

Chinese Classics Present Future

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Excerpt: A few issues concerning the translation worth a mention: First, the contents of each chapter was written by a different author (and probably several students). The details of who wrote each section can be found in the Afterword. Second, in the original Chinese, the style, format, and terminology varies throughout the book—from chapter to chapter and sometimes within a single chapter. Generally, we worked to establish consistencies that do not always appear in the original, especially for the sake of formatting and where terminological discrepancies occur, but each chapter remains somewhat independent in terms of style. Third, barring certain key terms such as dao 道, li 礼, or ren 仁, we do not attempt to do word-for-word translations. Indeed, there may be significant variances in how a term is translated, according to the context, implied connotation, and with concern for English fluency. Finally, there are some obscure ancient texts that do not have agreed upon (in some cases, any) English titles. Glosses have been added for these titles either by the chapter translator, but the glosses merely hint at the context of these texts, and are not meant to be translations of the actual title.

The term dao 道 can be translated as “way,” “path,” or “discourse.” It is central to Chinese philosophical thought, and can often be understood as the “way” of the cosmos, or in Guo’s work as “the way of nature,” which, if gone against, will only cause unproductive friction.

The term li 礼 can be translated as “principle,” “pattern,” or “coherence.” It is another term central to Chinese philosophical thought, but one that has various connotations that develop over time and vary from text to text, author to author.

Looking Back and Reflecting on Sixty Years of Research on Chinese Philosophy, translated by Chad Meyers

First, we want to define “Chinese philosophy.” According to the branches of study, what in the past was called “the history of Chinese philosophy” is now called “Chinese philosophy.” However, using the term “Chinese philosophy” easily leads to a misconceived reference to the whole field or primary branch of philosophy in China. In this book “Chinese philosophy” is generally equivalent to what is known today as “Chinese philosophy” of the so-called secondary branch, that is, “the history of Chinese philosophy.” But this is not the end of the matter. What we have to explain is that analyzing “Chinese philosophy” solely in terms of knowing and understanding is not enough. “Chinese philosophy” possesses at least two levels: the first level is “Chinese philosophy” as a world of meaning. This level connotes a state of mind and the ideal of the ultimate meaning of human life, and particularly the fundamental, whether general or particular, spiritual beliefs or core values of Chinese civilization—like “the boundary of interrelation of Nature and human beings,” “the source of the natural order of human life,” dao 道 or “Dao” and li 理 or “Li,”—which constitute the living and fluidly transforming level that still plays a positive role in securing a way of life in today’s world and in the collective life of the Chinese people. Only the second level is the academic level of “Chinese philosophy” as a body of knowledge that is built up as a branch of study. Here we find what could be divided, classified, and separately taken into academic research. On this level “Chinese philosophy” can be cognitively turned into the content of comparison with foreign philosophy and taken to be the equivalent of the “Chinese philosophy” that foreign sinologists take as the object of their research. There are, however, some differences between “Chinese philosophy” on this level and foreign sinology.

Second, in this book we stress the three “thirty years” concept. In discussing the recent sixty years of development of academic history, the thirty and forty years running prior to this are unavoidable. If we take more than a century or so as a whole, then the history made by the scholastic paradigm of Chinese humanities or social science even more strongly illustrates the whole image of contemporary academic history. Of course, our discussion of problems always

includes points of emphasis, and in this work the emphasis is on the last sixty years since October 1949. We cannot, however, forget that we need to frame this against the background of the thirty years preceding this period, namely the academic history of the beginning of the People's Republic up to 1949. In discussing the last sixty years of academic development of the mainland region of China, the point of emphasis is, of course, the thirty years after reforming and opening up. But the first thirty years of this period, namely academic history from 1949 to 1978, is by no means insignificant. There are many reasons why the problems in the following thirty years could stimulate deep discussion and obtain academic value, and part of the problematic themes among them stemmed from reflections on the thirty years prior to reforming and opening up. The achievements of the prior thirty years of research were not all vacant of truth.

Since the modern age, the increasing tediousness of the division of labor in academia has greatly strengthened the self-awareness of individuated branches of study; many have begun asserting their own independent agency, and their own objects of areas and methods have been more profoundly discussed. The distinction and differences among the history of Chinese philosophy, the history of Chinese academic learning, and the history of Chinese thought have begun to catch the attention of scholarly discussion and debate. Generally speaking, research in the history of philosophy is centered on the discussion of metaphysics, cosmology, life, values, philosophical problems, and methods.

It then tends to analyze the internal logic and pressing difficulties of different philosophical systems and the evolution and development of philosophical theories. But research in the history of thought focuses much more on the interaction between ideas and social historical factors like politics, economics, and culture, the influence of specific historical conditions upon the formation of some thought, and how these thoughts influence social reality—more simply put, the “historical meaning of the transformation of thought.” But what must be noticed is the last 100 years of research in the history of Chinese philosophy is that it is always inextricably intertwined with research in the history of Chinese thought. Liang Qichao, Cai Shangsi and the general scholarly world of the 1980s have even professionally discussed the problem of the relationship between the history of philosophy and the

history of thought. However, this problem has not been fundamentally resolved. In addition, the boundary between the history of Chinese philosophy and the history of Chinese thought is blurred. Based on this fact, taking the “history of Chinese philosophy and thought” as the topic of discussion seems to more fully reflect the developmental evolution of the last sixty years of research in the history of Chinese philosophy. In another respect, many scholars who have been influenced by such trends of thought as modern hermeneutics emphasize the autonomous nature of the study of the history of Chinese philosophy as well as the close bond between the raising and answering of philosophical problems and the context of history and culture, and so hold to unfolding the combined research of the history of Chinese philosophy in a way that integrates the history of philosophy and the history of thought. Of course, the authors of this book engages in the enterprise of philosophy and focus heavily on the content of philosophy and its research. The content of philosophy strongly reflects the spirit of the age, and philosophical wisdom is capable of embodying the singular nature of a people.

Two Big Stages and Five Small Stages

The branch of study (of the history) of Chinese philosophy was established at the beginning of the twentieth century. The forerunners of this branch of study were Chen Fuchen, Chen Hanzhang, Ma Xulun and Xie Wuliang. The founders of this branch of study were Wang Guowei, Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei, and especially those who were influenced by the United Kingdom and the United States, like Hu Shi and Feng Youlan. Those who participated in this branch of study also include Zhong Tai. The guiding star in the process of initiating the study of the history of Chinese philosophy was Feng Youlan's two-volume *Zhongguo Zhexue Shi* [A History of Chinese Philosophy], published by the Commercial Press in 1935. Additionally, Feng Youlan's *Xin Yuan Dao* [A New Treatise on the Nature of Dao], published at the end of the war of resistance against Japan, was an extension of this tradition, and was comparatively more developed and more Chinese than the previous work. From the end of the 1920s to the eve of the founding of the new China, the works of Tang Yongtong and Zhang Dainian are hard to ignore. In other respect, another set of classics includes the series of creative works about Chinese philosophy and thought that were written by Marxist historians of

thought who were guided by the theory of historical materialism like the representative figures, Guo Moruo and Hou Wailu. This became the main basis and foundation of this field of study in the first thirty years following 1949. In brief, research in (the history) of Chinese philosophy and thought prior to 1949 there were predominantly two paradigms, the Hu-Feng [Hu Shi and Feng Youlan] paradigm and the Guo-Hou [Guo Moruo and Hou Wailu] paradigm. In the thirty years following, the Guo-Hou paradigm was the most popular.

The thirty years of research on Chinese thought and history prior to the reforming and opening up is divisible into two smaller stages: the “seventeen years” from 1949 to 1966 was the first stage, of which the representative academic event was Peking University’s Symposium on the History of Chinese Philosophy, which was influenced by the Soviet philosopher Zhdanov’s definition of the history of philosophy, established the idea of “the two pairs” of opposites in philosophy, the opposition between materialism and idealism and that between dialectics and metaphysics, and clearly reflected the disrupting and suppressing influence of dogmatism upon the research of the history of Chinese and foreign philosophy. The second stage is from 1966 to 1977 during the Cultural Revolution, whose critique of legalism and Confucianism showed the scholarly world taking further steps into the messy confusion of right and wrong under the shroud of political forces, where no true academic research was possible in the atmosphere of extreme leftist thought.

Looking at the relevant published works, *Zhongguo Sixiang Tongshi* [A General History of Chinese Thought], which was completed between the early 1940s and the early 1960s by Hou Wailu, Du Guoxiang, Zhao Jibin, and Qiu Hansheng is undoubtedly the most important achievement on the history of Chinese philosophy and the history of Chinese thought during this period, and up until the present moment it is still widely influential. The People’s University Press republished a revised version in 2008. *Zhongguo Sixiang Tongshi* highlights the integration of the history of thought and the history of society, and “carries out the systematic analysis and explication of the content, evolution, and distinctive features of the history of Chinese thought rooted in the spirit of unifying history and logic.” This book establishes the basic paradigm of researching the history of Chinese philosophy and thought from

the perspective of historical materialism and dialectical materialism. In the name of the history of thought, this work possesses the concentrated taste of the history of philosophy, and so in the early 1980s became the first book of the abbreviated edition, *Zhongguo Sixiang Shigang* [An Outline of the History of Chinese Thought], and was published in 1963 under the name of *Zhongguo Zhexue Jianshi* [A Brief History of Chinese Philosophy] by the China Youth Publishing House. The other works published during the period on the history of Chinese philosophy and thought basically did not surpass this paradigm, for instance, Yang Rongguo’s *Zhongguo Gudai Sixiang Shi* [A History of Ancient Chinese Thought], published in 1963. That aside, other works worth consideration include Qian Mu’s *Zhongguo Sixiang Shi* [A History of Chinese Thought], published outside China in 1952. The distinctive characteristic of this book is its focus on explaining ancient Chinese thought through the difference between Chinese and Western thought. It attempts “to understand the content of Chinese thought from the standpoint of Chinese thought it-self, and seek the developmental change and system of principles that Chinese thought distinctly possesses of itself.” The author restricts himself to the narrow, Westernized understanding of philosophy and believes that China did not have philosophy in the Western sense; the book is thus not named A History of Chinese Philosophy but A History of Chinese Thought. But with respect to content, this history of Chinese thought is much closer to a history of Chinese philosophy. The first three books of *Zhongguo Zhexue Shi* [A History of Chinese Philosophy], edited by Ren Jiyu, was published by the People’s University Press from 1963 to 1964; the full four-book edition was published in 1979. Although this set of books carries the seal of the age, as a work that completely constructs a consistent history of Chinese philosophy under the direction of Marxism, using a simple, clear thread and logical system, it undoubtedly possesses great significance and value. Also, this book was used as a teaching text, was widely employed in university classrooms following the reforming and opening up, and had a rather large influence.

