thought is depth in blandness, enduring in what is ordinary. The one-sided depth about which I am speaking is actually relatively easy to reach, but to speak deeply in blandness requires a much higher level. This thought of the mean is also embodied in written works, for example, “the middle is the great root of everything under heaven, harmony is reaching the broadest way (*dao*).” (*The Doctrine of the Mean* 33) The middle path and the harmonious path are important concepts in Confucianism’s view of human life. To take the middle path is to stay away from extremes by seeking the whole-sided rather than one-sided manifestation of one’s own life through what is inclusive, just, and even. This is precisely the Confucian view of human life, which I think is capable of becoming the mainstream view of human life. Other views of human life cannot expect to be upheld by the whole of society, which is to say that they differ in their degree of universality.

The second issue is moral ideals. We also have a few sayings, public, private, right and good; those who uphold the official’s life; and the ideal of the superior human being. The first saying is public, private, right and good. Confucianism believes that in morality the most important issue concerns how to fix the relationship between public and private on the one hand, and that between what is right and what is good on the other. What is right represents the principle of moral right (*daoyi* 道义), while what is good is the totality of what is beneficial. What is public is the greater collective good and also the duties of public servants, while what is private is the good of our individual smaller families. The Song dynasty scholars talked about what public and private means. The public/private distinction is precisely the right/good distinction; what is the right/good distinction? It is the public/private distinction. I think this question about what is public and what private is not the question about what is right and what is good, which everyone runs into. It is much rather the question that public servants and leaders of the state bump into. The reason the ancients would take the distinction between the public and private spheres so seriously is because its target was the *shidafu* (士大夫), which in Chinese is the term that refers to someone from the intellectual class (*shi* 士) who has official (*dafu* 大夫) responsibilities in the spheres of bureaucratic regulation. Such persons were most likely to run into issues involving the private/public distinction. We may look at what the ancients called the “virtue of the official;” this

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<sup>8</sup>See Footnote 3.

basically meant “using the public to snuff out the private,” which is a saying that appears in the *The Book of History*. In ancient times, publicizing what is private and justifying what is good was said in reference to officials of the intellectual class rather than to ordinary people. In other words, it does not mean that ordinary people ought not to have a private life or profit. Confucius also said that “Yao and Shun cannot do away with the selfish desires of the people,”<sup>9</sup> which means that Yao and Shun, as sage-kings, cannot make the people have no selfish mindset or profit. This is very profound. In our past era of the commune no room was left for the self, which is to say that the people were not allowed to have selfish desires. However, the result in practice shows that this path is a dead end. The correct method is to “go along with what the people find beneficial and benefit them.”<sup>10</sup> (*The Analects* 20.2) This means that the people demand some kind of profitable benefit, on the basis of which you should make them capable of reaping it. So, to say that Confucianism opposes private profit in favor of the more righteous public interest is incorrect.

The second point concerns the determined scholar-official and humane (*ren* 仁) person, which sets the standard quite high. Confucius states, “The determined scholar and the humane person will not seek to live at the expense of injuring their virtue. They will even sacrifice their lives to preserve their virtue complete.” (15.9; Legge’s translation is slightly modified) “Humanness” here represents the moral ideal, which is a universal principle and a demand in the moral sphere. It stipulates that we must be capable of daring to dedicate our lives to completely realizing the moral ideal when faced with serious moral problems. This is the Confucian spirit, a positive spirit. With respect to moral ideals, Confucianism takes the development of free and independent human character very seriously; it is not at all like what some people say, namely, that Confucianism only makes people docile in the face of the hierarchy of command. Confucius states that if you are a minister, you only follow those of higher rank and your lord as a basic principle, which is called the way of women (*qiefu zhi dao* 妾妇之道) not the way of great men. What is the way of great men? It is what Mencius declared,

To dwell in the wide house of the world, to stand in the correct seat of the world, and to walk in the great path of the world; when he obtains his desire for office, to practise his principles for the good of the people; and when that desire is disappointed, to practise them alone; to be above the power of riches and honours to make dissipated, of poverty and mean condition to make swerve from principle, and of power and force to make bend - these characteristics constitute the great man. (3B7)

The way of great men is not the same as the way of women, and it was Confucius who posited the way of women as the way of the minister, not Mencius, who opposed this, asserting that to be a minister one must uphold the character of great men.

The third point concerns the ideal of the superior human being (*junzi lixiang* 君子理想), which brings us to universal values. What is the most universal value?

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<sup>9</sup>Translator’s note: This sentence is actually from *Xunzi* 27.61; the translation is my own.

<sup>10</sup>See Footnote 3.

I think it is the value and ethical principle of being-humane. The ethical principle of being-humane is expressed in *The Analects* as the way of compassion (*zhongshu zhi dao* 忠恕之道). In *The Analects* it is stated that Confucius once said to Zengzi “my doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity.” (4.15) This is to say that we have many thoughts, but there must be a basic principle which pierces through them all and links them together. Zengzi responds saying he understands, then Confucius left, but his other followers still do not understand, so Zengzi explains it to them, saying, “the master’s principle is sincere compassion and that is it.”<sup>11</sup> (4.15) This principle that links everything together along one thread is compassion. Later, Zi Gong asks, is there one saying which one may dedicate one’s whole life to in practicing it? Confucius states, “It is one’s compassion! What one does not desire, do not do it unto others.”<sup>12</sup> (15.24) And again another time, Zi Gong asks, supposing there were such a person who extensively acted upon the people in a way that was beneficial such that he was able to help the multitude, would this be called being-humane? Confucius responds saying that this person is not only being-humane, he is nearly a sage, and that it is hard to say whether or not the emperors Yao and Shun were able to do that well. Later, when asked, what is being-humane? Confucius responds, “Now the humane person, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others.” (20.30; Legge’s translation is slightly modified) These sayings embody the principle of what we call loyal compassion, and the universal principle of humaneness. Concretely speaking, being-compassionate is not doing unto others what you do not desire to be done to yourself, while being-loyal is desiring to take one’s stand in standing for other human beings and getting others to attain what oneself desires to attain. In ethics the principle of compassion to not do unto others what you do not want done to yourself is called the silver rule. The golden rule is “do unto others as you would want done to yourself.” This idea has transformed greatly in the past 20 years. At the end of the 1980s, there was a catholic theologian whose opinion was that among the hot issues since the 20th century the most important has been that of war and peace, and that underneath the sensitive point of every war is a religious problem. He brought up a slogan saying that without religious peace no world peace is possible. How is peace between religions attained? Precisely through the train of thought in religious studies I was just talking about, which is first looking in the classical texts of different religions for those things which are the most basic and common to all of us. This basic common ideas are precisely what a universal value is, but could we find such a common understanding, and starting from here, expand the cooperation of religious peace and attain world peace? Due to this pressing question he started to cooperate with an American ethicist in the desire to start the first world religions conference. Historically speaking, the world’s first religions conference was convened in 1895 in Chicago. In 1994, nearly one hundred years later in, there was a new world religions conference (also in the US), at which more

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<sup>11</sup>See Footnote 3.

<sup>12</sup>See Footnote 3.

than 100 religious organizations brought forward their own religious canons. The result of this conference was the finding of common sensibilities. This common sensibility is precisely “do not do unto others what you would not want done to yourself,” which became the golden rule of world religions. We could call it the world’s universal golden rule of ethical relations.

This saying “do not do unto others what you would not want done to yourself” seems a bit passive, but looking at it from our new perspective today, that attitude of forcing things onto others in intercultural relations, international relations, and interethnic relations is extremely dangerous. To be able to desist from doing unto others what you would not want done to yourself, and seeking harmony through tolerance, is the most viable alternative. On the list of all of the religious canons that record this principle, the first in history was Zoroastrianism, which in 800 B.C. E. recorded this principle rather vaguely. The most clearest expression of this principle is the second one recorded in history, is found in the *The Analects*, which states, “not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself.” (12.2) For this reason, this Western catholic theologian started to boldly use the character *ren* 仁 (humaneness) and spoke out for *renxue* 仁学 (the study of what is humane), and this *renxue* was tightly bound to the study of relations with others. This represents an important shift in modern thought, which shows an important influence that Confucianism has had upon modern thought. Of course, in addition to not doing unto others what you do not want done to yourself, there is also the important significance of wishing to take your stand in standing for others and getting others to attain what you yourself wish to attain, which we must champion as we face the great disparity between Eastern and Western development. We must advocate the wish to take one’s stand in standing for others and getting others to attain what one wishes to attain from the perspective of the developed regions. This formulation is what we call being-loyal, but it also falls under being-humane, so being-humane is the principle of loyalty and compassion, which is not only, for Confucius, a fundamental principle that links everything together along one thread, but should be the universal law with the greatest capacity for universalization as well.

The fourth point is the practical orientation of Confucianism, that is, the integration of knowledge and practice, which was most fully formulated in the thought of the Ming dynasty philosopher, Wang Yangming 王阳明. We can cite one paragraph from his works. He states that people during his day take knowledge and practice as two separate affairs, thinking erroneously that knowing beforehand and thereafter acting is correct. I first go to seek knowledge, wait until I know, and then act. Wang Yangming asserts that this does not work. He holds that the practical result is practicing nothing one’s whole life and knowing nothing by the end of one’s life, because knowledge is forever inexhaustible, and therefore practice is forever incapable of realizing it. He is criticizing Zhu Xi, who spoke for knowing beforehand and practicing thereafter. Wang Yangming was pointing to the state of the Ming dynasty, saying that the effect of Zhu Xi’s thought had been bad. Zhu Xi placed practice in front along with knowledge and spoke for the combined unity of knowing and practicing. Wang Yangming thought that his theory that knowledge and practice ought to be combined was medicine for social ills that were not

invented by himself. The unification of knowledge and practice is a very important tradition in the practice of Chinese Confucianism.

The fifth point is the ultimate concern of Confucianism. It is the concept of integrating the natural and the human into one (*tian ren he yi* 天人合一), which consists of the harmony of nature and human beings, the common essence shared by the universe, all creatures, the human species, and the laws common to all of them. All of the ancients, including the Confucian and Daoists, thought that the laws of the bigger universe and those of the smaller human universe were consistently one and the same, by virtue of which it could be said that nature and human beings are not separate but one. We do not hold, as Westerners do, that there is a transcendent division between nature and human beings, and that Heaven represents the transcendent creator of this world, which is entirely unlike those created. The heaven and humans that we understand are always one interconnected body. Additionally, there is the concept that all things are one body (*wan wu yi ti* 万物一体). During the Song and Ming dynasties, this idea became more intense. As the Northern Song philosopher Cheng Hao 陈浩 spoke of it, this is not an ontological formulation nor a statement about how the universe is structured, nor an assertion that nature and human society are isomorphic; rather, this idea is said with respect to one's state of mind, that is, everyone should see oneself and everything else as one body. For example, if someone were to scorch your finger, you would feel pain, and you would know thereby that your finger is a part of your body, but were someone else to suffer pain you might have difficulty feeling her pain. You could feel numb to it. Only under the condition that you see her in pain and can feel her pain you could say that you have grasped the notion that all things are one body. This is already beyond the sphere of ontology and cosmology; it is an extremely elevated state of mind. The third major concept concerns maintaining the great harmony (*bao he tai he* 保合太和), which is a saying found in the *Book of Changes*. Holding together the great harmony is precisely the broadest most enduring harmony. This ultimate concern of Confucianism is rather pointed. We once endured an age that praised battle, and that saw actual contradictions as rational ones that we ought to resolve and develop through violent confrontation. Such a model of action once brought about many sad events, which were opposed to the ideal and ultimate concern of Confucianism. There is no place for harmony in a concept that praises violent confrontation. Today we talk about the need to establish a harmonious society, which is in line with the Confucian tradition, and Confucian thought is not just about social harmony, it is also smaller than that; it is as small as the harmony of the human mind and body and as big as the harmony between family, society, and state, and ultimately becomes the greatest enduring harmony among the whole universe. Only this is the Confucian ideal. In this vein, the Song dynasty philosopher, Zhang Zai 张载 said something oddly in line with the dialectical method. He stated that "the opposite party necessarily opposes one's action, and in opposing this there is revenge," which is what Mao Zedong 毛泽东 spoke of as the contradiction being opposites. Opposites are opposed to one another

and vengefully against one another, but Zhang Zai adds one more statement to the end of the saying, which represents the ideal of Confucianism, that is, “vengeance must necessarily find harmony and dissolve.” This is the human ideal of holding together the greater harmony that Confucianism stands for.