After the 1950s, under the influence of the Soviet Zhdanov’s definition of the history of philosophy, research in the history of Chinese philosophical thought showed an obvious tendency toward dogmatism. During the Cultural Revolution the political environment worsened, legalism and Confucianism

were critiqued, academic research was politicized and lost the most basic, objective independence, and the history of philosophy and thought became the history of the struggle between legalism and Confucianism, the history of political thought.

At the beginning of the reforming and opening up, historical memories worth focusing on include the famous conferences at Wuhu and Taiyuan on the history of foreign philosophy from 1978 to 1979 and the Hangzhou conference on Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism in 1981. The development of the Chinese philosophical world in the thirty years following the reforming and opening up underwent roughly three small stages (that is, the third to fifth stages of the whole sixty years), and in many respects achieved striking success.

The third stage was roughly from 1978 to 1990, when the branch of study entered an era of revitalization. First, in the context of the liberation of thought, the main tendency of the studies on the history of Chinese philosophy during this period was to shake off the dogmatic model of the “two opposed camps” of materialism and idealism, dialectics and metaphysics, which came from the influence of the Soviet Zhdanov, and then to critique the chaos of thought that “critiquing legalism and Confucianism” incited, and break free of political discourses such as the “class struggle” and “the struggle of paths.” Hegel and Marx’s view of the history of philosophy as the “unity of logic and history” and arguments related to it in Lenin’s Philosophical Notebooks set the tone for the restructuring or decoding of Chinese philosophy during this time. It was an attempt to move out of politicization towards an academic system that would be under the influence of the “epistemological” turn in the philosophical world. In this new system, methods went under names such as the “the spiral structure,” “the circle of history,” “the research of categories,” and “the history of philosophy is the history of knowing.” Despite being a mixed bag of the old and the new, there was no shortage of impressive works. Although Zhang Dainian’s *Zhongguo Zhexue Dagang* [An Outline of Chinese Philosophy], which revolves around the history of problems, was published by the Commercial Press under the name Yu Tong in 1958, it was only during this stage that it started to play a significant role. Second, another major topic forming the background of this stage was a certain “culture buzz.” With the help of opportunities to open up to the foreign world, in the peak of discussion of “the

relationship between traditional culture and modernization,” which scholars promoted at home and abroad, the scholarly world started to re-examine the wisdom of Chinese philosophy. Although the main surge of interest was in Enlightenment rationality and the form was mostly grand narrative, there were still many publications of innovative treatises that revealed the inside story and distinctive quality of Chinese philosophy, which were equally refreshing to eyes and ears. These two threads (grand narrative and distinctive story) ran parallel and also crisscrossed. The representatives of the first thread were Feng Qi’s *Zhongguo Gudai Zhexue de Luoji Fazhan* [The Development of Logic in Ancient Chinese Philosophy], published by the Shanghai People’s University Press in 1983, and his three-piece opus *Zhihui Shuo* [The Doctrine of Wisdom], as well as *Zhongguo Zhexue Shi* [A History of Chinese Philosophy], edited by Xiao Shafu and Li Jinqian, published by the People’s Press in 1982 (first volume) and 1983 (second volume). The representatives of the second thread were treatises by Tang Yijie and Pang Pu, as well as Li Zehou’s three treatises on the history of Chinese thought, respectively on antiquity, the recent period, and the modern era.

Research on the history of Chinese thought during this period mainly carried forth and developed the fruits of Hou Wailu’s research; the main content of research was still philosophical thought. The representative treatises were He Zhaowu’s *Zhongguo Sixiang Fazhan Shi* [A History of the Development of Chinese Thought] (Beijing: China Youth Publishing House, 1980), and Zhang Qizhi’s *Zhongguo Sixiang Shi* [A History of Chinese Thought] (Xi’an: Northwestern University Press [China], 1993).

At this stage, the first generation of scholars, were old and strong in spirit, and were exemplary with respect to promoting the understanding of the whole of Chinese philosophy and also with respect to the creative transformation of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism and cultivating talent: Feng Youlan, Lü Cheng, Meng Wentong, Zhang Dainian, Wang Ming, Zhu Qianzhi, Yan Beiming, Fan Shoukang, Feng Qi, Ren Jiyu, Shi Jun, Yang Xiangkui, et alia.

The second generation of scholars, all made developments and achievements in their respective fields, resulting in a lot of high-level research: Zhu Bokun, Xiao Shafu, Tang Yijie, Pang Pu, Li Zehou, Li Jinqian, Zhang Liwen, Zhang Qizhi, Qing Xitai, Yu

Dunkang, Mou Zhongjian, Du Jiwen, Yang Zengwen, Fang Litian, Fang Keli, Liu Wenyong, Pan Fuen, Meng Peiyuan, Chen Junmin, Ge Rongjin, Zhang Xiqin, Cui Dahua.

Of course, the stages we are discussing are not rigid and mechanical. For example, of the multi-volume *Zhongguo Zhexue Fazhan Shi* [The Historical Development of Chinese Philosophy], edited by Ren Jiyu and published by the People's Press in the years 1983–1998, the first four volumes are on the pre-Qin to Wei-Jin periods, crossing over the first and second stages. Research on the history of Buddhism and Daoism in these three stages is worth taking seriously. Concerning this issue, Zhang Haiyan gave a rather systematic and comprehensive introduction.

The fourth stage was roughly from 1991 to 2000. In contrast to the previous stage, where pulling order out of chaos was predominant, the fourth stage was a period of profound study and research of advanced academic quality, a period of diversification in methodology and means of interpretation, a period of bifurcations in paths of investigation and case studies, a period of further influence from all of the modern Western philosophical trends, and a period of genuine dialogue between sinologists inside and outside of China. During this stage, the second-generation scholars, whom we just mentioned, were extremely active and lively, their pens could not stop writing, and, simultaneously, there emerged a large group of young scholars. The representative figures of the third generation of scholars were Chen Lai and Yang Guorong, who came to prominence with an exceptional amount of ground-breaking work. Chen and Yang produced abundantly, and made refined research on the whole of Chinese philosophy from the pre-Qin to the modern periods, and in particular they each have a rather strong background and training in Western philosophy. There were also scholars who had begun to feel dissatisfied with the state of research on the history of thought being dominated by research on the history of philosophy, and who tried to break free of presenting the history of Chinese thought as “the grand history of philosophy”; such scholars were influenced by the thought of Western historians like those from the Annales School, and started to make a turn toward emphasizing “the history of thought in general.” The representative treatise in this respect was undoubtedly *Zhongguo Sixiang Shi* [A History of Chinese Thought] by Ge

Zhaoguang, published by Fudan University Press in 2001.

The fifth stage is roughly from 2001 to the present. The background of this stage is “the guoxue [national studies] buzz” at the social level and “the modern interpretation of Chinese classics” at the academic level. It is a period of reconstructing the originality of “Chinese culture” and the autonomous agency of the branch of study called “Chinese philosophy.” And it is a period of gradually breaking free of the yoke of Western methods of social science and philosophy, of integration between academics with thought and thought with academics. During this period, many viewpoints and set patterns of thought that had been inveterately passed down since the May Fourth Movement and that had seemed right but were wrong, have been spotted and wiped clean. This stage is still underway. In comparison with the previous stages, in this stage, the methods of researching Chinese philosophy are much more diverse, conversation with foreign scholars is more three-dimensional, research is more refined, there are achievements in case studies, specialized studies are abundant, research teams are continuously enlarging, new vital forces are gradually increasing, and there has emerged a lively fourth generation of scholars.

The excellent aspects of the development of this stage in comparison with the previous stages are found in the marked development of organizations and institution-building in Chinese philosophy, the setting up and building of many academic institutes for Chinese philosophy and organizations for cultivating talent (including centers or institutes for branches of study such as the study of the *Yijing* [Book of Changes], Buddhism, and Daoism), which are innovative while passing on traditions, and that have become important supports for academic development. For example, the following universities and institutions have already become important vehicles for research on the history of Chinese philosophy and thought:

- Peking University,
- Wuhan University,
- Fudan University,
- The Institute of Chinese Social Science,
- Chinese People's University,
- Zhongshan University,
- Nanjing University,
- East China Normal University,

- Shandong University,
- Nankai University,
- Sichuan University,
- Beijing Normal University,
- Zhongyang Minzu University,
- Suzhou University,
- Shaanxi Normal University,
- Xibei University,
- Zhejiang University,
- Zhejiang Province Institute of Social Science,
- Heilongjiang University,
- Shanghai Normal University,
- Shanghai Municipal Institute of Social Science,
- Xiamen University,
- Capital Normal University,
- Huzhong Normal University,
- Sichuan Normal University,
- Shenzhen University

In total, there are more than twenty places that confer doctorates in Chinese philosophy, which have amassed and cultivated a large group of next-generation talent. There are also civil and regional societies like the Conference of Chinese Philosophical History, the Chinese Confucius Conference, the International Association of Confucianism, and the Chinese Confucius Scholarship Conference, which all engage in richly diverse academic activities.

With respect to specific academic activities, during this period, at every level and in every specialized department, there are academic panels and meetings on Chinese philosophy opening profusely. There is the profound unfolding of work in the informational organization of the classics from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. Many collections and genealogies of important philosophers of every stripe and school are being organized and published, scholars are issuing and publishing large quantities of theses and special works, the quantity and quality of achievements in research show breakthrough progress in comparison with the past, academic schools are contending and debating and more frequently communicating, and dialogues with foreign philosophies and religions are getting stronger. The research of many scholars has strengthened in terms of problematic themes and self-awareness of methodology, and scholars have put China and the West, antiquity and the present, into dynamic

interaction. Many scholars working with firsthand materials have been producing work sturdily and steadily. They take seriously the history of research inside and outside the country, and on this basis put forward innovative insights and give detailed analyses and arguments, which is thoroughly enjoyable. The sphere of research has enlarged further, and there have been many achievements in research on the philosophical problems, works, figures, schools, and trends of thought of every age. Representative figures, whose academic achievements are largely influential throughout this branch of study, include: Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi, Xu Fuguan, Chen Rongjie, Lao Siguang, Yu Yingshi, Fu Weixun, Chen Guying, Tu [Du] Weiming, Cheng Chung-ying [Zhongying], Liu Shuxian, Roger Ames.

Since 1978, the thirty years of reforming and opening up has been a period of great development in Chinese society and an important stage for Mainland Chinese philosophy, producing striking achievements. The ancients took thirty years to be one generation, and the time has already come that it is possible and necessary to summarize the successes that the associates of the world of Chinese philosophy have gained in this one generation. Zhang Liwen, Chen Lai, Yang Guorong, and Guo Qiyong have already taken the lead in this project, centered on the last thirty years, holding together before and after, left and right, and have made reflections and summaries of such aspects as the methods, mindset, resources, institutions, tendencies, successes, and failures of Chinese philosophy.

The Eight Big Fields that Have Been Popular in the Last Thirty Years

There have been many successes in research on philosophical figures and philosophical problems at every moment of the last thirty years. Comparatively speaking, the relationship between traditional and contemporary philosophy, classics and the study of classics, Buddhism, Philosophical Daoism and Religious Daoism, Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism, modern “New Confucianism,” research on unearthed texts of philosophical thought, and research on Chinese philosophy from the perspective of political philosophy have all become hot fields.

Traditional and Contemporary Philosophy

The Chinese people and the Chinese culture have produced their own spiritual system over the last several thousand years, including beliefs, ultimate

concerns, ways of thinking and acting, the order of ethical life, ideals, and aesthetic interests. Although these things transform and constantly change, there is a pulse of spirit that weaves through them consistently. This thread is the enlargeable and enduring ground of the fusing together of Chinese civilization and its culture. Traditional Chinese philosophy has always been pluralistic and diverse. Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, the competing pre-Qin schools, Religious Daoism, Buddhism, and nearly every school from the bottom to the top of society in the history of all the peoples of the Chinese civilization are precious as cultural resources. And today they have still have their value and significance.

In the past thirty years, most researchers have gradually made sense of the period of time between the end of the Qing dynasty and the Cultural Revolution. From the viewpoint of “cultural determinism,” which is popular in the Chinese mainland region today and for the last three decades, most researchers have been gradually subverting the period between the late Qing dynasty and the Cultural Revolution, and absolutely oppose the popular “cultural determinism” of Mainland China on the one hand and the self-deprecation of seeing the motherland’s culture as a garbage dump on the other. And this viewpoint, which completely opposes tradition and modernity, takes seriously the objective understanding and evaluation of traditional philosophical resources. Moreover, it aims at unearthing the intrinsic values of the spirit of Chinese humanities with a sympathetic and understanding attitude, and on top of that also aims at clarifying and motivating these intrinsic values in an effort to make them play a healthy and positive role in the shaping of the modernization of China. Scholars are completely focused on unearthing the contemporary value of traditional philosophy and creatively transforming traditional philosophy with an open attitude towards plurality.

Research on Classics and the Study of Classics
The revitalization of research into the five or thirteen classics is the most important event of the Chinese academic world in the last thirty years. The classics are the roots of Chinese culture and the crystallization of the wisdom of Chinese civilization. The classics and the study of classics are naturally the most important content of Chinese philosophy or the study of Chinese classics.

The classics, which include

- Shujing 书经 [The Book of History],
- Shijing 诗经 [Book of Poetry],
- the three Li 礼 [Rites],
 - Liji 礼记 [Book of Rites], the Zhou Li 周礼 [Rites of Zhou] and the Zhou Yi 周易 [Changes of Zhou],
- Chun Qiu 春秋 [The Spring and Autumn Annals]

and their commentaries

- Zuo Zhuan 左传 [Commentary of Zuo],
- Gongyang Zhuan 公羊传 [Spring and Autumn Commentary by Gongyang],
- Guliang Zhuan 穀梁传 [The Commentary of Guliang],

and the four books,

- Daxue 大学 [Great Learning],
- Zhongyong 中庸 [Doctrine of the Mean],
- Lunyu 论语 [The Analects (of Confucius)],
- Mengzi 孟子 [Mencius]

envelop Chinese philosophy’s ontological and metaphysical theories, and are the most basic ideas and framework of ancient Chinese religion, philosophy, morality, society, ethics, politics, and history. They are, additionally, the very refinement and fountainhead of Chinese civilization. In the past thirty years, there has been comprehensive development in the study of books on changes [such as the Yijing 易经 (Book of Changes) and Zhou Yi, the books on rites and the four books. We have also seen the emergence of many specialists, special works (specifically, Ph.D. theses), research institutes, and publications. Detailed research on some of these single classics are still at the stage of preparation (specifically, the preparation of human resources), but the comprehensive revitalization of the classics and the study of classics is unfolding daily.

Research on Buddhism

Along with daily increases in frequency of communication between the native and foreign worlds of philosophy and religion, the last thirty years of Buddhism research in Mainland China has continuously developed in depth. With respect to the compilation of Buddhist canons, the Zhengbian [Canonical Part] of

the massive and comprehensive Zhonghua Dazangjing [Chinese Tripitaka], which Ren Jiyu undertook, has already been published with the other parts already in the process of compilation. The successes in research on the history of Buddhism are striking. Works of comprehensive historical research and research on separate ages of Chinese Buddhism and its most important schools (including Weishi [Yogācāra], Tiantai [which follows the Lotus Sutra], Huayan [Avatamsaka], Chan [Zen], Sanlun [Mādhyamaka], and Jingtū [Pure Land]) emerge constantly in tandem with special works on the most important thinkers of Buddhism, and scholars have noticed that the links between application of the Chinese Dunhuang papers (Dunhuang juanzi) and newly unearthed materials such as those in Japan amassed daily in the works of Western, Indian, and Asian Buddhist scholars. Research on local Buddhist histories are increasingly the focus of attention, and Tibetan Buddhism is now the hot new topic. The core of this sphere of research includes research on Buddhist classics and the history of their interpretation, Buddhist philosophical ideas and institutions, the comparison of Chinese and Indian Buddhism, the sinicization of Buddhism, research on the relationship between Buddhist philosophy of life and ethical theories, and research on the relationship between Buddhism, Chinese culture and modern life.

Research on Philosophical and Religious Daoism
Textual interpretations, philosophical analysis, case studies, and comparative studies about Daoist thinkers and traditions such as Laozi, Zhuangzi, Liezi, Wenzhi, Jixia Daoism, Warring States Daoism, Han dynasty Huang-Lao Daoism, the Huainanzi [Collected Essays from Huainan's Court], the Mawangdui manuscripts, including the Huangdi Sijing [The Yellow Emperor's Four Classics], and especially research about Daoist metaphysics, Daoist environmental philosophy, Daoist theories of cultivation, and Daoist political philosophy have continuously deepened and the fruits of such research are abundant. Ever since research on philosophical and religious Daoism became a hot topic in the 1990s, the systematic research on famous Daoist figures, the different sects of Daoist religion, comprehensive historical research on Daoism in general, and the separate ages of Daoism in particular, have gradually blossomed. And the research on the Quanzhen ("Way of Complete Perfection") School of Daoism has become a hot topic as well. The focus of discussion for scholars is giving Daoist doctrines a modern interpretation. The new trend of Daoist research is unfolding studies at the

interdisciplinary level and the level of practical application. For instance, scholars look at such branches of study including cosmology, life philosophy, music, medicine, technology, cultivation practices, qigong ("life energy cultivation"), or even the study of regulation, politics, ethics, sociology, education, psychology, and literature respectively, in order to unearth the cultural resources of philosophical and religious Daoism. Near completion is the massive edition of the collected Daoist canon, the Daozang, which specialists from the Daoist Association of China have compiled and which is about to become an important milestone in the research and transmission of philosophical and religious Daoist culture.

Research on Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism

The important position that Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism occupies in Chinese philosophy is due to its being a form of philosophy that was reconstructed through the long-term collision and fusion of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. Neo-Confucianism presents a form of spirit and philosophical principles that vastly surpass those of the Han and Tang dynasties in refinement—especially its metaphysical theories, theories of states of mind, and theories of practice. Moreover, it exerted profound influences on Asian history and world history over a long historical period. At the level of philosophical research, in the last thirty years scholars have comprehensively deepened research not only into the relationship between Song dynasty Neo-Confucianism and the academics and Neo-Confucianism of the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties, but also into the relationship between Song dynasty studies and Han dynasty studies, into Song-Ming Neo-Confucian categories, philosophical systems, theoretical features, academic figures, academic collectives, regions, schools, genealogies of transmission, and academic metamorphoses. At the level of research on the history of thought, continuously becoming the center of focus in the scholarly world is not only the relationship between Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism and the corresponding social and political affairs and educational transmission of methods in the Song and Ming dynasties, but also the popularization of Li studies and its relation to the history of academic institutions, and the township organization of the Qing dynasty, and also the socio-political actions of Song-Ming Neo-Confucian intellectuals, and the rise of the new

philosophy of the Ming and Qing dynastic shift. Due to the complicated make-up and profound cognitive success of Song-Ming Confucianism, and its increasing importance as an object of examination, the content of research in this area includes its relation and connection to Buddhism, Daoism, the literary study of the history of classics, science, commerce, society, politics, and law, on the one hand, and the popularizing transmission of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism in such Asian nations and regions as North Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, along with the complications of local traditions of Zhu Xi's (d. 1200) philosophy, Wang Yangming's (d. 1529) philosophy, and their followers, on the other hand. Lastly, the Asian influence and divergent tendencies of Song-Ming thought in combination with the study of Western civilization at the time is also an important area of inquiry. In a definite sense, the modern nature that Song-Ming Confucianism possesses still requires reanalysis, and research on Yuan dynasty academics still needs to be strengthened.