#### **A.4 The Study of Confucianism and Contemporary China**

We have now discussed Confucian views on human life and ruling the state, and drawn directly on the classics to illuminate these. I would now like to return to modern society. Here, we do not have to quote from the classics, but can focus rather on modern observations and viewing the characteristics of Confucian values from the modern perspective. I would like to adopt a method of comparison and a few modern expressions to strengthen our recognition of the relation between Confucian values and contemporary society.

The first expression: morals are more important than laws. We have just seen various statements that boil down to the modern notion that morals are more important than laws. This is not to say that laws are unnecessary, just that morals are more important.

The second expression is: the social group is more important than the individual person. The person is but one individual, while smaller social groups include families, clans, ancestral decent and communities, and larger social groups are nations and peoples.

The third expression: spirit is more important than material. Confucianism is not eclecticist; it finds some points more important than others. It does not reject material. Specifically with reference to the people’s material needs, Confucianism goes along with what the people find beneficial and enables them to acquire it, but spirit is more important, and this especially the case for the scholar-official.

The fourth expression is: responsibility is more important than power and rights. This responsibility may be responsibility for one’s family, for one’s group, for one’s society or for one’s people. Rights, on the other hand, refer more specifically to individual rights in Western political thought, but Confucianism does not speak about individual rights. Confucianism speaks of the importance of responsibility. Why do we call them distinctive features of values? These distinctive features are expressed as prioritization. This is not to say that Confucianism does not care about laws or material or rights, but that Confucianism does care about which is prioritized, and the distinctive features of a body of values are expressed in the ranking of its priorities.

The fifth expression is: the livelihood of the people is more important than the rule of the people. The people first have to satisfy the needs of life and only then can we talk about other things. The development of democracy (the rule of the people) moves in stages, and democracy cannot be seen as absolute or as the chief value of any and every stage of social development, because the livelihood of the people is the more fundamental value.

The sixth expression is: order is more important than freedom. Different schools view this differently. Zhuangzi might think that freedom is more important than order, and Legalism that order is more important than freedom, but Confucianism should be said to stress order over freedom. Yet it should not be said to ignore freedom altogether.

The seventh expression is: this life is more valuable than the life hereafter. Confucians are positive realists, who find this life important, while Buddhists at bottom speak of escaping the cycle of birth and death and find the life hereafter more important than this world.

The eighth expression is: harmony is more valuable than conflict. The opposed party necessarily opposes its enemy, but the enmity must satisfy itself and dissolve, which is the direction of Confucianism.

The ninth expression is: civilization is more valuable than poverty. Although these two words are not necessarily fit for precise comparison, Daoism does not praise civilization, but the original condition, while Confucianism always gives elevated affirmation to civilization. Rites and ritual propriety are marks of civilization that Confucianism conservatively upholds, develops, and transmits. Confucianism's sense of civilization is pronounced.

The final expression is: family is more valuable than class. This is a Confucian way of thinking. The kind of Marxism that we understand from the past believes that only class struggle is valuable, but things have changed in today's age. Confucian thought offers us a new notion: is not family something with fundamental value? From the antiquity of the past to what is coming now there has always been some notion of doing away with the family. This is the case with Plato and also some communists who believe that there is no family in communist society. But returning to the actual life of Chinese people today, we see that family is indeed extremely valuable, which Confucianism strongly affirms.

We have now spoken about China and used ten points to distinguish and compare Confucian thought from some other types of thought, for instance, individualism, liberalism, liberal democracy, and so on. This is all rather pointed, because all of this is related to modern society, and in this way we may holistically understand the characteristics of Confucian values. Of course, this is only a rough sketch, but each of these points could also be called characteristics of the "basic position" of Confucianism. For instance, you could say that Confucianism is morality based, community based, responsibility based, and based on the livelihood of the people, but Confucianism is not a simple "-ism"; it is a whole constituted out of the values manifested by very many "-isms."

Looking back at the whole transformation of contemporary China and the role that Confucianism plays in it, we could make a simple historical reconsideration, and divide it into several stages: from 1949 to 1965 is the first stage, called the stage of political construction, when the PRC was founded; the second stage is the "cultural revolution" from 1966 to 1976, which was catastrophic; the third stage is the economic reforms, and our reforms were multifaceted, but the most salient one was the reform of economic institutions, which became more distinct after the 14th

NCCCCP; the fourth stage is called coordinating development, which is the new stage that started at the beginning of the new century.

The first stage, the stage of political construction, was essentially the continuation of the political revolution or the continuation of the civil revolutionary war. The revolutionary times were culturally opposed to Confucianism; what was wanted was revolutionary ideology to critique the non-revolutionary culture of everyday life. Confucianism is the bland and ordinary culture of everyday life, the everyday practice of rules of life and common moral principles. Because of this, Confucianism suffered the critical attacks of revolutionary culture following 1949. Mao Zedong said it most clearly, revolution is not painting pictures or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained, and magnanimous.<sup>13</sup> Granted, Confucian thought is certainly not an ideology of political revolution, but must be supplemented with one addition, which is that Confucianism permits revolution, and even affirms it, especially the Confucianism of China. Chinese Confucianism acknowledges revolution, but revolution is not the common state of mind of Confucianism, which only affirms revolution when it is absolutely necessary. Japanese Confucians are against revolution; they even hypothetically considered this, saying that supposing Confucius and Mencius themselves were to bring revolution to Japan, Japanese Confucians would fight them back to China. They cannot understand the revolutionary thought of Confucianism, so how could they have overthrown the emperor? But in China revolutionary cases of changing dynasties are many, and Chinese Confucianism does not in principle oppose revolution. Rather, it views revolution as simply alternative to the normal state of things, which Confucianism always sees as everyday life.

The second stage is from 1966 to 1976, which is called the continuation of the revolution or the continuation of the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The continuing revolution, culturally speaking, “critiqued Confucius,” believing that legalism was revolutionary and that Confucianism was conservative; the continuing revolution wanted to use ideological struggle to critique conservative cultural ideas, and because of this criticized Confucianism. Mao Zedong stated that stability and unity do not reject class struggle; class struggle is the outline and everything else is detail. Western scholars here translate *baoshou* as “conservative,” which renders the transmission of culture itself into a conservative process. Confucianism is not a culture that praises struggle, but one that praises stability and unity, and because of this suffered critical attacks.

The third stage is that following the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Committee of the CCP, at which time we set off on the reform of economic institutions and obtained elevated economic development, but not without problems. During the entirety of Deng Xiaoping’s era, he rarely brought up the issue of culture, because his most important concern was the reform of economic institutions. He needed to advance cautiously, testing each stone before stepping on it.

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<sup>13</sup>Selected Works Vol. I, p. 28.



I think this is related to the mission of the era, which was characterized by institutional reform by dint of which culture was neglected, specifically traditional culture, including Confucianism, of course. As regards the relation between Confucianism and this era, Confucianism did not provide economic reform with spiritual motivators, because it was the protector of moral order and its role lied elsewhere. But there were some intellectuals during this period who started to draw attention to Confucianism, because vicissitudes in the moral order left everyone constantly concerned with the role of Confucianism.

The fourth stage is called that of coordinating development, which could also be called the reconstructive stage of the cultural order. We started to emphasize the thought of stability and unity, and the thought of the order and security of the state. Moreover, the great revitalization of the Chinese people and the great renaissance of Chinese culture gradually became acceptable slogans to us all. I have not conducted a census of literary documents, but these slogans of the great revitalization of the Chinese people and the great revitalization of Chinese culture emerged in our historical documents between 1995 and 2000, which is rather early. The revitalization of the people and culture necessarily brings with it the revitalization of traditional Chinese culture, including Confucianism. In the recent years since 1978 we have already seen wide and elevated enthusiasm in Confucianism and traditional culture, especially among the people and entrepreneurs. So one could say that Confucianism was reborn during this stage of coordinating development and reconstructing culture. Looking at the history of the development of Confucianism over the past 100 or so years, it survived the invading onslaught of modernization and Western culture, and reignited in modern China after undergoing a series of transformations, welcoming new prospects of development.

I think the renaissance of Confucianism today is due to two important reasons. The first is the strengthening of confidence in the culture of our people, which the success of developing the modernized economy has brought about. This started between 1993 and 1994, which represented a major shift from the 10 prior years of expressing resentment towards our forefathers for our unsuccessful modernization during the 1980s. This shows a recovery of confidence in the entirety of Chinese culture, and here credit is owed to institutional reforms. So I call this the initial success of modernization and the recovery of Chinese culture. As I have worded it in past years, the 2008 Beijing Olympics was the mark of the initial success of Chinese modernization. There is an initial stage, intermediate stage, and higher stage of modernization. Although we are still now developers of China, this initial success of modernization is indeed an important reason behind the shift in the cultural mindset of our people. Second is the transformation of our country's political culture, especially the transformation of the political culture of the ruling party. I have already stated that prior eras did not focus on culture, while in recent times this started to change. For example, "ruling the nation with virtue" is a Confucian slogan, "advance with the times" is also a development of Confucian cosmology, and "being human based," "valuing harmony" and "the power of the people" are all Confucian standpoints, that we publicly formulate today. When our leaders give speeches overseas, they consistently announce the foundation of

Chinese policies with these concepts as their core (restless self-empowerment, being human based, valuing harmony, and so on). This is the pronouncement of the Chinese quality of Chinese policies through the perspective of Chinese civilization for the sake of clarifying the cultural significance of our Chinese policies and for presenting China's future. I think our ruling party has reabsorbed the political ideas and values of Confucianism in order to deal with the pressing issues we face, which is not to say that the leaders are fond of Confucian thought, but that they responsibly face our cultural resources and face our problems. This shift, to use academic words, could be called the re-Sinicization of the ruling political culture. Re-Sinicization does not imply that in the past we did not deal with Chinese problems or were not Chinese enough, but rather that we now self-consciously utilize the resources of traditional Chinese culture and even more self-consciously strengthen the many sides of our legitimacy from the perspective of transmitting Chinese culture. I think these are the two important sources of the renaissance of Confucianism today.