Research on Modern and Contemporary New Confucianism

From 1983 to 1990, Professor Tang Yijie and Professor Xiao Shafu started to compile Xiong Shili Quanjì [Complete Collection of Xiong Shili's Work], and initiated the academic conference on Xiong Shili, Feng Youlan and Liang Shuming, and have invited Tu Weiming and Cheng Chung-ying to come to Mainland China to speak. From 1986 to 1995, Professor Fang Keli and Professor Li Jinquan directed a class group that thirty or so scholars joined, titled "Research on the Thought of Modern New Confucianism," which began the work of compilation and organization of materials and case studies of specific topics and persons. It generated a large haul of academic results. The list of names that constitutes the objects of research for this class was gradually refined, and ultimately made up the "Editor's Choice of Modern New Confucian Works," which spans three generations and fifteen people: the first generation includes Liang Shuming, Zhang Junmai, Xiong Shili, Ma Yifu, Feng Youlan, He Lin ori, Qian Mu, and Fang Dongmei. The second generation consists of Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan, and Xu Fuguan. And the third generation is represented by Yu Yingshi, Tu Weiming, Liu Shuxian, and Cheng Chung-ying. From 1988 to the present, the Taiwan Ehu School, the Hong Kong Fa Zhu Conference, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Wuhan University, Shandong University, and Sichuan and Zhejiang

academic organizations have all convened international academic conferences on modern and contemporary New Confucianism and their representative figures. The representative works of those fifteen figures, San Songtang Quanjì [Collected Works of San Songtang], Xiong Shili Quanjì, Du Weiming Wenji [Collected Writings of Tu Weiming], Cheng Zhongying Wenji [Collected Writings of Cheng Chung-ying], have been published en masse, and the quantity of research and Ph.D. theses on the whole and parts of the movement have been gradually growing. This is a field that did not exist thirty years ago. Academic research on modern and contemporary New Confucian trends of thought and figures of thought as well as their theories and practices have enlivened thinking about culture, theory, and academics in addition to having raised many issues. This has catalyzed the comparison, dialogue, and fusion between cultures and has assisted in discussions like "the dialogue of civilizations" and "global ethics." Scholars have recognized that Confucianism possesses religiosity and transcendence at the level of spiritual beliefs and existential experience. The Chinese spirit of humanities is entirely capable of matching Western theories and modern civilizations, and therefore demands the adjustment and healthy development of humanities, religion, technology, and environmentalism. <>

[Confucius and the World He Created](#) by Michael Schuman [Basic, 9780465025510]

Seeking the Real Confucius

Traveling to Confucius's hometown of Qufu, in Shandong Province in eastern China, was once a bit of a chore. Qufu isn't very close to any major urban centers, and with Confucius out of favor for much of the twentieth century, no one felt the need to smooth the process of getting there. But now that the Communist government is promoting the sage, the party cadres, always efficient when an opportunity to propagandize presents itself, have made the trip much more convenient. The latest high-speed trains zipping between Beijing and Shanghai now stop in Qufu, making the town a mere two-hour journey from the capital in a comfortable coach. There is perhaps no more obvious sign of Confucius's resurrection in China than Qufu's spiffy train station. Forty years ago, Beijing's Red Guards rushed to Qufu to ransack its historic Temple of Confucius. Today Beijing tourists are rushed to Qufu to rediscover the great sage in the temple's peaceful courtyards.

I made that trip myself in the summer of 2013. In my quest to discover Confucius in modern China, I figured there was no better place to find him than in his hometown. Qufu has been a center of Confucian study in China since the sage lived and taught in the town 2,500 years ago. When Sima Qian, the dedicated Han Dynasty historian, visited Qufu on a research trip, he found a community of scholars engrossed in the classics and absorbed in Confucius's teachings. The Communists had suppressed Qufu's Confucians during its assault on the great sage, but since the government has given Confucius official sanction once again, that community has been reborn.

One of its more prominent members is Duan Yanping. The Qufu native has spent most of his life teaching himself about Confucius. At the age of ten—just as the Communists' attitude toward Confucius was beginning to thaw—he began reading the Analects and other Confucian texts and became enthralled. Inside he discovered the ancient wisdom of China, which, he says, "helped me build up my own personal values." By the time he reached high school, he was staying up late into the night reading Mencius—and ignoring his regular studies. As a result, he failed to gain entrance to a university and ended up as a technician at his father's company, which services power generation equipment. As the government's attitude toward Confucius warmed, however, Duan realized he had an important opportunity. "Before Mao died, no one really dared to mention Confucius," Duan says. "But that kind of closed cultural attitude was not initiated by the common people. It was forced by the outside. After Mao died, the old memories started coming back and people started talking about Confucianism again. I set up my goal to expand Confucian culture."

To achieve that goal, Duan opened the Qufu Confucian Institute in 2009 in an old schoolhouse just inside the rebuilt walls of Qufu's old town, aiming to reintroduce Confucius to a population raised on Marx and Mao. Six days a week, the thirty teenagers who live at the institute memorize the Four Books, just as if they were cramming for the civil service examinations of China's imperial past. They can learn calligraphy and traditional painting, too. Desks in the classrooms are splattered with ink from their brushes. One closet houses the school's collection of ceremonial red and yellow robes.

The goal, Duan says, is to nurture a new generation of Confucian scholars and set China on the correct

path—the Confucian Way. "In the future, China should rely on Confucian culture to expand and develop its prosperity," he tells me. "Confucian culture holds a lot of wisdom and it could foster the entire nation to be more competitive in the world. The development of Confucius will better serve as the guideline for China's political development?" Nevertheless, Duan isn't certain Confucius will win the day. Western cultural influences have become stronger in society as the nation has grown richer. If the Chinese choose the West over Confucius, the country could be ruined. "The American democratic ideology is not compatible with the psychological conditioning that the Chinese people have been used to for a long time," Duan explains, sounding eerily like Lee Kuan Yew. Confucius, he believes, could act as a bulwark against such dangerous Western ideas. "Learning about Confucius could upgrade the wisdom of the Chinese people to better cope with globalization," he adds.

What, I ask him, is so terrible about Western culture? "Chinese people value morals and rules," he says. "At home the father is the authority, and for a country, the emperor is the core. Confucianism cherishes obedience and conformity. If there is democracy, the country may become chaotic. There is a materialistic Western culture, a nonconformist Western culture, that is not suitable for China's development?" What, then, should the Chinese people do to avoid the dangers of Western liberalism? "Now we need to listen to the government and respect government officials," Duan continues. "Confucianism is supportive of authoritarian government. Since ancient times it has always been like this?"

I step out of the institute's main gate onto the dark, muddy streets of Qufu feeling dismayed. Duan's Confucius is the Confucius that the old emperors wanted the public to know—the Confucius that was meant to keep them quiet and submissive, the Confucius that squashes challenges to those in control. Of the many Confuciuses who have lived throughout China's long history, I wonder, is this the Confucius who China needs today? Is this the Confucius who will take China into the glorious future the nation so deserves? Duan apparently thinks so. During our conversation, I ask Duan what he would tell a student who complained that the government was doing something the student thought was wrong. "I would tell him to stay in his studies and not engage in politics," Duan answers.

I rise the next morning hoping that day's meeting will lift my spirits. Kong Leihua, a Qufu-born descendant of the sage himself (the 76th generation), appropriately, manages the Analects of Confucius Recital Center, located outside the gate to Qufu's famous Temple of Confucius. There, anyone can test his or her knowledge of Confucius by regurgitating passages from the Analects before appointed officials. Recite thirty of them correctly and the center will grant you free access to the temple. My visit came only six weeks after the Qufu municipal government had opened the center, and 3,000 people had already tried their luck, with an impressive 80 percent winning their free tickets.

Kong, like Duan, believes that China needs Confucius in order to counteract the ills of modern society, especially the rampant materialism that has gripped the Chinese people. "Now in the country, where people's ideas are restless, they particularly need Confucian thought," Kong explains. "The uncivilized behavior in society is because people have too many desires. They cannot fulfill all of them. Confucianism requires people's words and behavior to be in line with rationality and morality. That is why it is important for us to advocate Confucian thought?"

It is hard to argue with that. In today's China, money rules over duty, responsibility, and compassion. Yet few in Qufu seem to have gotten Kong's message, least of all the municipal government that funds his center. Local officials clearly have grand hopes that Confucius will translate into jobs and cash. Restaurants, shops selling calligraphy and other trinkets, and other tourist-related businesses have proliferated. A luxury Shangri-la hotel is being built. Local eateries advertise "Confucius food," a smattering of Shandong dishes that includes smoked bean curd with peppers in gravy and a crispy (and miserably dry) pancake filled with peanuts. Like everything else in China, Confucius has become big business. Rather than counteracting materialism in Qufu, Confucius is fueling it.

As my talk with Kong Leihua continues, I ask him what would happen if more of the Chinese begin to adhere to Confucian teachings. "The Analects could play a role in maintaining societal stability and order," Kong asserts. Rules and regulations would help as well, he adds, but "to order a society, laws alone are not enough. You also need tradition and culture to do that." So Kong, like Duan, is ultimately advocating that

Confucius be employed to pacify the populace. Perhaps, in his own way, he means well—like all those countless imperial officials who were forced to compromise the lofty ideals of Confucius's teachings in order to serve a state that didn't adhere to them.

I retreat into the Temple of Confucius across the street, hoping to find some solace amid its quiet courtyards and aged trees. The finely carved and appropriately sedate wooden pavilions leading to the main shrine are all hundreds of years old. Yet the temple only adds to my growing cynicism. It still bears the scars of the vicious attack on Confucius perpetrated by the very regime that now upholds him. The paint and concrete splattered by the Red Guards onto the few tablets they didn't shatter renders them illegible. "Revolution is not a crime," reads a bit of graffiti scrawled onto one of them. The new statue of Confucius installed by the Communists—to replace the one burned by the Red Guards—doesn't portray the sage as we usually imagine him—as a saintly, bearded wise man. Here he is once again the "Uncrowned King" of the Chinese empire. His hat, with small balls hanging from the rim, is the same style once worn by the old emperors. An employee stands near the shrine, yelling in an authoritative voice: "Bow to Confucius! Bow for your family!"

That sums up what China's officials want Confucius to mean in modern China: bowing. Bowing to authority. Bowing to the status quo. Although I agreed to bow to my in-laws at my wedding, I still don't care much for bowing, and especially when it means bowing to oppression. That, after all, is what is really behind the Confucian resurrection in China. Today's dictators, Communist only in name, are abusing Confucius's reputation just as Emperor Wu and Ming Taizu had—to convince an uneducated public that China's greatest sage told them to be subservient and docile and accept a "harmony" imposed from above. Once again, a repressive government is draping itself in a colorful Confucian cloak to try to mask its corruption and brutality, and to fool the average Chinese citizen into thinking his ancient traditions teach that he is getting the government he wants and deserves. If that is the Confucius being revived today, isn't China better off without him?

Years ago, before I started my own investigation of Confucius, I would probably have answered that question with a resounding "yes." The Confucius I held in my mind was the one hated by democrats,

reformers, and feminists—the Confucius of imperial repression, foot-binding, and parental tyranny. But now, after reading his words and studying his history, I think the Chinese—and, in fact, all of us—would be better off in a world with Confucius than without him. All doctrines and faiths founded so long ago have some ideas and practices that no longer fit into modern society. If we adhered strictly to the Bible, we would still own slaves. Proper Hindu wives were once expected to throw themselves onto their husbands' funeral pyres. Every faith at some point has been used to justify actions clearly at odds with the substance of its teachings. The Crusaders slaughtered in the name of Christ, Osama bin Laden in the name of Allah. Yet despite all of that, we haven't thrown out the Bible, the Koran, or the Vedas. The Vatican has been corrupt and greedy throughout much of its history; its pedophile priests go unpunished. Yet we don't discard Jesus or the Gospels. Confucianism is no different. Yes, Confucius believed in sage-kings and subservient sons. His teachings have been drafted to legitimize authoritarian regimes for centuries on end. But that doesn't mean Confucius holds no value for us today.