Guo Moruo 郭沫若 wrote an article in 1926 called "Marx's Offering to the Temple of Culture" (*Makesi jin wenmiao* 马克思进文庙). I mention this because many of us were responsible comrades of the central state organs. What problems do we face now? We face the problem of Marx and Sinicization. What relation does the Confucian tradition bear to Marxism and Sinicization? How should this relationship be treated? According to leftist thought Marxism bears no relation to traditional Chinese culture, and the propensity of things does not leave both standing, which I think very few of us today think. In his article, Guo Moruo published a story that narrates the tale of Confucius bringing his three disciples to the Shanghai Temple of Culture to make offerings. The outside gates were wide open, and four strong men shouldered a caravan in without notice. Zi Lu very unhappily said who was coming. Confucius responded that those coming were all guests and that they should be polite. The caravan stopped and down stepped someone with a full beard by the name of Karl Marx. Confucius loved to learn and wished to learn from everyone who had specialized knowledge. He once learned ritual propriety from Laozi. Confucius stated that the name of Karl Marx is most respected and asked him to step up so as to ask him, "What teaching are you seeking in coming here to this temple?" Marx responded, saying he came to learn about what was behind the rumor he heard that his thought was very popular in China but was opposed to the thought of Confucius. Today he wanted to learn more about what this opposition is between his own thought and that of Confucius. "Could my thought be promoted in your country?" He asked. Confucius responded, staying, "I have never read much of your books, how about you tell me of your thought first." Marx says, "I have a few basic thoughts. First, my thought differs from the religious thinkers of Western history. I care intensely about the real world, but I want to change this world, and make it a happy, perfect world." Confucius responds, stating, "but this is just my thought. I do not walk the path of those leaving this world. I also have a strong sense of reality. In this regard our ideas get along." Marx then tells Confucius of the ideal of socialism, and Confucius responds saying that this is precisely what his teachings regarding "great unity"

(*datong* 大同) in the “Liyun” 礼运 book of the *Record of Rites* are all about. They spoke at length about their views on wealth. Marx said that he could not believe that such a distant place as China more than 2000 years ago could be home to such an old comrade. The two spoke heartily, after which Confucius saw him off. This is a tiny novelistic article written by Guo Moruo.

Guo Moruo was a first generation Marxist historiographer, and his attitudes towards Marxism and Chinese culture are worth our deeper consideration. During that era, he already saw that the tradition of Chinese Confucian culture could fuse together with the culture of Marxism. They were not opposed. For this reason, he was criticized by Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution. Mao said Guo Moruo’s *Book of Ten Critiques* (*Shi pipan shu* 十批判书) was no good, because they spoke of Confucius. We come from that era, and I think the question of our age still lies in how this relationship should be treated. However, I think that our past historiographers and literary writers already accomplished a lot of meaningful work. I think we today should again study some of their representative and valuable thoughts in order to supplement our contemporary thoughts regarding the relationship between Marxism and Confucianism.

## Appendix B

# Modern Confucianism and Universal Values<sup>14</sup>

Over the last two weeks I closely read through the book *What is Universal? Whose Values?* In what follows, I will discuss my opinion of this work. I think the intended purpose of this book is excellent, and I have a few impressions remaining after reading it.

First, it very much emphasizes subjective agency in Chinese culture. Although this book focuses on the topic of Confucianism and Confucian values, I feel that this book actually discusses more than just Confucianism and Confucian values. Overall it also highlights subjective agency within Chinese culture.

Second, the viewpoints discussed in this book differ from the many talks given here. The discussion in this book issues not from merely one voice; it is a melody that wraps inside itself many different voices with different trajectories. But on the whole, although there are many different viewpoints, one can still clearly witness a very strong cultural self-consciousness. Cultural self-awareness at the earliest was brought into the spotlight in the 1990s, and it is very prominent in this book.

Third, I think that in addition to the subjective agency in Chinese culture and the emergence of cultural self-awareness, this book's discussion is actually an echo and seeking out of the motif of this age, whether self-consciously or not. Last year the Korean Academic Research Council invited me to speak. They first wrote me a letter requesting a speech on the topic of "all under heaven" (*tianxia* 天下), and I politely refused. I said that I was not a specialist in researching the problem of "all under heaven," and that they could find a scholar who specifically discusses this problem. The head of the conference, Professor Kwong Ok Kim, is a famous South Korean anthropologist who graduated from Harvard, and he wrote a letter in response saying that he must have not been very clear in the first letter. He was only bringing up an example topic, and truly wanted to invite me to discuss the

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<sup>14</sup>Editor's (of the original Chinese version) note: In April of 2013, ECNU Press and Fudan University's Research Center of the History of Thought collectively Hosted *What is Universal? Whose Values?*—*The Universal Values of Contemporary Confucianism*, ed. by Ceng Yi and Guo Xiaodong, ECNU Press, 2013, Discussion of New Books. This text is the compiled draft of the record of the author's issuing statement at the meeting.

philosophical background and foundation of Chinese civilization. What they were looking for was not something historical; what they were truly looking for was how another set of values or worldview—one that this age needs, and one that may replace those of modern Western civilization—might extend out of Chinese civilization. Since this was the case, I readily accepted, and proceeded to give two speeches, one about the cosmology of Chinese civilization, the other about the values and worldview of Chinese civilization. Because the question at hand was about the philosophical background of Chinese civilization, it was necessary to talk first about cosmology. However, the formulation of this cosmology would need to point in the direction of the values of Chinese civilization, and these values would have to respond to the demands of the current age. Therefore, I say that many issues also raised in this book, whether self-consciously or not, may be seeking out the motif of the age. Although many scholars in South Korea are heavily influenced by the United States, they also reflect the concern that the outside world has for the renaissance of Chinese culture. The scholars who work from the perspective of anthropology have been especially committed to understanding this issue, because anthropology readily leads to relativism, and will resist those universalizing cultures that bespeak of their own absolute necessity.

Finally, the fourth characteristic I think is rather sharp-edged. I think in one respect of course it could also be said that, as they themselves have spoken of it, it might reflect some distinctive feature of young scholars, and reveals some kind of condition of young scholars, but I think this cannot be said in all cases. Because, I think in this there is indeed the reflection of Chinese people's sense of the West, including this complicated sense of inequality between China and the outer western world for over a hundred years now; this is a true feeling. So, I think this should also be a fact. These few points are the feelings I have reading this book.

I wrote an article with a similar title as this one ten or so years ago when talking about world ethics in *Dushu* 读书; the title of the article is *Whose Responsibility? What Kind of Ethics?*<sup>15</sup> I think the problems discussed in this book refer specifically to two main phenomena: one is the current popular tendency to make Western values and specifically the values of modern Western political institutions the incarnation of universal global values. This is not actually fair to the West, either. The trend of today's world is to make the values of Western institutions the incarnation of the most universal values in the realm of possibility. The second is the idea of uniform universality, which is a deeply ingrained opinion that has spread since the popularization of Western Christian culture, but which cannot tolerate a diversity of opinions. These two points are the situation that we face in the mainstay.

This was just a prologue. I would like to look back now to speak of a few of my own opinions. First, what I would like to talk about is not a critique of this book, but my own opinion. Today we are talking about this cultural question, whence we

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<sup>15</sup>Chen Lai, "Whose Responsibility? What Kind of Ethics?" (*Shei zhi zeren? Hezhong lunli? 谁之责任?何种伦理?*), in *Dushu* 读书, no. 10 (1998).

should take notice of the Sixth Plenum of the Seventeenth Central Committee, which describes ethnic culture, and on this basis and with the aid of this wind expand our understanding and research of traditional Chinese culture. In 2007, I joined the annual meeting of the “Chinese Culture Forum” (*Zhongguo wenhua luntan* 中国文化论坛) with Professor Tong Shijun 童世骏. I was the chair that year discussing “Confucius and Contemporary China.” My main report specifically dealt with the need to focus on the re-Sinicization of the political culture of the ruling party when discussing contemporary Chinese culture, because we clearly see that slogans with content from traditional Chinese culture have gradually been appearing more frequently in the CCP’s political culture since the 1990s. This transformation I call “re-Sinicization,” which implies the self-conscious utilization of resources from traditional Chinese culture as positive energy. I think this transformation is important. As in China the political culture of the ruling party has a massive effect and influence upon the various strata of our social culture, when we promote cultural activity in this space we have to take notice of it. I think that the Sixth Plenum of the Seventeenth Central Committee actually gave fantastic reports on culture, even though sometimes scholars themselves might not have written very well rounded analyses. I think that in today’s Chinese environment discussions about cultural problems must be integrated with the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, including the practice of the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Specifically, the question of how to increasingly extend this theory into practice invites those spiritual values of Chinese culture that I have just discussed, and us scholars should also join this promotion of the re-Sinicization of political culture in this respect, fully acknowledge this transformation of political culture, and promote cultural development together. What I mean is, today as we promote the renaissance of Confucian culture in China, this question is the focal point that we cannot overlook.

Second, we need to summarize the cultural ideas and cultural practices of last century’s Confucian scholars in a more well-rounded way. Some of the last generation of New Confucian scholars whom I brought up in this book believe the affirmation of Confucian values given by the New Confucianism which emerged after May 4th in the vein of conservatism was nothing more than the importing of Western values into Confucianism. I think this might not be the case or at least not entirely the case. For example, yesterday I just came from the Ma Yifu 马一浮 conference. Ma Yifu was a conservative, who differed from other conservatives in that he championed universalism rather than uniqueness. The study of six arts in his understanding was not the study of six arts that we talk about today as only some kind of ethnic culture. He insisted that the six arts are truly worldly things, and that world cultures should all be brought into and measured in this system. It is a universalist system. So, in his idea the tradition of the six arts could incorporate Western culture, which would be incorporated thereby into a more rational framework, a more universal framework. So he of course has a conservative attitude, but its universalist attitude does not simply affirm Western culture; on the contrary it, in brings Western academics into the Chinese academic system with the thought that it is not universal enough, and that ours is the more universal one. In

addition, I know the example of Liang Shuming 梁漱溟. It is obvious that after May 4th, the most representative work was of course Liang Shuming's *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies* (*Dong-Xi wenhua ji qi zhixue* 东西文化及其哲学). Liang Shuming's idea is that in modern times we have run into the first step of duties in the all-around acceptance of Western culture, which is realistic and must be accepted across the board. But in connection with this is the future renaissance of Chinese culture, and after that the future renaissance of Indian culture. This formulation is not to say that today our affirmation of Confucianism is only for the importing of Western values. His understanding of Western culture was that the West could only stop where it was in his day and go no further, after which what must still lie ahead in his mind was the manifestation of Confucian values. So for him Confucian values were the more future-oriented and worldly ones, which simply could not be brought up in the present space. So I think that this view of the situation reflects that we must summarize the last generation's efforts in a more well-rounded way, especially the cultural outlook and practice of last century's Confucian scholars.