China may be a rising global power and a marvel of supersonic economic progress, but it is also a society adrift, without purpose, without a soul. That leaves China rotting from within, and vulnerable to aggressive bursts of violence that could destabilize the country or threaten peace in Asia. It is a China where people ignore a two-year-old dying in the street, or poison babies to turn a quick buck. It is a China where government officials amass great fortunes and stand above the law.

The Confucius I have come to know over the course of researching this book can provide what China is missing. That Confucius was not a pawn of autocrats or a tool of suppression. That Confucius, though far from perfect, was a voice of boundless humanity and unswerving determination. He was a man who refused to compromise his principles for fame, wealth, or status.

He would not submit to the will of immoral men or abusive regimes. He told the most powerful people of his day that they were wrong, directly to their faces. He judged men not by their riches or birth, but on their sincerity and benevolence. He could laugh at himself. He envisioned a society in which everyone fulfilled their responsibilities and placed the welfare

of their families and communities over their own. He strove to transform a world convulsed by selfishness and war into one of selflessness and peace. He thought our society could be perfected if we first improved ourselves. Most of all, he thought that any one of us who took the time and made the effort to become a better person held the power to change the world.

The great calamity of Confucius's long life story is how widely his reputation has diverged from his intent. He is attacked for being an advocate for injustice—an oppressor of women, an enemy of personal liberty, a devotee of autocracy. In fact, the mortal flaw in his teachings can be found elsewhere—in his undying and ultimately misplaced faith in humanity. Confucius believed in his heart in the inherent goodness of man, that we strive for self-perfection, that we wish to act with honor, decency, and wisdom. He based his entire philosophy on that conviction. And time and time again, during his own lifetime and for the 2,500 years since, mankind has disappointed him. The tragedy of Confucius is that so many people who have sworn to uphold his vision and mission have so often betrayed the sage's trust. They are still doing so today.

Perhaps, though, the upcoming generation of Chinese, or the generation after them, or the generation after that, once again studying their Analects, will gain more than a free ticket to a tourist site. What we can hope is that as they read the sage's ancient words they will discover their own Confucius, a Confucius who holds special meaning for them, a Confucius who opens their minds, a Confucius free of government slogans and petty purpose. Maybe they'll invent a new Confucius for a new age. <>

[A Concise Companion to Confucius](#) edited by Paul R. Goldin [Blackwell Companions to Philosophy, Wiley-Blackwell, 9781118783870]

[A Concise Companion to Confucius](#) comprises a succinct introduction to one of East Asia's most widely-revered historical figures, providing essential coverage of his legacy at a manageable length. The volume embraces Confucius as philosopher, teacher, politician, and sage, and curates a collection of key perspectives on his life and teachings from a team of distinguished scholars in philosophy, history, religious studies, and the history of art. Taken together, chapters encourage specialists to read across disciplinary boundaries, provide nuanced paths of

introduction for students, and engage interested readers who want to expand their understanding of the great Chinese master.

Divided into four distinct sections, [A Concise Companion to Confucius](#) depicts a coherent figure of Confucius by examining his diverse representations from antiquity through to the modern world. Readers are guided through the intellectual and cultural influences that helped shape the development of Confucian philosophy and its reception among late imperial literati in medieval China. Later essays consider Confucius's engagement with topics such as warfare, women, and Western philosophy, which remain fruitful avenues of philosophical inquiry today. The collection concludes by exploring the significance of Confucian thought in East Asia's contemporary landscape and the major intellectual movements which are reviving and rethinking his work for the twenty-first century.

An indispensable resource, [A Concise Companion to Confucius](#) blazes an authoritative trail through centuries of scholarship to offer exceptional insight into one of history's earliest and most influential ancient philosophers.

[A Concise Companion to Confucius](#) provides readers with a broad range of perspectives on the ancient philosopher and then tracing the significance of Confucius throughout Chinese history—past, present, and future. The volume offers a unique, interdisciplinary overview of Confucianism that is curated by a team of distinguished scholars in philosophy, history, religious studies, and the history of art. In all, [A Concise Companion to Confucius](#) is an ideal text for undergraduate and graduate courses on Confucius and Confucianism. It is also fascinating and informative reading for anyone interested in learning more about one of history's most influential philosophers.

Excerpt:

Confucius is a Latinization of the Chinese name Kongfuzi, meaning Gentleman or Master Kong (traditional dates: 551-479 BC). Throughout East Asia, he has always been more commonly called Kongzi, but his status as the premier teacher in the Chinese tradition was crucial to the Jesuits who popularized the Latinized name, and thus they seem to have preferred the even more august locution Kongfuzi. The accommodationist strategy of Matteo Ricci (1552-

1610) and other Jesuit missionaries was to declare Confucius' teachings, as well as the tradition on which they rested, as fundamentally congruent with Christianity. One key piece of evidence for Jesuit readers was the presence of multiple variants of the Golden Rule in Confucian texts, such as "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire" (Analects 12.2). This was naturally compared to Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism was well intentioned, but misleading in several respects. For example, while Ricci advanced Confucius as the most authentic and praiseworthy embodiment of Chinese wisdom, he denigrated many other traditions, including not only organized religions like Buddhism and Daoism, but also popular practices such as divination, as vulgar superstition. This has led to the unproductive analytical habit, sometimes discernible even in today's scholarship, of equating all aspects of Chinese culture with Confucianism, which not only overstates the role of Confucian teachings in the organization of Chinese society, but has also contributed to a lack of appreciation of other philosophical and religious movements.

Nevertheless, most Chinese literati in Ricci's day would have agreed that Confucius was the most important of their many cultural forebears. One of Confucius' many Chinese appellations is *xianshi*, a powerful term meaning both "former teacher" and "foremost teacher." Confucius was similarly venerated in other East Asian cultures influenced by Chinese examples, such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam (even as they recognized, more readily than Ricci, that other traditions were worthy of respect as well).

What did Confucius accomplish that warranted such immense and institutionalized praise? The title *xianshi* offers a good preliminary basis for an answer: he was regarded as first among teachers. He was assuredly not the first teacher in any literal sense, for the cultic rituals of the Bronze Age (manifested by complex assemblages of ritual bronze vessels that were hoarded by leading lineages and interred with prominent men and women upon their deaths) must have required instructors to insure that the ceremonies were properly performed and the finical spirits duly appeased. Over time, it seems, such ritual masters started to include moral and political lessons in their

curriculum. For example, in a scene set in 662 BC, occasioned by the appearance of a spirit in a place called Guó, two ritual officers are said to have predicted the demise of that state because its ruler "listens to spirits" instead of "listening to his populace," as an enlightened sovereign would. Hardly anything else is ever said about these two officers; we must surmise that they were masters who would be consulted when the government required an expert opinion on ritual affairs. Their statement that the ruler must above all heed his people suggests an underlying political philosophy that charges the ruler with safeguarding the welfare of his subjects, and may even anticipate Confucius' humanistic view that spirits do not offer useful moral guidance. Another ritual master, Scribe Lao (fleeting attested in Xu Yuangao 2002, 502), an advisor of King Ling of Chu (r. 540-529 Bc), may be the dimly remembered historical figure who inspired the world-famous text Laozi

Confucius is the first such master for whom we have substantial evidence of the content his teachings. Remembering that he lived over 2,500 years ago, however, we should not be surprised that the sources leave many open questions. The foremost text purporting to record his teachings is the so-called Analects (the Jesuit translation of Lunyu, meaning Selected Sayings), which was supposedly compiled after Confucius' death by his disciples — or perhaps disciples of disciples, since some of Confucius' disciples are identified in the text as masters in their own right. Strangely, however, there is no record of the Analects until centuries later. Michael Hunter, in Chapter 1 of this volume, discusses the interpretive consequences lucidly; my view (Goldin forthcoming) is that that whoever was responsible for compiling the Analects included an overwhelming proportion of genuine material within it, but at a minimum modern readers must bear in mind that they are not reading the work of Confucius himself — that is to say, the Confucius we are given to see in the Analects is the Confucius that some posterior committee wanted us to see. To muddy the waters further, sayings and conversations are often presented with scant context. Reconstructing a coherent philosophy out of such fragmentary material requires considerable creativity. Nor are we alone in this quandary: the varied interpretations of Confucius' philosophy even in antiquity indicate that there was no authorized ideology shared by all Confucians.¹

Of Confucius' life and heritage we know only the barest of details,¹ especially after eliminating the eager hagiographies that emerged in the centuries after his death.

In reality, his ancestry was murky; his father, called Shuliang He in most sources, may have been a warrior from a place called Zou. The highlights of his career, according to tradition, were serving his home state of Lu t as Minister of Justice (sikou and attracting dozens of disciples, some of whom were among the social elite. Latter-day Confucians regarded the position of Minister of Justice as incommensurate with Confucius' prodigious gifts, and were at pains to explain his failure to achieve more. Sometimes posterity called him "the uncrowned king" (suwang), alluding to the rank that he should have attained. Passages in the Analects (e.g., 16.13), similarly, hint at unseemly discord in his household, and it is suggestive that more is known about his grandson, the philosopher Zisi (483?-402), than his ne'er-do-well son, Boyu (532-483). Confucius died in his seventies, perhaps with a sense of a mission unfulfilled.

As presented in the Analects, Confucius' philosophy begins with the premise that one must think for oneself. Confucius continually deconstructs received religion and enjoins his disciples to think through a new moral system with human interaction as its base.

Fan Chi [b. 515 BC] asked about wisdom. The Master said: "To take righteousness among the people as one's duty, and to revere the ghosts and spirits, but keep them at a distance, can be called wisdom." (Analects 6.20)

Confucius is not an atheist— he concedes that there are ghosts and spirits, and that it is advisable not to offend them — but he believes that pondering the afterlife and the supernatural will only impede moral reasoning (Analects 11.11).

And how does one instill "righteousness among the people"? Here the Golden Rule, admired by Ricci, comes into play: "What you yourself do not desire, do not do to others" (Analects 15.23; cf. also 5.11). This is presented as Confucius' own definition of shu, "reciprocity." Sometimes it is called the Silver Rule, so as to distinguish it from the Judeo-Christian Golden Rule, because it is formulated in the negative (cf. Huang 2005, 394). Another qualification is necessary: in practice, shu has to be interpreted as doing unto others as you would have others do unto you if you

had the same social role as they. Shu is a relation not between two individuated people, but between two social roles. How does one treat one's father, to take a typical Confucian example? In the same way that one would want to be treated by one's son if one were a father oneself. Moreover, whether formulated as the Golden or the Silver Rule, Confucius' principle is open to the same doubts that Alan Gewirth has raised with reference to the Western tradition.