Third, I think the discussion of the last century of culture still requires a sympathetic understanding, and as regards the last century of culture, including the last century of New Confucian culture, this book looked at Eastern and Western cultures and laid emphasis on the East-West distinction while entirely overlooking the ancient-modern distinction. I believe the discussion of the last century of culture should distinguish East from West and ancient from modern. You say that New Confucianism is just integrating Confucianism into Western values, but you overlook the distinction between ancient and modern which is so important. Most important here is what Feng Youlan 冯友兰 said in 1930, which is that the East-West question was actually nothing more than the ancient-modern question and that the ancient-modern problem is the problem of modernization. The last generation of scholars did not simply talk about values and did not simply focus on cultural comparisons. If we were to talk about their stance on ethnic culture, we would have to ask why these scholars had to accept Western culture. Important here was their need to accelerate the modernization of the Chinese nation, disconnected from which any discussion of cultural shifts is but abstract talk that can neither reflect the true historical motivation behind them nor fit in with that standpoint on the Chinese nation that you yourself standby. So that generation of scholars, especially, the first generation of thinkers, was more concerned with the modernization of development of the Chinese nation. They accepted science and democracy for the sake of modernization without which the Chinese nation could not be saved by any means. Absorbing Western culture and proceeding with modernization was simply the most basic means of saving the nation. So I think when I discuss this question the focus should not only be on the East-West distinction but on the significance of the ancient-modern question, which sees the modernization of the nation of the Chinese people as an ethnic nation to be the most important. One could say that the whole topic of 20th century China is found here. The last generation of scholars deeply understood this topic, so we should swap this question about East-West culture during the early May 4th movement for the

ancient-modern question. Of course, the ancient-modern question is not necessarily the only approach; one cannot look at Asian culture as entirely traditional culture and then look at recent Western culture as modern universal values. With respect to values, both East and West are both cultures that contain universal values, and you cannot generically treat one as ancient and the other modern.

I think the last generation scholars who took in Western culture across the board might have affirmed some things more than others (most representative of which is of course democracy and science); this affirmation in one respect includes an anxiety about the modernization of Chinese civilization and in another respect also includes their affirmation of the values of modernity in the worldly sense; for example, whether it is freedom, democracy, or human rights, they always affirmed these in the sense of universal values in the worldly sense. In this respect, modern Confucianism requires a more well-rounded summary. That aside, I think that because the form of Chinese society is constantly changing, the concepts and content of Confucianism, including its assertions, advance with the times. So from traditional Confucianism to the New Confucianism of modern social life, the affirmation of democratic freedom is the very meaning of Confucianism advancing with the times. Of course, this affirmation of democratic freedom is not an affirmation on the highest level. We have to be clear about this. Moreover, advancing with the times not only concerns the affirmation of free democracy but the affirmation of socialism, as well. Such was the case for Liang Shuming, who for his whole life said that socialism is affirmative. So why did Liang Shuming say that after the all around acceptance of Western culture the next question is that of Confucianism? He stated that the future world will need Confucian culture, and that the Confucian culture of the future world is Confucian socialism, and is tightly bound to socialism. Xiong Shili's 熊十力 affirmation of socialism after the founding of New China was due to the fact that there are things with intrinsic affinity inside socialist values and Confucian values. Thus this advancing with the times is not Confucianism turning its back on its traditional values, but a continuation of them; it is a continuing development grounded in what is originally Confucian and based on the change of times.

Fourth, there is a question raised in this book that asks whether or not Confucianism can bring forth out of itself new universal values that differ from liberal democracy. In terms of the basic components, this is one of the most important questions that this book raises. This question may sound a bit strange. Of course Confucianism can bring fourth values that differ from liberal democratic ones, because over the course of its two millennia of development it formed precisely a systematic set of values that differs from liberal democratic ones. However, this book does not seem to be asking this question with reference to the past, but with reference to "new" universal values the content and form of which are reformulated with today's age in mind. I think this problem is worth pondering. We generally say that the postulation and expression of the core values of socialism must have the traditional cultural foundation in mind, which still looks at traditional culture and Confucian values as forms of the past. So to speak about Confucian values is generally to point to a set of those values developed in Confucian



antiquity, which differ from modern and liberal democratic ones. In other words, how today's Confucianism would express new universal values is generally not the focus. Later, I thought that actually since the war of resistance against the Japanese, many new formulations have emerged like the new five virtues or the new six virtues, which are new values that were synthesized out of Confucian thought. Among contemporary scholars I at least know that Mou Zhongjian 牟钟鉴 and Wu Guang 吴光 have many of these kinds of conceptions of new virtues like being humane and righteous, being publicly sincere, and the middle harmony. The formulation of new universal values was unheard of before, but today a closer look will reveal that there are such things. The example I want to cite today is rather mundane; it is what Singapore has formulated as Asian values. Are there new universal values that have been brought forth out of Confucianism itself, values that differ from liberal democratic ones? I think there are. In today's world the most influential ones are undoubtedly what Singapore has called Asian values. Asian values include five main values: first the social state is more important than the individual; second, the roots of the state are in the family; third, the state must respect the individual; fourth, harmony is better than conflict at maintaining social order; fifth, there must be peaceful coexistence and complementarity between religions. I think that if I were to look at this topic of "new universal values" I would naturally think of the example of Singapore. These five principles not only include traditional East Asian values; they also include the new values that have been absorbed from Western civilization for the last century, like the one that stipulates that the state must respect the individual. Actually, the term "Asian values" does not imply that all the elements in its system of values are Asian and only Asian. Asian values may be different than Western values, but this does not mean that all of the values in this system are different. So-called Asian values do not by any means seek a different civilization in terms of elements, but a difference in terms of the structure, order, and core of values; there are different elements and similar elements, but as a whole the order of importance differs. Because of this, Singapore's set of Asian values is a systematic set of values that do not give priority to individualism. This is Singapore's version of modern Asian values, and I think that this is also Singapore's version of the values of modern Confucian civilization, the core of which is not the priority of the individual's right of freedom, but the good of the society and the community; it does not give priority to conflicts between various parties, but to harmony between different parties. This attitude, comparatively speaking, is closer to communitarianism and cannot be used to suppress human rights. It needs to protect the realization of human rights by relying on the expansion of democracy and values that respect the individual. Yet it is indeed different from Western values. Its overall attitude demands the individual to have duties and responsibilities in relation to the other and the community. Of course, these Asian values are also inadequate in some places. The main place of inadequacy is that their level is an intermediate one focused on the level of social values; the values of the higher levels have not been expressed. This is my view on the issue of new universal values.

Fifth is the issue of liberal democracy, which I won't go into in great detail. The description of liberal democracy in this book is always integrally combined with the pursuit of profit of Western nations. This looks at it from the perspective of their foreign policies. However, from the perspective of the history of the world in its entirety, one may see that the call to liberal democracy and the formation of liberal democratic values arose through the long-term social conflicts of the modern West, specifically during the resolution of these developing internal conflicts. These values were not formulated for the sake of tricking the outside world, but emerged through the continuous resolution of internal problems and internal conflicts.

Finally, I will talk about my own opinion of universal values. In South Korea I used four rhyming English words to describe Confucian values: humanity, civility, community, responsibility. I speak of the values of the Chinese people mainly with reference to Confucian values. If we look at what these stress, the first is humanity and the second is civility, which is not civility in the common sense of rationality, but civility in the sense of being humane, just, ritually appropriate, wise, and trustworthy. Of course there is an element in this formulation that was influenced by my talk in South Korea. This element is my emphasis on the spirit of civility, which is partially due to the fact that I was in South Korea, a state that stresses the importance of civility. When speaking, I of course had to communicate with the local culture. The civility I spoke of was an affirmation of the essence, spirit, and values of the culture of ritual propriety. The third stress is on the good of the community. Community consciousness is very important, I think, because although ancient Chinese culture did not make use of an all-encompassing concept of community, expressions such as *jia* 家 (family), *guo* 国 (state) and *sheji* 社稷 (the country), which are all filled with Chinese culture, could all be attributed to a concern for the good of the collective, the community, and the whole. The fourth stresses responsibility. Although the Chinese term for responsibility, *zeren* 责任, was already used in ancient times, and its meaning was not completely the same as the sense of the modern Chinese word *zeren*. All of our notions of moral action and all of the notions of moral action in Chinese culture and Confucian culture are filled with consciousness of responsibility. For example, *xiao* 孝 (filial piety) is one's sense of responsibility towards one's parents, *xin* 信 (trust) is one's sense of responsibility toward one's friend, and so on. After returning to China, I readjusted these five points on the basis of the characteristics of Chinese culture: responsibility is prior to freedom, duty is prior to rights, community is higher than the individual, and harmony is higher than conflict.

I finally would like to say in conclusion that the basic position I have adopted is not elementism but structuralism, not monism but pluralism. What does this mean? What I mean is this: I wrote an article in 2005 talking about the problem of values in the age of globalization, in which I posed a concept called "plural universality." I see in your book that there is a voice that totally opposes pluralism, asserting that Confucianism is to be respected exclusively and opposing plurality, whereas I espouse pluralism. I aimed precisely at monistic universalism in putting forth the concept of plural universality, which is related to what anthropological discussions of globalization. When the American sociologist Roland Robertson speaks of

globalization, he raises the notions of the particularization of universalism and the universalization of particularism. This sees globalization as a two fold process, where the particularization of universalism refers to the political economy and system of rule that the West first developed, and the importing of its basic values into other regions. The universalization of particularism points to the identification of other ethnicities in the world with their own native values, which gradually come to have global influence and fuse in the process of globalization. Such regional knowledge may acquire the universal sense of globalization through this process, so Robertson calls this regional globalization. I think this way of discussing things is meaningful, but it is inadequate in acknowledging the values of East Asian civilization. I think Western civilization realized itself to be universal much earlier, while East Asian civilization still has not realized its own universality to an adequate degree. Moreover, whether East or West, the value of inner spirit is not determined by the degree of outer realization. In other words, the spiritual civilizations of Eastern and Western civilizations and their values actually intrinsically have universality. We cannot say that today only China has universality and Western values have no universality. I think with respect to intrinsic universality, we have to accept that the East and West both have their own intrinsic universality, while the question of whether or not it is realized externally is another question altogether. This requires external historical conditions, and in becoming realized moves from intrinsic universality to realized universality. Fei Xiaotong 费孝通 once stated, "Each should promote their own beauty, and each should promote the beauty of the other; and the beauty of the one and the beauty of the other coexisting is the great concordance of all under heaven." This is a lively portrait of the cultural outlook of plural universality.

If we were to talk about Eastern and Western civilizations having intrinsic universality on the spiritual level and on the level of values, we should say that this is universalism in both cases. The mainstream values of Eastern and Western civilizations are both universal values. However, there are differences between them, and between their degrees of realization in history. Thus, plural universality must look directly at these intrinsic structural differences and the disparity of their historical realization. Because of this, justice, freedom, rights, and reason are of course universalist; yet humanity, responsibility, community, inner peace, and social harmony are also universalist values. This is the principle revealed in the above discussion of Liang Shuming. This position I have called "the culture of recognition." Charles Taylor specifically spoke of "the politics of recognition," which he spoke of from the standpoint of pluralism. I think we should have the position of "the culture of recognition," which of course is the position of worldly pluralism. This is my own opinion on this aspect. Where is the distinction between the elementism and structuralism that I just brought up? There is a formulation in the book that demands bringing forth values out of the Confucian system that differ from Western values, but I think this demand should be made not simply to bring forth a Confucian system composed of elements entirely different from those of

Western values. I think that some elements could perhaps be different, but modern Confucian values could also contain such things as liberal democracy. It is just that the status of liberal democratic values in the Confucian system of values is not necessarily that high. This is related not only to the spiritual striving of culture but to the actuality of today's China and Chinese history, as well. This is the content that I have thought upon in this exchange with everyone here.

## Appendix C

# The Transmission and Development of Traditional Chinese Values<sup>16</sup>

I am extremely happy and excited to have been invited to the “Qilu Forum” (*Qilu da jiangtan* 齐鲁大讲坛). Today I will discuss a bit with you all questions related to Chinese culture.

The host has given me the topic of “the transmission and development of traditional Chinese values.” This topic should be extremely important, so today I will engage in an exchange with everyone about this issue.

### 1.

At present, the formulation of China’s core values could be divided into three levels, namely the level of the state, the level of society, and the level of the individual. I would like to distinguish these levels, as well, in my speech.

The first question I would like to talk to everyone about is the basic values of Chinese culture and the manifestation of these basic values in the spheres of political regulation and state rule, which occurs precisely as values at the state level.

Everyone is very concerned about the mainstream ideals and values of Chinese culture regarding the issue of political and state regulation. From the government down to the basic stratum of people, we are all concerned about this because it involves the basis of the direction of the policies of today’s governmental actions. I would like to first talk to everyone about this.

How should the ideas of political and state regulation in traditional Chinese culture be grasped? First of all, I believe, they should be seen as being human based. It should be noted that what we are talking about has to do with our province here, Shan Dong 山东. The four characters *yi ren wei ben* 以人为本 (taking humans as the basis) are found in the *Guanzi* 管子. Although Guanzi was not from Jinan 济南, he lived not far from Jinan. He was from Zibo 淄博. Human beings are the basis—one should say that this is a very unique and bright notion, which comes from the Western Zhou period, when Chinese culture embarked on a new direction

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<sup>16</sup>Editor’s (of the original Chinese version) note: This text is the reconstructed draft of the record of the author’s lecture in 3-9-2014.

of development. As the ancient civilizations around the world were all cultures that posited God and gods as the basis, and as China was also an ancient civilized state, therefore gods were also the foundation of the early history of China prior to the Shang dynasty. However, after the Western Zhou, starting with the Duke of Zhou's (*Zhou Gong* 周公) enfeoffment of land to the state of Lu 鲁, the thought of this great figure took flight in a new way, shifting the culture from its basis on gods to a basis on human beings. Of course, to say that there were no gods in early Chinese civilization, 3000 years ago, is not possible. But there was something distinctive about it, which is that in Chinese social life, whether in the sphere of politics or morals or even economic life—throughout the entirety of the realm of human life—one could say that human beings were more important than gods. In the early periods the thought that human beings are the basis did not mean that there is nothing else, but that in comparison with gods or the world of gods humans and the human world were more important. So in the Western Zhou era there was this thought that stated that the formation of gods depends on human beings, and that gods could only exist by relying on human beings.

Why would such thought exist? At the time there was a saying that because God depended on human sacrifices to exist, the existence of God had a basic condition, which was that human beings provide God with sacrifices without which God could not exist. So from this standpoint, the human world was seen as the foundation of the world of gods. This thought developed in Western Zhou, and became Western Zhou's unique humanist thinking. This is precisely the early origin of the Chinese notion of human beings as the basis.

Up to the later half of the Spring and Autumn period, during the Warring States period, the majority of schools of thought all posited human beings as the basis. Within this emphasis on human beings as the basis there were different directions of development and different ideas of the development, regulation, and ordering of the human world, but all were resolute as regards the priority of the human world. This was the thought all schools had in common. For example, during the spring and autumn period, some thinkers brought up the idea that “the Way of heaven is distant, the Way of man is near.” The Way of heaven is distant, this we do not have to focus too hard on; that the Way of man is near is where we will place our concentration. Confucius actually spoke similarly as well, stating “respect ghosts and spirits, but maintain your distance from them.” (*Analects* 6.22) This does not imply that there are no ghosts or spirits, but that we must respect them, keep our distance from them, and focus our attention on the human world.

Why must we respect ghosts and spirits? Because that was the tradition at that time in antiquity. I think from Confucius' perspective, spirits are beings, and the effect of spirits upon human beings was significant. This is not an important question. They kept the human sense of respect and sacredness through the activity of respecting spirits. So, in receiving the transmission of this ancient belief, although we stress the importance of the human world today, we have to maintain a sense of awe and sacredness in the face of higher beings. I think this passion should be understandable.

So why did the ancient Chinese collect so much wisdom with respect to political regulation? It is because they started to invest a lot of energy into the sphere of regulating the human world very early on. This is the first characteristic of the development of Chinese values, the mainstream values of politics and state rule.

The second characteristic is being virtue based. Positing virtue as the basis is about the same thing as ruling the state with virtue, which we talked about today. Everyone is pretty familiar with the thought of Confucius. The notion that human beings are the basis, just discussed, was established in contrast with the notion that gods are the basis. Today we are talking about ideals and values. Generally we express the values we are partial to and choose what is more important through ideals as well as our selection and comparison of different things. Such is the meaning of values.

We have discussed the notion that human beings are the basis, which corresponds with the notion that gods are the basis. There is also a corresponding opposite to positing virtue as the basis, which is ruling the state with punishment. This was prevalent before the Shang and during the Shang to stress the role of command and punishment and neglect the role of virtue. But this was not what Confucius praised. Everyone knows a lot about Confucius' thought. He stated:

If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good. (*Analects* 2.3)

So, the mainstream ideas of ancient Chinese politics were greatly influenced by Confucius' thought. Of course there was a period of time in the pre-Qin era when the legalist culture of focusing on laws and punishment was prevalent. It was also fully realized during the Qin dynasty. But, very quickly this set of policies underwent critical scrutiny during the Han dynasty, and it was given the death sentence in Chinese political culture, and the guiding ideal that was established in its stead was the notion of ruling the state with virtue, which finally we may call "virtue is the basis" for short.

Aside from the notion that human beings are the basis and the one that virtue is the basis, we also have an even more important value in the sphere of political and state rule, the third value, which is the notion that the people are the basis, also called people based thinking. I started saying that values and the comparison of values need to be in a series of comparative worth. For example, Confucius made a comparison between this on the one hand and leading with virtue, leading with laws and seeking uniformity with punishments on the other. He brought it up through this comparison through which we see his choice in terms of values. I think the notion that people are the basis is also similarly like this. Because before the Western Zhou, actually in the *Shangshu* 尚书 (Book of Documents) there was already this thought of people being the basis of the state. In the *Shangshu* one could say that there was no shortage of such thoughts. For example, during the Shang dynasty there were the ideas of earth and heaven, and the highest gods were the earth and heaven, but from the later phase of the Shang dynasty to the Zhou a

new development of religious thought started to slowly emerge, one that did not believe heaven and earth possessed independent will. If one were to say they had will at all, one would have to say that their will was the people's will in the sense that "heaven sees what we the people see, heaven hears what we the people hear," which means precisely that heaven cannot hear or see independently of human beings and have to observe this society through the people's eyes and ears and will through the people's will. This makes us notice that such an idea already existed in the culture of early China.

We now come to Mencius, whom everyone knows. For Mencius, "the people are the most important, the society is second, and the prince is less so," which also shows the selection of values through a comparison. Although before Mencius there was the thought that the people were the basis of the state, the prince obviously had the absolute status of leader. But in the political thought that Mencius expressed, the prince was less important, and even the special princes were not as important in comparison with the people. So whether it is the prince or the special princes, no one is more important than the people. This thought of positing the people as the basis also reflects another important aspect of the political and state rule of mainstream ancient China.

These three values are all tightly bound to Confucian thought, because Confucian thought is the classical culture of the entire Chinese civilization among the different schools, and its sedimentation consists in the transmission of classical culture. So today, when we reflect and talk about ancient Chinese cultural values, most of course come from Confucian values.

The fourth value is the notion that union is the basis. This should not just be the case for Confucianism, but for some other systems of thought of well. For instance, Daoism also adopts this viewpoint, so one could say most of ancient Chinese thought approves of this viewpoint, which posits union as the basis. This is distinct from the other value of priding harmony. Positing union as the basis is a way of thinking that focuses on identity, the highest expression of which is nature and human unifying into one. So today we are talking about values and the ideals of the Chinese people, and cannot be without a higher perspective. In the report from the 18th Party Congress emphasis is placed on the construction of ecological civilization, which is an important duty. Our development is not only GDP or general development, and when talking about development and GDP the construction, protection and nurturing of ecological civilization must be taken into account. This point integrates with resources from ancient Chinese thought, because Chinese people talk about nature and human beings blending in union. Moreover, Chinese people tend toward synthetic union rather than analytic division. Whether we are talking about unity in politics, this unity is also synthetic union, or we are talking about the union of humans and nature, this is also synthetic union, so this synthetic union to a great degree represents the idea of a unity. The unity of human beings and nature, the unifying into one of nature and humans; the multiplicity of peoples blending into unity.

So, in the whole of Chinese culture, going from politics and political regulation up to the next higher level, we position it in a much vaster horizon that the Chinese



people call the study of nature and humans, and the mutual limit between nature and humans. The Chinese people position it in this big concept, which already involves philosophical cosmology and focuses on synthetic union rather than analytic division. When the construction of ecological civilization is emphasized today, resources and values from Chinese thought should be the focus.

In traditional Chinese culture, the ideals of mainstream values are mostly expressed with respect to political regulation, which was the first question of my speech.

## 2.

Traditional Chinese cultural values consist of much content. We cannot look at all of it today. We can only draw from some of the main issues and exchange them with everyone today. For example, I did not focus on general values, but mainly on the ideals of political regulation in order to bring forth some of my opinions on these values.

This brings us to the second issue. If we were to discuss the concrete ideas of values in the Chinese tradition, there are many, but I would like cut into this next issue, which is the unique color of the ideas of value in the Chinese tradition. Here I mainly talk about the unique color of Chinese cultural values at the social level of values. Talking about unique color requires comparison. If we were to take Western culture, especially modern Western culture and modern Western values as the object of comparison, how would we grasp the body of traditional Chinese values, especially the values of the social stratum? What are its distinctive features? Recently everyone is talking about how we have China's national sentiment, which comes from the system of values, and the unique color of values with Chinese characteristics is the Chinese national sentiment.

Which characteristics are there? I would like to bring up a few of them and see if they hold up. I will not confine myself to talking about those few ideals I brought up just now, and will try my utmost to look synthetically at the unique color of Chinese cultural values.

The body of values and basic values of traditional Chinese society differ greatly from those of the modern West. Just now I mainly made a summary with respect to political and state regulation, but to talk holistically about the comparison of traditional Chinese social values and modern Western values, our unique characteristic is "responsibility has priority over freedom." This is the first point I would like to talk about. The Chinese people have this outlook on values that emphasizes the responsibility that the individual has in relation to the other, the community and even nature. Our sense of responsibility is strong. Responsibility already transcends the independent individual, whose desires and existence are brought up in a much bigger social sphere. You need not talk about small responsibilities. Mencius talked about "*junzi*" 君子 (the superior human being), whose most important responsibility is toward all under heaven. Today we talk about all under heaven as one's own responsibility, which Mencius brought up early on. Scholars of the Han dynasty more clearly spoke about the need to posit all under heaven as one's own responsibility. The modern West emphasizes the fulfillment of my own individual

demands, leaving the big worldly affairs of all under heaven outside of the purview of my responsibility, but China is different, especially ancient pre-Qin philosophy, which spoke of *shijunzi* 士君子 (the superior official), and Han dynasty philosophy, which spoke of *shidaifu* 士大夫 (the great official), both of which have a poignant sense of responsibility toward all under heaven. Family affairs, state affairs, and affairs of all under heaven were all of your concern. But why? Because you have a sense of responsibility toward them. The notion of the great official from the Han dynasty to the Song dynasty, whose representative was Fan Zhongyan, who advocated “first concern oneself with the concerns of all under heaven, and second delight oneself with the joy of all under heaven.” The priority of concern and joy is all under heaven, which is the most typical example of the sense of responsibility in Chinese history.