In Analects 15.23, Confucius identifies shu as "the one word that one can practice throughout one's life" (cf. also 4.15 and 15.2), and in 6.28 he defines a paraphrase of shu as "the method of humanity," or ren, which he regarded as the cardinal virtue. Considering how reluctant he is elsewhere to define ren, we must apperceive this is a very big hint: the way to become a "humane" person starts with the moral reasoning entailed by shu, that is, asking ourselves in each particular situation how we ought to treat other people by imagining ourselves in their shoes and thinking through our relationship to them. Another big hint comes in Analects 12.1, where Confucius responds to a question about ren by saying: "Overcome the self and return to ritual in order to practice humanity." When the disciple presses Confucius further, he says:

Do not look in opposition to the rites. Do not listen in opposition to the rites. Do not speak in opposition to the rites. Do not move in opposition to the rites.

Western interpreters of Confucius have frequently mis-characterized "the rites" (li) as something like a code of conduct, leading to serious misconceptions about what Confucius means here by not looking, listening, speaking, or moving in opposition to the rites. One might think there is a discrete and knowable code, called li, on which one can rely for guidance in all matters: if you do not know how to act, cleave to the li, and you will never be wrong. This might even have been the standard conception of li in Confucius' own day: a practicable code that ambitious young men hoped to learn from experienced ritual masters. The problem is that this understanding of li is inadequate for Confucius, because he explicitly contrasts the rites with anything like a predetermined code (and, to this extent, the very translation of li as "rite" or "ritual" can be misleading). In Analects 2.3, for example, Confucius states that laws and punishments are inferior to virtue and ritual because although the former can be effective at molding

behavior, they do not cause people to reflect on their conduct and develop a conscience (chi, sometimes translated as "shame"). As a philosopher who values moral reasoning above all else, Confucius is wary of anything like a code that one could cheat oneself into practicing unthinkingly and automatically.

Other comments on li are in the same spirit. The most revealing passage has to do with rituals in a ceremonial hall (Analects 9.3): the contemporary habit of replacing a prescribed linen hat with one of cheaper silk is approved as frugal, but the habit of bowing at the top of the hall, when the rites call for bowing at the bottom of the hall, is criticized as self-aggrandizing. Thus, the rites are subject to emendation in practice, but one cannot depart from them capriciously or groundlessly. Rather, they must be practiced in such a way as to convey and reinforce deeper moral principles. Nor can one simply follow the majority: laudable practice of the rites requires thinking for oneself.

Li is best understood, then, as embodied virtue, the thoughtful somatic expression of basic moral principles, without which the ceremonies are void (cf. Analects 3.3 and 17.11). Far from a static code of conduct, li is the sum total of all the moral calculations that a thinking Confucian must go through before acting, and must be constantly reinterpreted and reapplied to suit changing situations. Thus, when Confucius tells his disciple not to look, listen, speak, or move in opposition to the rites, he does not mean that one need only memorize a certain body of accepted conventions and take care always to follow them; rather, using the fuller sense of li, he means that one must ask oneself how to put the most humane face on the rites in each new situation, and then to carry them out conscientiously. What sounds like a deceptively simple instruction is really a demand not only to act with unflinching moral awareness, but also assess for oneself the right course of action at every moment.

Political action relies, likewise, on the thoughtful performance of the moral obligations entailed by one's position, but here Confucius' ideas are harder to reconcile with modern preferences because of the heavy emphasis on the figure of the ruler and his decisive influence, positive or negative, on his subjects' behavior (e.g., Analects 12.17-19;

The key passage is Analects 12.11: "May the lord act as a lord, the minister as a minister, the father as a father, the son as a son." As they were understood by

the tradition, the phrases "to act as a lord," "to act as a minister," "to act as a father," and "to act as a son" are moral demands: if a ruler, minister, father, or son are to be reckoned as such, they must act as required by their positions in society. "To act as a lord" means to live up to the moral demands of rulership: to be vigilant about one's own conduct so as to provide a worthy model for the people to follow in their quest for moral self-cultivation.

Confucius' pronouncement permits some other inferences. First, modern readers can hardly avoid observing that all four characters — the lord, the minister, the father, and the son — are male. It was a social reality in Confucius' day that lords and ministers were without exception male, but instead of "the father" and "the son," he might well have said "fathers and mothers" and "sons and daughters." Readers must decide for themselves how much to make of this problem (see Anne Behnke Kinney, Chapter 7, this volume). On the one hand, there is little reason why Confucius' ideas could not be extended today to include women as well; on the other hand, there is also little reason to suppose that he would himself have thought to do so. All his disciples were male, and his few comments about women suggest that he thought most consequential actions were undertaken by men.

Another inescapable observation is that the four cardinal roles are all relative. No one can be a lord without a minister, a minister without a lord, a father without a son, or a son without a father. By the same token, it is possible for the same person to play more than one of these roles in different situations and in relation to different people. All males are sons, and thus any father is not only a father to his son but also a son to his own father. Similarly, a minister may be a lord in his own right, but a minister to a lord higher than he; indeed, in Bronze Age politics, even the highest king, the Son of Heaven (*tianzi*), is conceived as a lord to all other human beings but only a vicegerent of Heaven above.¹ These dimensions of Confucius' saying should not be overlooked. All Confucian morality, as we have seen, emerges from relations with other people. It is impossible to practice *shu* except in relation to other people, just as virtue always has neighbors (Analects 4.25). Moreover, the stipulation that we must act in accordance with our social role means that the right way to behave depends on our relationship with the person with whom we are presently engaged. There are no

universally valid moral injunctions because no one is in the same social position at every instant of his or her life.

At the level of state politics, however, merely exhorting the ruler to live up to the demands of his supreme position may seem inadequate to modern readers, because Confucius does not tell us what to do if the ruler fails — as they often do. A Confucian minister is obliged to remonstrate in such cases, but rulers who heed principled remonstrance have always been in the minority. Mencius (372-289 BC?), who expanded Confucius' philosophy roughly two centuries later, confronted such questions more squarely, even implying a right of rebellion in extreme cases of misrule. Confucius, by contrast, suggests that when the state is hopelessly misgoverned, one can scarcely do better than "to avoid punishment and disgrace" (Analects 5.1). He was not a democrat.

Just as there is no good solution to the problem of serving a reprobate king, Confucius acknowledges that immoral parents can place their children in intractable situations as well. On the one hand, he declares that a son should not turn in his father for stealing a sheep (Analects 13.18), because he is misguided if he thinks he owes more to the faceless state than to the father who reared and raised him. On the other hand, he recognizes that serving parents can be difficult:

The Master said: "In serving your parents, remonstrate slightly. If you see that they do not intend to follow [your advice], remain respectful and do not disobey. Toil and do not complain." (Analects 4.18)

The remonstrance is indispensable; "acting as a son" must include raising controversial issues with one's parents whenever necessary. But imperfect parents are not always persuaded to mend their ways, and Confucius does not accept taking parents' mistakes as grounds for losing one's filial respect. "Toil and do not complain": you may know you are in the right, but if you have done everything you can to make your case, and your parents are unmoved, you must endure your lot.

The foregoing summary of Confucius' philosophy is by no means exhaustive; it merely presents the background necessary for understanding why he has been venerated throughout East Asia as the forefather of a distinctive moral and cultural disposition. In Western languages, this has been

called "Confucianism," a term with both supporters and critics. The present volume, however, is a companion to Confucius, not a companion to Confucianism, and just as Marx declared that he was not a Marxist (Marx and Engels, the two are not identical. A companion to Confucianism would have to survey major Confucian thinkers after Confucius, their philosophical innovations, and so on. While that would be a welcome and useful resource (in English, the only large reference work of this kind is Yao 2003), the subject of this book is the figure of Confucius and his diverse representations down to the present day.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I focuses on early representations of Confucius in both textual and visual sources. In Chapter 1, "Early Sources for Confucius," Michael Hunter begins by surveying the extant sources for Kongzi, concluding that they are so diverse, and of such questionable reliability, that they scarcely combine to paint a coherent portrait of the master. Hunter then considers the text that has traditionally been the most venerated, namely, the *Analects*, and observes that a reader's assumptions about the origins of this collection, which remain disputed, will necessarily inform his or her imagination of Kongzi himself. The historical Confucius may be beyond reconstruction.

In Chapter 2, "Confucius in Excavated Warring States Manuscripts," Scott Cook focuses on Confucius' image in a group of texts that was not available before the 1970s: previously unknown manuscripts, some excavated by archaeologists, some looted by tomb-robbers. After surveying the material, Cook argues that its portrayal of Confucius' philosophical outlook is "largely concordant with what we find ascribed to him in received texts dating from the Warring States period," yet he concludes by reminding us that these new documents await more thorough investigation.

Oliver Weingarten examines creative literary uses of the figure of Confucius in Chapter 3, "The Unorthodox Master: The Serious and the Playful in Depictions of Confucius." These include satires, parodies, playful misreadings, the use of Confucian utterances as proof texts, and nascent hagiographies. Such appropriations and adaptations, which were often ludic, bespeak broad familiarity with the figure of Confucius at diverse levels of literate society; otherwise one could not find such a variety of depictions, Confucian and non-Confucian alike.

In Chapter 4, "Representations of Confucius in Apocrypha of the First Century CE," Zhao Lu discusses a particular subset of later appropriation: a corpus commonly translated as "apocrypha" (*chenwei*). These texts, which were mostly lost over the subsequent centuries, reflected a growing enthusiasm for an ideal society based on the Five Classics and the restoration of the Han A dynasty. In this context, Confucius became a prophet and messenger of Heaven who not only encoded his political teaching in his work, but also foretold the ascendance of the ruling Liu family. This superhuman image of Confucius was rooted in knowledge shared amongst scholars of that time.

In the final chapter in Part I, "Visual Representations of Confucius" (Chapter 5), Julia K. Murray discusses Confucius as a subject for visual representation after the Han court formally endorsed his teachings. While the earliest images appeared in schools and offering shrines during the Song period (960-1279), portrayals became more diverse and some reproduced pictures kept by his descendants. Moreover, pictorial biographies of Confucius brought him more vividly to life and to a wider range of society, and in recent decades new images of Confucius have evolved to serve a range of contemporary purposes, including politics and advertising.

Part II, "Confucian Ideas," addresses the philosophical perspectives that have been attributed to Confucius over the centuries (some with a more solid historical basis than others). Kwong-loi Shun opens this section with "Le in the *Analects*" (Chapter 6), a discussion of a term commonly translated as "joy" (*le*). Shun begins with a survey of usage in early texts, then considers the nature of *le* in the *Analects*: a state akin to tranquility, and anchored in one's following the ethical path and affirming such a way of life. Because the different elements of the mind are blended together in an ethical direction, there is a sense of harmony and ease. Furthermore, because the external conditions of life are invested with minor significance as compared with the ethical, one is not subject to worries about them.

In Chapter 7, "Women in the *Analects*," Anne Behnke Kinney focuses on three famous (some might say infamous) comments about women that are attributed to Confucius in that text. Taken together, they demonstrate that in Confucius' mind, high social status overrides the restrictions of gender. Just as he

expresses his frustration with low-ranking men and women of unseemly ambition, he seems willing to regard certain elite women with the same respect usually reserved for elite men. Although such women were extraordinary even among their own peers, it is no less extraordinary that the Confucius of the *Analects* acknowledges their accomplishments and actively engages with them, despite the objections of a narrow-minded disciple.

Yuri Pines focuses on two other keywords, "noble man" (*junzi*) and "petty man" (*xiaoren*), in Chapter 8, "Confucius' Elitism: The Concepts of *junzi* and *xiaoren* Revisited." By comparing the usages in the *Analects* with earlier texts, primarily the *Zuo zhuan* (*Zuo Commentary*), Pines argues that Confucius revolutionized the concept of *junzi*, expanding it to include members of his own social class, the *shi*. Originally, *shi* denoted the lowest stratum of nobility, but eventually it referred to the elite more broadly, with membership primarily determined by one's qualities rather than one's pedigree. Confucius contributed to this process by allowing a more flexible conceptualization of membership in the elite. This flexibility, coupled with persistently rigid emphasis on sociopolitical hierarchy, became an effective recipe for preserving a highly stratified society while maintaining the possibility of social mobility.

Thomas Radice considers a related concept in Chapter 9, "Confucius and Filial Piety." Rooted in early Chinese religion, Confucius' understanding of filial piety (*xiao*) is, in Radice's words, "an ornamented expression to both the dead and the living." Because parents can be fallible, filial piety requires more than straightforward deference: one must gently remonstrate with them, but also be ready to conceal their misdeeds. These are imperfect solutions for imperfect situations, and they undermine simplistic characterizations of the parent—child relationship in Confucian ethics.

In Chapter 10, "The Gentleman's Views on Warfare According to the *Gongyang Commentary*," Sarah A. Queen focuses on a different Confucian text, namely, a commentary to the canonical *Springs and Autumns* that operated on the assumption that Confucius was the august author. Though often overlooked as a source for understanding Confucius' position on warfare, the *Gongyang Commentary* is replete with relevant material. It articulates a complex set of

ethico-ritual principles that provisionally permit certain kinds of military activities for the sake of mediating conflict until the sage rule symbolized by King Wen of Zhou (d. 1050 BC) can be restored and peace returned to the realm.

In the final chapter in Part II, "Comparisons with Western Philosophy" (Chapter 11), Erin M. Cline explores similarities and differences between Western philosophy and Confucianism. While works that compare the thought of Confucius and Western philosophy are diverse, they share the view that comparative study is worthwhile and seek to address, in various ways, some of the common challenges that comparative studies face. In light of this body of work, Cline examines different proposed answers to the question of why comparative philosophy is worthwhile, and highlights three sets of challenges that frequently arise in comparative philosophy, which she calls thematic, interpretive, and procedural.

Parts III and IV turn to the legacy of Confucius in later centuries: Part III is devoted to imperial China, and Part IV to the modern world. In Chapter 12, "From Uncrowned King to the Sage of Profound Greatness: Confucius and the *Analects* in Early Medieval China," Alan K. L. Chan limns the concerted effort by literati in the third through the sixth centuries to interrogate tradition afresh. The discourse called *xuanxue* V (which Chan translates as "Learning in the Profound") juxtaposed the Confucian *Analects* to other texts, especially the *Changes* (*Yijing* *gm*, Laozi, and Zhuangzi). This radical reinterpretation resulted in a Confucius who was a sage of "profound greatness" embodying the fullness of *dao* in his being (*xuansheng*). As literati's interests changed, so did their Confucius.

In Chapter 13, "The Reception of The Classic of Filial Piety from Medieval to Late Imperial China," Miaowfen Lu observes that biographies of women indicate the increasing importance of this text in female education, whereas biographies of men exhibit the opposite. Her explanation is that The Canon of Filial Piety played a significant role in political culture before the medieval period, but became mainly a primer after the Southern Song. The marginalization of the text in political and elite circles caused it to figure less prominently in biographies of males until it regained political importance with the support of the Qing dynasty (1636-1912).

On-cho Ng revisits the Gongyang tradition and the concept of the "uncrowned king" in Chapter 14, "Kongzi as the Uncrowned King in Some Qing Gongyang Exegeses." In their synoptic judgment of the ancient past, Ng maintains, Gongyang commentators of the Qing dynasty not only resisted the destructiveness of time, but also relived, retrieved, and rendered events of yore as transhistorical archetypes that serve as muse and model for contemporary political amelioration. Moreover, the symbolic enthronement of Kongzi as "uncrowned king" introduces a peculiar order of time. Whereas the historical succession of the ancient dynasties is based on a realistic temporality, the mythic systems of Confucius' reign are built on idealized ethico-moral standards, and thus subvert and claim priority over recorded histories.

The three chapters in Part IV address Confucius and new Confucianisms in modern East Asia. In Chapter 15, "Confucianism, Capitalism, and Shibusawa Eiichi's The Analects and the Abacus," John A. Tucker discusses Shibusawa Eiichi (1840-1931), who is widely known as the father of Japanese capitalism and was also one of the more outspoken advocates of Confucius' learning in modern Japan. Tucker examines Shibusawa's *The Analects and the Abacus* (Rongo to soroban) against the bleak assessment by his contemporary Max Weber (1864-1920) of Confucian cultures and their alleged inability to develop capitalism. Tucker suggests that Shibusawa's life and thought constitute considerable counterevidence to Weber's thesis, and also offers a historical contextualization of Shibusawa's promotion of Confucius.

The negative images of Confucius during the 1910s and the 1920s constitute the theme of Chapter 16, "Confucius in the May Fourth Era," by Q. Edward Wang. After the fall of the Empire, Confucius was associated with conservative political forces that were regarded as causes for the challenges faced by the newly founded Republic. To many intellectuals, the 1911 Revolution was incomplete because it created a new type of government without a new mindset for the Chinese to become citizens of the Republic. Accordingly, Confucianism was declared obsolete — but the question of how much blame to pin on Confucius himself remained open. There was also the unresolved problem of what should replace it.

In Chapter 17, "New Confucianism," Yong Huang addresses the Confucian response to the challenge posed by modern Western ideology in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. What is unique about this movement, often called "New Confucianism" (xin Rujia), is its attempt to show that traditional Confucian values and such modern Western values as rationality, modernity, science, and democracy are not only compatible, but can also significantly enrich each other. Moreover, it is noteworthy that a small but vocal conservative group of Confucians has emerged. These thinkers stress the political dimension of Confucianism, including meritocracy, and some of them advocate a Confucian constitutionalism.

In today's bustling China, the figure of Confucius is evidently as controversial as ever, sometimes standing for the right things, sometimes standing for the wrong things, but never standing for nothing. With the conviction that only the rarest of personages can endure as cultural symbols for century after century, we offer this book to readers in search of diverse perspectives on Confucius and all that he has represented. <>

[Neo-Confucianism: Metaphysics, Mind, and Morality](#) by JeeLoo Liu [Wiley-Blackwell, 9781118619148] [paper](#)

[Neo Confucianism: Metaphysics, Mind, and Morality](#) gives a detailed philosophical analysis of eight central figures in Chinese neo-Confucianism from the Song-Ming era (between the eleventh and the seventeenth centuries).

Solidly grounded in Chinese primary sources, [Neo Confucianism: Metaphysics, Mind, and Morality](#) engages the latest global scholarship to provide an innovative, rigorous, and clear articulation of neo-Confucianism and its application to Western philosophy by contextualizing neo-Confucianism for contemporary analytic philosophy by engaging with today's philosophical questions and debates. It is based on the most recent and influential scholarship on neo-Confucianism, and is supported by primary texts in Chinese and cross-cultural secondary literature that in general presents a cohesive analysis of neo-Confucianism by investigating the metaphysical foundations of neo-Confucian perspectives on the relationship between human nature, human mind, and morality that in sum offers innovative interpretations of neo-Confucian terminology by examining the ideas of eight major philosophers, from Zhou Dunyi and

Cheng-Zhu to Zhang Zai and Wang Fuzhi, approaching their neo-Confucian concepts in a synthetic and penetrating way that remains accessible.

Following upon the solid [An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy: From Ancient Philosophy to Chinese Buddhism](#) by JeeLoo Liu [Wiley-Blackwell, 9781405129497] that unlocks the mystery of ancient Chinese philosophy and unravels the complexity of Chinese Buddhism by placing them in the contemporary context of discourse. It elucidates the central issues and debates in Chinese philosophy, its different schools of thought, and its major philosophers by covering eight major philosophers in the ancient period, among them Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi, illuminating the links between different schools of philosophy, and opening doors to further study of the relationship between Chinese and Western philosophy. It is a sequel to the author's first book *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy: From Ancient Philosophy to Chinese Buddhism* (Blackwell, 2006), which examines five major philosophical schools in the ancient period as well as four principal schools of Chinese Buddhism. [Neo Confucianism: Metaphysics, Mind, and Morality](#) continues the analytical introduction to Chinese philosophy given in the first book and focuses on neo-Confucianism. It draws comparisons to analytic philosophy in regard to its main issues and concerns. This approach helps to bring neo-Confucianism into the context of contemporary philosophy and to show how issues expressed in distinctively neo-Confucian terminology relate to issues in contemporary philosophy. One of the aims of this comparative approach is to show that even though Chinese philosophers used different terms, narrative strategies, and analytic modes, their concerns were often similar to those of their Western counterparts, for example: What is the nature of reality? Wherein lies the foundation of our moral values? Is human nature fundamentally good or bad? How do human beings connect to the whole universe? What is the foundation of our knowledge of the world and of moral reality? Such an approach will make these issues accessible to Western thinkers by shedding light on their universality through the analytic explication of these texts. This book will enable Western readers who are not familiar with Chinese philosophical terminology or its intellectual history to gain a philosophical appreciation of neo-Confucianism. Furthermore, by consulting both English

secondary sources and representative Chinese works on neo-Confucianism, it will facilitate a more active philosophical exchange between Western philosophers working on neo-Confucianism and contemporary Chinese scholars by coming to see the shared concerns as well as the common pursuits laid out in a clear and accessible language.

What Is Neo-Confucianism?