Of course there are many responsibilities. From the individual’s responsibility towards the family panning out step by step to the most fundamental responsibility of humans toward nature and what Mencius spoke of as one’s responsibility to take care of the affairs of all under heaven. In this respect, traditional Chinese values give priority to responsibility in relation to human freedom.

The second point is “duties have priority in relation to rights.” The characteristic of modern Western society is the extraordinary emphasis placed on individual rights. But in our Chinese thought, and specifically in Confucian thought, the emphasis is on duty. The connotations of “being humane, righteous, ritually appropriate, wise and trustworthy” are quite vast, but this includes obligations. In the last century, the great Confucian scholar, Mr. Liang Shuming, engaged in the political practice of the *Xiangzhi* 乡治 movement in Caozhou 曹州. What he learned in this practice was Chinese interpersonal relations, which emphasize the priority of duties or the mutual taking on of duties. This is a distinctive feature of Chinese ethical principles. So when we talk today about the ethical principles of the Chinese people, we have to emphasize having this sense of responsibility. Of course these senses of responsibility compose a list, which is not just a list of responsibilities in the family. Family duties of course must be fulfilled. Your filial piety and respect towards your parents are your duties in relation to parents and siblings that you should fulfill in your family. At the same time, we could pan out much wider from the family and look at your duties in relation to the community, the county, the state, all under heaven and the universe. So we should say that the ethical ideas of the Chinese people specifically emphasize sense of responsibility, and do not expand individual rights.

So, Liang Shuming states that in the relationship between parents and children, the parents have the duty to take care of the children, which for Chinese people is extremely natural. Children cannot say to their parents that they have the right to demand their parents to take care of them. This is not how the Chinese think. In Chinese thought the parents have the responsibility and duty to take care of their children. This thought, I think is also a distinctive feature of Chinese values.

The third point is “the social group is higher than the individual.” Before we said that Chinese culture posits human beings as the basis. We should say that there is a stage in modern Western society in which human beings are the basis, because in

the world of antiquity 3000 years prior, God and gods were the basis. After the 10th century B.C.E., us Chinese people started to shift toward making human beings the basis, but the eleventh century B.C.E. was also when Judaism was founded, and Judaism still stressed God as the basis, and developed pantheism into monotheism. Later there was Christianity and the time of Jesus, the time of the Common Era, which continued to stress the thought of God being the basis all the way up until the 18th century when the shift of basis occurred from God to human beings. So, to speak about this point, Liang Shuming often said that Chinese thought was precocious and that Chinese culture reached enlightenment much earlier, when we started to liberate ourselves from theocracy.

Then what is different about Chinese humanism vis-à-vis Western humanism? Modern western humanism is based even more so on the human being, but China's human based thinking does not speak of the individual human being as the basis, but of human society as the basis, so the human social group is higher than the individual human being. We just said that responsibility has priority in relation to freedom and that duties have priority in relation to rights. Now we may add that the human social group is prior to the individual human being, which is another distinctive feature of ancient Chinese values. Of course, the individual has a different feelings in relation to human social groups, and has to extend oneself to others starting with who is close and extending to those more distant. We should say that the collective consciousness of the Chinese people is expansive; it is not a small group ideology or a regionalism. I just said that the Chinese people found all under heaven to be their own responsibility, which went beyond the limitations of smaller regions early on and became the greater care for all under heaven. For instance, in *The Analects* it is stated that "everyone within the four seas is my brother," and in *Record of Rites (Liji 礼记)* it is stated that "all under heaven is one family." So, our idea of the collective is rich. The family is the most basic Chinese idea, and familial relations are the most basic Chinese relations. The Chinese people preciously expanded the concept of family and familial relations to all under heaven. So on this point, I would like this to be the third characteristic that we talk about in the effort to draw a comparison with the West.

The fourth point is "harmony is higher than conflict." We may look at cultural history. In human culture there is no shortage of conflicts and struggles and lost blood. But comparatively speaking Chinese culture stresses interpersonal harmony more than Western culture. As I noted earlier, we should speak about harmony and unity separately. Chinese values praise harmony.

Consciousness of conflict is strong in Western culture. The issue is always to use one's forces in a self-centered way to dominate the other, to subjugate the other and take possession of the other party, so this is a possessive consciousness. Because of this, religious wars in Western history have been brutal, whereas in China no such religious wars took place to the point where we should say that modern Western culture was the source of the Second World War. Modern Japan also accepted the imperialist culture of the West.

With respect to values, the ancient Chinese idea of "harmony" was manifested in relations with other surrounding countries in how China treated them. In history,

ancient china also had some singular emperors who invaded foreign lands, which we must acknowledge, but generally speaking, the behavior of these emperors went against mainstream Chinese values and were criticized by mainstream Chinese values. China places priority on a secure homeland, so in this respect China stresses that harmony higher than conflict in comparison with Western culture.

Above, I spoke about four points, but actually there are still a few other points I would like to talk about. However, due to time limitations, I can only hit on these four points, which show the distinction between Chinese values and the basic values of the modern West.

### 3.

For the third issue, I think talking a bit about the development of the paradigm shift in traditional values would be just right, since the topic that the host gave me is traditional values. Because today we are talking about carrying forward the excellent culture of the Chinese tradition, this includes development, moving forward with the times, and even cutting out the irrational. For example, ancient Chinese values are male centered and chauvinistic, which should be done away with.

If we look at these issues I just mentioned, and if we want to develop, readjust and change progressively, I think there are a few points that warrant changing. I was just talking about traditional Chinese values, and those several “priorities,” that is, the priority of responsibility over freedom, of duty over right, and so on, and I think such “priorities over” should be resolutely held onto today, because they are the distinctive features of the Chinese people, and we do not need to be the same as Western people, who find in everything the priority of individual rights and emphasize the priority of the individual’s demands.

We hold onto this “priority over” but we should not turn it into “neglect.” For example, to say that responsibility has priority over freedom is correct, but no freedom at all is not right. Duty has priority over rights, which is correct, but completely ignoring rights is not right. The human social group should have priority over the individual human being, but not respecting the individual and having no concern for the individual is not right. So I think that speaking about “priorities over” in traditional Chinese culture is right, but in some places if this notion of “priority over” is not sufficiently explicated, it becomes indistinguishable from neglect. So today we have to develop and transform traditional values while holding on to these “bases” and “priorities” but not without focusing on those things over which the first terms have priority. For example, we just spoke about Confucius’ concept of ruling the state with virtue and his virtue based thinking, which should be understood in opposition to law, because Confucian thought always found virtues to be more important than laws. So, ancient Chinese values are also known in this way, which is that virtues are seen as more important than laws, and this “more” in “more important” expresses partiality and preference. But today we still have to take the value of laws into account. We spoke of ruling the state with virtues, and now we have to talk about ruling the state with laws. Because in China there is at bottom a tendency to disregard laws. Today we still emphasize morals and find morals important, but we cannot ignore the importance of the construction of laws.

Speaking again of examples, I just spoke earlier about the people based thinking of Confucianism, and factually speaking, its most direct and basic meaning is positing the livelihood of the people as the foundation. We have to hold onto this notion today. From the perspective of historical materialism, we still have to look at the reality of Chinese development and hold onto the priority of the livelihood of the people. The higher rungs of government have already brought up this notion of the priority of the people's livelihood. But the ancient Chinese thought that was based on the livelihood of the people also harbored some partiality, which was the tendency to think that the livelihood of the people was more important than the democratic rule of the people. In our thought there is always this belief that the livelihood of the people is most fundamental, and that it is more important than the democratic rule of the people. I think the reality today is likewise. But if we are to talk about going forward with modernization, then of course democratic rule needs to be stronger. The construction of laws needs to be stronger, the construction of democratic rule needs to be stronger, and we have to expand socialist democracy and protect everyone's rights. So today if we are to developmentally transform traditional values while holding onto the people and the livelihood of the people as the bases, then we also have to focus on improving democratic rule. This is also a major point.

I brought up three points. The first point was about individual rights, the second was about morals and laws, and the third point was about the livelihood of the people and the democratic rule of the people. There is also a fourth point: Confucius and the Confucian school of thought stress social harmony, and comparatively speaking, find fairness and equality important. Everyone may be familiar with two sayings, "do not worry about shortage worry about uneven distribution; do not worry about poverty worry about insecurity." But I could say that in the Confucian consciousness and in traditional social values, there is the belief that whether it is society or the individual under consideration, equality is more important than wealth and riches. In this view, we therefore should not worry about shortages but rather about uneven distribution.

But then after undergoing the era of "people's communes" and experiencing the Cultural Revolution, we already have experience that this pursuit of the ideal and value of equality cannot change into only wanting the plant of socialism without the sprouts of capitalism. This leads to excessive poverty and poor equalitarianism, which neglects social development entirely. There is still a lot of distance between this and the thought of letting a small minority to get rich first and then evening out the wealth later, which has been brought up since the Eleventh Session of the Third Plenary Committee. In modern society we should allow the pursuit of increased wealth, and perhaps allow a few to get rich first, but of course we ultimately have to realize the sharing of wealth. But when talking about equality, we already have experience. We cannot go poor or walk down the path of fake socialist equality. Rather, we need to correctly and dialectically understand the distant relationship between equality and wealth in the process of development. This is at once both an issue about the transformation of ideals and values and also an issue about the philosophical idea of dialectical understanding.

We just mentioned three issues, one of which was the mainstream ideals and values of the Chinese tradition, especially those that manifested in the sphere of political and state regulation; the second one concerned the social values of the Chinese tradition and the comparison between the basic social values of the Chinese tradition and those of the Western tradition in the effort to discern what our distinctive features are; the third issue concerned the synthetic integration of Confucian values and preferences in the effort to point out the path of development of traditional Chinese values and the need for creative transformation.

#### 4.

Aside from the issue of social values, I think there is another important issue, which is the issue of moral values at the individual level. This issue is also related to that of the modern transmission and transformation of traditional Chinese virtues. Everyone just heard my speech, and my say, “you are talking about values, and we are from Qilu, Confucius’ home, and we all speak about the values of being humane, righteous, ritually appropriate and wise, but how come we did not hear you speak about these values? Where did they go? In what follows I will talk about the modern transmission and transformation of these traditional Chinese virtues.

First let us look back at the formation of the traditional Chinese virtues. What were the predominant things involved? I will talk about this first. The traditional Chinese virtues were shaped during the Western Zhou Spring and Autumn Period, and were fixed in the early Confucian thought of Confucius and Mencius. In the Spring and Autumn period there were already many moral ideas emerging. During this period there was no dominant virtue that led ahead of all other morals. But we could say that one of the mainstream virtues of the later phase of the Spring and Autumn period was loyal belief. The character for loyalty is composed of the radical for “heart” (*xin* 心) and the radical for “middle” (*zhong* 中). Another virtue was “humanity, wisdom, courage.” In the Spring and Autumn period prior to Confucius, not only in Qilu, but also in neighboring states like that of Wei, and in the whole of the central plains culture, the most mainstream of the virtues were loyal belief on the one hand and humanity, wisdom, and courage on the other.

But when the end of the Spring and Autumn period nears in the thought of Confucius, humanity or being humane became the most important virtue, the most important moral action. We should say that being righteous was also very important during the Spring and Autumn period, but the status of being righteous was not poignant. In the thought of Confucius, being humane and acting righteously were also far from the same thing. Mozi was also from Qilu, from Tengzhou 滕州. He stressed the value of acting righteously. This stress on the value of acting righteously influenced Mencius, who then raised the value of acting righteously to the same level as that of being humane, hence the joint formulation of “being humane and acting righteously.” So starting with Mencius, being humane and righteously became the most important virtues of Confucianism. Mencius then listed four virtues together, namely “being humane, acting righteously, observing ritual propriety and acting wisely.” After undergoing the Han dynasty’s emendation, the virtue of being trustworthy was added to the list. Why did the Han dynasty bring up

the notion of “five cardinal virtues?” Because only by becoming “five cardinal virtues” could they correspond with the “five elements.” The five cardinal virtues of course included the four virtues of being humane, acting righteously, observing ritual propriety and acting wisely, each of which became the basic virtues that have influenced Chinese society most deeply.

In the “four virtues and five cardinal virtues” and in the “four books and five classics” that the Confucian school promoted there were also some, which co-constituted the complete system of virtues of the Confucian school along with the four virtues and six cardinal virtues. For example, filial piety, balanced harmony and sincere respect acted in unison with the five cardinal virtues. They together dominated the moral thought and moral life of the Chinese people.

Bringing up another obvious example, there is filial piety. Filial piety is not among the five cardinal virtues, but no one could deny that filial piety is in the moral life of the Chinese people and occupies an important and poignant place there. You talk about being humane, acting righteously, observing ritual propriety, acting wisely and being trustworthy, but you do not think filial piety is important? You cannot say that. Because of this, we often say that the four virtues are the four moral norms or items of moral action, which for Chinese people are most representative, but one cannot say that the four virtues can entirely cover the whole of our moral ideas and moral life.

Why in history were the four virtues in the Confucian theory thought to be the most important and the most salient? Why not add filial piety to the list? I think ancient Confucians had their own thought. But this does not preclude the fact that filial piety is still very important for everyone in practice, and theoretically speaking this is because the four virtues go beyond specific ethical relationships (like parents and children) and become the principles defining interpersonal relations in general. We should say that filial piety is still intrinsic to specific ethical relations. But the four virtues are not blood-bond based ethical principles, and are also not specific ethical principles for political relations. Filial piety is an ethical principle of blood-bond relations, and the specific ethical principle for political relations is loyalty. The four virtues are virtues with more universal significance than those of filial piety and loyalty, virtues with the meaning of being principles of interpersonal relations.

But we say that in antiquity, every item of moral action is far from being one-sided and simple. Whether it is loyalty or filial piety, whether it is being humane or acting righteously, observing ritual propriety or acting wisely, every moral stipulation has a specific concrete meaning and also an expanded universal meaning. For example, loyalty is predominantly a specific political relation between prince and minister, who should take on a moral duty, a moral norm, a moral stipulation. Loyalty’s specific meaning refers to the minister’s morality in relation to the prince, but loyalty also has an expanded universal meaning, according to which one may be loyal to a political duty or a nation-state. This was the case for the Warring States period. Moreover, loyalty in the prince-minister relation is also not simply obedience, for one’s ability to risk speaking frankly to one’s prince may also be loyalty. By the Warring States period loyalty had the even more universal significance of fully exercising one’s affective mind for others. Did you fully

exercise your affective mind when you were considering another person? In *The Analects*, there is the saying, “everyday I reflect on myself with respect to three things,” the first of which is, “Have I been faithful in executing affairs with others?” (*Analects* 1.4) This all points to fully exercising one’s affective mind for the sake of others. So, every item of moral action has its concrete meaning and its more expanded universal meaning, as well, which are the grounds upon which it is capable of transforming.

Why were the virtues of loyalty and trustworthiness so popular during the Spring and Autumn period? It is because this specific meaning particularly suited the needs of society in the patriarchal society of the Spring and Autumn period. But then the era of Confucius came, and Confucius spoke of learning how to be humane, which in terms of moral ideas was already a breakthrough when it comes to traditional aristocratic society and clan institutions. Confucius made *ren* (being humane) into an important virtue of the basic relationship between human and human. During the Spring and Autumn period, being humane and acting righteously became important virtues. Being humane and acting righteously were important not only because they were specifically advocated by Confucius and Mencius, but also because of the needs of those times. In the aristocratic patriarchal institutions of the Warring States period, and particularly in the patriarchal institutions of politics, the institutions themselves were corrupt and changing, so the individual’s moral obligation to the patriarchal political order gave way to those more universal social morals and principles of interpersonal relations.

Moreover we say that being humane and acting righteously were not only personal virtues, they were also social values during the development of ancient Chinese society.

So today we are looking back at the meaning of the four virtues and seeking to explain them. The first is being humane, the meaning of which historically speaking is rather debatable. For instance, the *Shuowen jiezi* 说文解字 states, “being humane is loving the intimate,” but after the Tang dynasty, Han Yu 韩愈 stated, “friendly loving is called being humane.” Of course, Confucius and Mencius both stated that “being humane is loving other humans,” but this loving other humans or being humane that Confucius and Mencius spoke of already went beyond the familial relations of the blood bond. To use today’s words, it already became a greater love without limits, and had profoundly universal connotations. Being humane is the most important virtue in traditional Chinese culture.

Among the four virtues, observing ritual propriety originally stood for ritual etiquette and specifically put weight on correctly modifying the outward appearance of actions. As a virtue, observing ritual propriety is precisely respecting and upholding rites. Acting righteously had earlier referred to respecting elders who were not bonded to one by blood. But the further universalization of acting righteously made it become the respecting of all elders, including those bonded to one by blood and those who are not. But because later observing ritual propriety came to cover the respecting of elders, acting righteously gradually transformed after Mencius, who understood it as moral action in correlation with the sense of shame and disgust. It was no longer the moral action of respecting elders. Shame and



disgust are affects associated with what is morally good and evil, because of which acting righteously gradually became the active upholding of the righteousness of the way in rejecting evil and fighting for what is morally good. Being wise is on a much higher cognitive plan than that of knowing. As a moral virtue, wisdom is a capacity of grasping and identifying what is moral knowledge. So as regards the virtues of individual morality, being humane is deep friendly love of humanity, being righteous is upholding the righteousness of the way, observing ritual propriety is maintaining ritual deference, and wisdom is enlightened discernment.

As the morality of the individual, the four virtues mean precisely this. However, as I just said, out of the four virtues being humane and acting righteously connote not only the morality of the individual, but are also social values. Confucius spoke of being humane as a moral virtue, but the broader social significance of being humane and acting righteously can be seen, for example, when Mencius' teachings, "If the son of heaven is not humane, he cannot hold the four seas; if the minister is not humane, he cannot hold the temple." (*Mencius* 4A3) Being humane had already become a universal political principle. So after the Han dynasty in the 2000 years of political culture in China, being humane in theory has been the leading principle of politics and action. So, it is not just the individual's values; it is also the state's and society's basic principle of political action. For this reason, Emperor Taizong of Tang 唐太宗 brought it up that, being humane is the basis; being humane and acting righteously are the chief values. As the basic values, they are more than the morality of the individual; they are the basic values of social politics. Being humane developed once again to the point where everyone within the four seas is my sibling and the great concordance of all under heaven became the highest social ideals.

In the *Zuozhuan* 左传, it is said of acting righteously that "acting most of the time unrighteously will sentence one to the grave." (*Zuozhuan*: "Yin Gong yuan nian" 隱公元年) This is a concept of justice. In *The Analects* it is stated that "righteousness is the essence," "righteousness is the highest," which shows that Confucius still found what is righteous extremely important, but righteousness in these places is not acting righteously in the sense of moral action, but the righteousness of justice. Mencius stated, "killing one innocent person is inhumane; taking something that is not one's own is unrighteous." (*Mencius* 7A33) To take someone else's things as one's own is against the principle of justice. So the concept of *yi* 义 (what is righteous) in many places during ancient times expressed what is just in aspects of society. In this way, what is righteous was not simply what is moral at the individual level; it was also a social value.

So the four virtues were not only morals at the individual level; they were also the core values of the mainstream of ancient society. With respect to the basic values of society, the concept of being humane was for strengthening humane policies that were favorable to the people; that of observing ritual propriety was for strengthening the cultural system, and observing ritual propriety did not just refer to the individual's behavior, it referred to the cultural order of rites as well; that of right referred to the social principle of justice, and harmony referred to the harmonious solidarity of the group. Aside from these items that we have discussed there are also many cultivating exercises associated closely with these items, for

instance, overcoming oneself, reflecting on oneself, rectifying one's will and making one's intentions sincere, being vigilant of one's morality when alone, etc. I will not say more of this here.

Aside from these formulations in the canons expressing our moral values, there are also some popular sayings that express values in the social culture of every age. For instance, the Song dynasty was very particular about "being pure and righteous, having integrity and shame," and the later phase of the Ming dynasty spoke of "loyalty and filial piety, being pure and righteous." Novels in the Ming and Qing dynasties were full of mentions of the latter, which were socially popular universal values.

This is the basic meaning and social value of the moral virtues of ancient China, during which time morality at the individual level were integrally combined into one body with social values.

## 5.

In connection with this, I would like to talk a bit about time since the modern age, during which traditional virtues were transmitted and thereby transformed. This transmission and transformation since the modern age, one should say, was a topic of shared concern on behalf of thinkers, politicians and scholars. For example, after the revolution of 1911, the empire no longer existed, nor did the study of classics, so what use could be made of what was said in the classics? The state at this time proposed some basic morals in response to the need of moral cultivation. Since the modern age, the state had an important mission, which was to take important measures to promote basic morals, which every age needs. The classics lost their status, but a society still needs to determine and establish a set of mainstream values. These were the "eight virtues," namely, "filial piety, care of siblings, loyalty, trustworthiness, observing ritual propriety, acting righteously, being pure and having a sense of shame." These were what the Peking government proposed, because as we know, Sun Yat-sen 孙中山 did not occupy the seat of president for very long before he gave way to Yuan Shikai 袁世凯. So, these were not proposed by Sun Yat-sen. The first four of the eight virtues appear in the *Mencius* and the second four appear in the *Guanzi*.

Sun Yat-sen was a revolutionary, but he was very serious about the importance of the transmission and transformation of traditional virtues. One should say that in the past 100 years state leaders have all taken the transmission and transformation of morality very seriously, but the first of these state leaders was Sun Yat-sen. We know that Sun Yat-sen also proposed the eight virtues, but in contrast to what the Peking government proposed, Sun Yat-sen's were "loyalty and filial piety, humanity and love, being trustworthy and righteous, harmony and equality." The Nanjing government continues to advocate this up till today in Taiwan where it currently rules. The streets of Taipei are filled with these words, East Loyal Filial Piety Road, Love of Humanity Road, and so forth, which are all names of the eight virtues of Sun Yat-sen.

Sun Yat-sen was very particular about loyalty and filial piety. He states that although we cannot speak of a loyal prince today, but can we not speak of being

loyal to the people? Could we speak of fully exercising one's might and soul in loyally executing affairs? "If acting but without success, and still sacrificing one's life without pity, this is loyalty." Looking at Sun Yat-sen's transmission and transformation of this concept of loyalty, I see the modernizing effect. The ancient notion of loyalty emphasized being loyal to one's emperor, but "now that there is no emperor, no one speaks of being loyal, as if one could do just anything at all; that is a great mistake. In our republic, in principle we still need to be loyal, not to one's prince, but to one's country, to one's people; we need to be loyal to 400 million people. So, Sun Yat-sen spoke of loyalty and filial piety in ways quite unlike the loyalty and filial piety of the Ming and Qing dynasty. He attempted to integrate and transform the traditional moral ideas with our modern life.

Of course, as for Sun Yat-sen's thought, loyalty and filial piety, humanity and love, being trustworthy and righteous, harmony and peace, these eight virtues are actually grouped into four sets of two. But why? For example, humanity and love are one virtue, being harmonious and peaceful are not two different virtues, and although being trustworthy and righteous seem like two different virtues, when Sun Yat-sen himself emphasized them, he pointed out the priority of being trustworthy. Because of this for Sun Yat-sen, these eight virtues are actually underscored as four. He also divided them in this way. He spoke about the virtues that China shares, but people to this day cannot forget that today we are promoting a set of values, a moral outlook that in Sun Yat-sen's opinion must be the transmission and transformation of the ancient traditional morality. An entirely new set of morals will not do. He stated, "the eight virtues already existed in ancient times; Chinese people to this day cannot forget that first is loyalty and filial piety, second is humanity and love, the third is trustworthiness and righteousness, the fourth is harmony and peace." So Sun Yat-sen still focused on the moral resources native to Chinese culture. Sun Yat-sen stated: because the morality of our people is so highly esteemed, the state may fall, but the people can still survive, and moreover, the morality of our people is still powerful enough to assimilate foreign peoples. So, from the native origins to the source, today we have to resuscitate the status of the people, and aside from linking everyone together in solidarity to form a collective state, we have to restore our native morals. We may only have the inherent status of our people and restore the inherent status of our people with the old morality we had inherently." So I think that he was underscoring the role of native morals in the rebirth of our people.

After Sun Yat-sen passed away, the Nanjing Republic not only advocated for the eight virtues, it also added the four dimensions that Guanzi spoke of, "observing ritual propriety, acting righteously, being pure and having-shame," which underscored the sphere of morality at the individual level. However, the eight virtues from the perspective of Sun Yat-sen's intended meaning of them were the integrated with the need of social values, and loyalty was loyalty to the state and to the people, while peace was obviously not individual. So, the four dimensions and the eight virtues became the mainstream morality that they advocated at that time, which shows the effort of the Chinese civilization in transmitting the morals native to China. In 2014, Secretary Xi Jinping 习近平 said in Europe that "two thousand years ago China experienced a flourishing of schools of thought, Laozi, Confucius,

Mozi and other such thinkers spoke of the patterns of stars in the sky above and the patterns of the earth below, spoke broadly about the essence of the relationship between human and human, between human being and society, between human beings and nature, and brought up a system of thought of great breadth and subtle profundity. They brought up many ideas like filial piety, loyalty and trustworthiness, like observing ritual propriety, being righteous and pure and having shame, the notion that the humane love human beings, that one should be morally good to other people, that nature and man fuse into one, that *dao* emulates nature, that one should strengthen oneself tirelessly, and so on. To this day these ideas still deeply influence the life of the Chinese people. The Chinese people have their own unique system of values in looking at the world, society, and human life.”

Of course, whether it was the Peking government or the Nanjing government, both transmitted the inherent morals of China, but these positions still differ from the formulations of Confucian scholars. In what places do these differences exist? It is where the modern state leaders placed these morals in terms of status. They found loyalty to the state and filial piety to be the most important, but if one were a Confucian, one would not speak of loyalty, filial piety, humanity and love, but of humanity and love, then loyalty and filial piety, where humanity and love were placed in the most important position.

From the world of theory to the world of knowledge, many people know that Liang Qichao 梁启超 wrote an early article called *The Doctrine of the New People* (*Xinmin shuo* 新民说), which speaks of public virtues from the outset. It states that before Chinese people spoke of private virtues, so today us modern people need to focus on public virtues. What are the most important public virtues that Liang Qichao spoke of? Undoubtedly the patriotic love of the nation and the good of the group. One should love this nation and one should do meaningful things for the group. This is most important. But most people do not notice this and neglect it. *The Doctrine of the New People* was written in three years. At the beginning Liang Qichao started to write a chapter called “On Public Virtue” (*Lun gongde* 论公德), but three years later he wrote “On Private Virtue” (*Lun side* 论私德) in order to reemphasize the meaning of private virtues. He states that today scholars talk about public virtues, but their effect on the public is far from obvious. Why? The reason is that the private virtues of our people still have a great defect. So we must forge a new people, and cultivate the private virtues of the individual as the first duty. This is to say that private virtues are still first in the order of importance. Public virtues are good for the state and good for society, while private virtues are good for individual character. Liang Qichao thought that private and public virtues were equally important, but also thought that private virtues constituted the foundation of public virtues.

For example the socialist values that we speak of today stress the importance of patriotism, and patriotism is a public virtue. But when we speak of friendliness, sincerity and trust, such are private virtues. Liang Qichao thinks that these relations do not simply run parallel with one another. Rather, public virtues are the morals of relations between the individual and society, while private virtues are the moral refinement of individual action and character, and so are also moral actions of the

individual in treating the other and society. These two aspects are very important, but for the individual, the foundation is individual character and individual behavior, individual morality. So private virtues are the foundation of public virtues. This is the final conclusion Liang Qichao made in *The Doctrine of the New People*. One should say that in this respect, the virtues of the Chinese civilization have profound resources.

## 6.

Finally, we will integrate the contemporary practice of core values with the real culture of Shandong province, and talk about some ideas. This is the final issue.

What I just stated was that private virtues constitute the basic morals and basic character traits of the individual. The moral demands of modern society upon the individual have increased, but this increase is mainly with respect to public virtues, for example patriotism and the upholding of law, which one should say are some new demands raised by the development of the modern state and society. Or course, here we have to make a distinction between morals and values. Because the scope of values is sometimes broader, there are many values that are not morals, for example, freedom, which is a value but not a moral at the individual level. Another example is equality, which is a social value but not a moral at the individual level. What we said just now is that we still need to emphasize the importance of individual morality.

Liang Qichao spoke of private virtues and public virtues, which are both questions for the individual agent. Whether it is a private virtue or a public virtue, both are moral demands of the individual agent. But whether it is freedom or democracy, none of them touch down as the moral issues of the individual agent, so this concept of values is sometimes quite different from that of morals. The topic the host gave me was values. I think this is not enough and that we need to add in the body of Chinese virtues, moral values and moral virtues into the mix if we are to completely understand where the direction and foundations of the realization of our core values today are.

A basic idea of mine is that today the morality and upholding of morality that we speak of today mostly actualize in the practice of the individual's mind and body. This is the most important point that we have to speak clearly about in theory today, when we undertake the practice of the core values of socialism. One should say that before this, our conception of this problem was also unclear. For instance, in 2001 the state publicly issued *The Basic Moral Norms of Citizenship* (*Gongmin jiben daode guifan* 公民基本道德规范), in which some twenty characters discussed public virtues without distinguishing between public virtues and private virtues. This is to say that it did not emphasize the private virtues that Chinese people are so particular about, nor did it advocate for the basic morals and character traits of the individual. One could say that we prior to this we did not emphasize the virtues of Chinese civilization, and we only are now.

So, in continuing to promote the traditional values of the Chinese civilization, I will mainly talk about the content of individual morals and of the cultivation of individual morality. To use Liang Qichao's words, "The important point is still

private virtue.” When we were recently talking about empowering the construction of morality, the shaping of moral norms and the establishing of moral ideals, speaking about morals, respecting morals, and upholding morals all have to do with the morality of the individual and have a foot hold in the basic morals of the individual person. The ultimate direction is in what kind of person one will become and how to be that person. This is most important.

Since the opening reforms, we were not serious enough in dealing with these issues, and did not absorb enough moral wisdom from Chinese culture. And the majority of the content of civil morals concerns public virtue. Actually, the Western philosopher Aristotle said long ago that the moral demands of the citizen are rather low, while the moral demands of the good person are rather high. Being a citizen and being a good person are different issues altogether. As a citizen, the demand upon the person is to be fair and orderly, which is not a high demand. If we were to talk from the perspective of politics and law, the demands upon the citizen are average. But from the perspective of society, culture and specifically traditional Chinese culture, we do not just demand civil morality, we also demand the virtues of a good person. This is precisely the idea of moral virtues and of upholding and respecting morality that we are talking about.

From the perspective of Confucianism, the core values of modern socialism come in three groups with some contents. Aside from this system of core socialist values, I would also like to consider secretary Xi Jinping’s treatment of spirit in order to understand it better. What does better understanding mean here? What we are looking for is the relationship between the nurturing and practice of the core socialist values and the traditional Chinese system of values and virtues. We have to examine this issue at greater depth. We have not learned deeply enough about the many sides of this issue at present. We are still talking about the meaning of the core socialist values on the basis of the average meaning of them. We still have not spoken clearly enough about the relationship between the nurturing of the core socialist values and Chinese culture and Chinese virtues.

First, the basic spirit of Xi Jinping’s discourse has been that the core values of socialism need to have a foundation in the basic values of the mainstream of Chinese culture. The latter must serve as the origin, the foothold, the foundation, the ground, and the vital fabric of the core values of socialism. This is most important. Today we are talking about the core values of socialism, the refining and promoting of which first must have a cultural foundation. I actually spoke about this already last year in my four “explain clearly” section. Xi Jinping clearly emphasized this year that the core values of socialism must have a foundation in traditional Chinese values. With respect to the traditional Chinese values, he mentioned six, namely, “speak of humanity and love, stress the foundation of the people, uphold sincerity and trust, prize justice, elevate peaceful union and seek the great concord.” In conclusion, we must unfold the meaning of the values of Chinese culture and make them the foundation of the core values of our socialism.

Second, the concrete practice of the core values of socialism is definitely conditioned by the transmission and practice of the Chinese system of virtues, which form the foothold of the former. Today I spoke of the nurturing and practicing of

the core values of socialism, but how are they nurtured? How are they practiced? My understanding is that we must underscore that the transmission and practice of the Chinese system of virtues is its basic precondition, its basic foothold. We must emphasize the importance of the relation between the core values of socialism and traditional Chinese virtues.

So my basic idea is this: we must talk about the nurturing and practicing of the core values of socialism on the basis of the analysis of actual conditions, and on the other hand we must notice the importance of the transmission and practice of the Chinese system of virtues. Starting with the basic moral virtues of the individual and the refinement of moral and social customs, we may have a solid social foundation. Respecting morals and upholding morals makes effectuating them in practice possible. I have completed my talk about today's content. Thank you.