Attributes that are worthy of humans' emulation. We may say that they developed a form of moral metaphysics. According to a contemporary scholar on neo-Confucianism, Yong Huang, "what is more unique about neo-Confucianism is its development of moral metaphysics as an ontological articulation of moral values advocated by classical Confucians" (Huang 2014, 195). What distinguishes neo-Confucianism from classical Confucianism is exactly this moral metaphysics. According to neo-Confucians, there is a higher order governing the world, which they call "heavenly principle," and the content of this higher order is also the objective moral principle for human beings. At the same time, neo-Confucians also embraced the Chinese philosophical tradition (founded in the Yijing) of positing a basic element of qi as the material/physical foundation of the universe. The core thesis in Neo-Confucian metaphysics is view that qi is the primary constituent of all things and that there is an inherent order in the operation of qi.

"Neo-Confucianism" typically refers to the revival of classical Confucianism developed between eleventh and eighteenth centuries in China, spanning over four dynasties in Chinese history: Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. Neo-Confucianism was a new form of Confucianism that came after the dominance of Daoism and subsequently Buddhism within Chinese intellectual circles. Comparable to what "Modern Philosophy" accomplished in Western philosophy, neo-Confucianism also revitalized classical philosophy and expanded the traditional philosophical discourse, adding new dimensions and attaining new heights. The transformation of Confucianism as a result of the challenge and influence of Daoism and Buddhism was the most remarkable and significant development in the history of Chinese philosophy. Neo-Confucianism invigorated the metaphysical speculation found in classics such as the Yijing, and incorporated different concepts and perspectives derived from Daoism and Buddhism into its discourse. Also, partly as a response to the Daoist skeptical attitude toward the possibility

of knowledge, neo-Confucianism brought the theory of knowledge asserted in classics such as *The Great Learning* to a much more sophisticated level.

With regard to the psychological foundation of human morality, neo-Confucians were predominately in the Mencian camp. Mencius advocates moral internalism—the foundation of human morality lies within the agent's internal psychological makeup. According to Mencius, humans are different from other animals because they are born with moral sentiments. Humans alone are moral creatures. This is what defines the notion "human" (ren A), which in his usage is not a natural kind but a moral category. There are, according to Mencius, four universal moral sentiments in the mankind: (i) the sentiment of commiseration, (ii) the sentiment of shame and disgust, (iii) the sense of reverence and deference, and (iv) the sense of right and wrong. Since humans are endowed with these moral sentiments, morality is a natural extension of what humans have within themselves. Evil is the result of not cultivating one's "moral sprouts." According to him, morality is not the sheer result of social conditioning and is not derived from social contract or rational consensus based on calculated mutual self-interests. On the contrary, human morality is possible only because we humans are moral creatures.

Frank Perkins gives neo-Confucianism an apt summary: Neo-Confucianism "can be broadly characterized as the attempt to integrate a speculative, systematic metaphysics influenced by Buddhism and Daoism into the ethically and socially oriented system of Confucianism". Neo-Confucians were fundamentally concerned with the role humans play in the moral reconstruction of the world around them. In their view, humans not only endow the world of nature with meaning but also share moral attributes with natural phenomena. Neo-Confucians' metaphysical views lay the foundation for their moral theories. The goal of this book is to explicate Song-Ming neo-Confucianism in its three major themes (metaphysics, mind, and morality) and to show how they exemplify a coherent underlying concern: the relation between nature and human beings. In their various debates, neo-Confucians touched on the possibility of an innate moral sense and the various means of moral knowledge. In addition, neo-Confucianism contains an intriguing discourse on the possibility and foundation of morality. In neo-Confucians' views, morality takes its root either in the universal goodness of human nature or in the

individual's moral reflection and cultivation of the human mind. This debate between the School of Nature and the School of Mind was one of the major themes in neo-Confucianism. Finally, in neo-Confucianism we see a consistent effort not only to redefine a realist worldview that affirms the world as existing independently of human conception, but also to reassert a humanist worldview that places human beings at the center of meaning and values. Both the realist and the humanist commitments were direct responses to the challenges of Daoism and Buddhism, and they delineate the spirit of neo-Confucianism.

Neo-Confucians identified the internal source of moral agency in humans' moral sense, moral judgment, moral intuition, or moral sentiments. What they shared in common was the view that moral action is an autonomous act springing from an individual's heart. They dismissed Xunzi's teaching that morality is the product of humans' contrived conditioning (wei o). According to Xunzi, we need to use rules of propriety and rituals to curtail the bad traits in human nature. Morality is the result of human endeavor and social institutions, while evil is simply the result of following inborn human nature without societal restraints.

Neo-Confucians were generally concerned with establishing a moralistic naturalism, that is, the natural world in which we live demonstrates many good. There is no such thing as "innate goodness," though Xunzi does claim that humans have reason and can appeal to the mind's moral cognition to learn good.

From a moral externalist's point of view, morality derives from social conditioning for the purpose of peaceful coexistence. The external social environment is responsible for the existence or the lack of our moral sense. According to this view, humans' moral consciousness and sense of morality are taught and learned. Hence, different social backgrounds and cultural rearing could generate incompatible moral views or even create diverse moral standards. In other words, cultural relativism is a natural extension of moral externalism. One characteristic in neo-Confucianism is their unequivocal conviction in the existence of the objective, universal moral standard, which they identify as heavenly principle. To them, the existence of a moral reality is an indisputable fact of nature, and the universality of moral truths is grounded in humans' shared moral sense.

Neo-Confucians based their moral theories on their metaphysical view of the objective moral reality in the

world of nature. This worldview originated in the Yijing, and the four attributes of heaven and earth (origination, advancement, enrichment, and perseverance) are the four virtues of each cosmic state represented by 64 hexagrams in the Yijing. With a sympathetic reading, we may render this perspective of nature as a version of teleology—the world is governed by the principle of life and the overarching telos assumed in this worldview is simply the creation and sustenance of life. From the contemporary viewpoint, we may see that the world of nature operates under the principle of life, as demonstrated by the fact that evolution continues and multiple forms of organism exist to this day. It is the subject matter of natural sciences to investigate which natural phenomena function to sustain life and what causes natural disasters that destroy life. Looking at aspects of the world of nature from a humanistic perspective, on the other hand, we can say that many natural phenomena, such as sunshine and raindrops from heaven and the richness of the soil from earth, are conducive to the continuation of life. Some natural phenomena such as hurricanes do indeed destroy lives; nevertheless, seasons rotate and life continues after destruction. Ancient Confucians found great solace in the continuation of life as they observed in the world of nature, and this natural fact became the foundation for their conviction that the dominant principle in nature is the continual generation and regeneration of life (shengsheng buxi). Given this conviction, they viewed the world of nature itself as a "beneficent" universe. From this observation of nature, they concluded that there is an ultimate moral mission for human beings: to contribute to the fulfillment of the principle of life.

Neo-Confucian moral theories are best understood as falling within the category of virtue ethics. Virtue ethics is the approach of ethical theories that emphasize the virtues, or moral character, of the moral agent. As a form of normative ethics, virtue ethics gives the precept of what kind of virtues one ought to cultivate, or what kind of moral character one ought to develop. It is an agent-centered approach, in contrast to the act-centered approaches such as deontology, which judges the moral worth of an act in terms of its adherence to some specified moral duties, or consequentialism, which prescribes or prohibits moral acts in consideration of their possible consequences. Virtue ethics focuses less on defining rules for moral acts; instead, it stresses more on

defining moral personhood. A virtuous act is one performed by virtuous agents. To define virtuous personhood, virtue ethicists have to identify the essential moral traits that anyone ought to cultivate in order to become a moral agent. They have to address the following question in their attempts to define virtue: What are the virtues such that as long as an agent possesses them, he or she is morally good? Their goal is thus to define those moral virtues that they deem to be enduring and causally efficacious in bringing about moral behavior in individuals. The highest moral character that these neo-Confucians all share in their moral image of the world is that of a sage: the ideal moral agent who has a sanguine vision of what one ought to do in all situations and unwavering moral character. Cultivating sagehood is the common moral aim for neo-Confucianism.

However, among virtue ethicists there are still different approaches. Philip J. Ivanhoe distinguishes two types of virtue ethics: virtue ethics of flourishing (VEF) and virtue ethics of sentiments (VES). The former approach "is grounded in a comprehensive and detailed conception of human nature" and conceives the condition of flourishing for an ideal moral agent as the teleological aim of moral cultivation. The latter, on the other hand, considers a moral agent's virtue in terms of social interactions, and places virtue on the basis of certain emotions or sentiments of human beings as part of humans' psychological makeup (Ivanhoe 2013, 29-30). Both approaches begin with a theory of human nature, and the difference could be characterized as one between an ideal versus an empirical conception of human mind. Hence, the latter (VES) is more empirically grounded. It is particularly in the works on VES that we see the alliance between normative ethics and moral psychology. However, neo-Confucian moral philosophy should be regarded as a form of VEF. Neo-Confucianism grounds its conception of ideal moral agent in sagehood, and all neo-Confucians aimed to present their methodology of arriving at sagehood as the aim of moral cultivation.

The Notion of Principle (li)

The most important notion in neo-Confucianism is undoubtedly that of principle (li ft). This explains why neo-Confucianism is called "the Studies of Principle" (lixue) in Chinese intellectual history. We shall explain first its origin and significance.

The substantial usage of the word *li* is particularly a neo-Confucian earmark, even though it was already employed in Huayan Buddhism to designate ultimate reality. The word was initially used as a verb, which means "to carve jade" (the Chinese character has jade as a radical). A fine jade craftsman must carefully study the lines and grooves of an uncut jade in order to produce a beautiful piece of jade. By extension, *li* as a noun means the veins or detailed markings of a thing, and *li* as a verb means to regulate, to administer, and to manage. In neo-Confucian discourse, the meaning of *li* includes pattern, sequence, logic, order, and norm. The Cheng—Zhu school also established a normative dimension of the concept *li* for they claim that everything in the world ought to meet the standard set by its own principle.

The English translation of the word *li* in the context of neo-Confucianism includes reason, law, organization, order, pattern, coherence, and principle. Of these translations, "principle" has now become a standard usage. As Wing-tsit Chan explains his choice of "principle": "Li is not only principle of organization, but also principle of being, nature, etc. 'Principle' seems to be the best English equivalent for it" (Chan 1967, 368). To see why principle is equivalent to the Chinese notion of *li*, we need to understand how the word is understood in the philosophical context. The word "principle" comes from *principium* in Latin, which was used as the translation for the Greek word *arché*, meaning origin or beginning. In pre-Socratic philosophy, the pursuit of *arché* was the attempt to define the ultimate underlying principle of all things. Thus, "principle" can be said to be the short form for "first principle." Aristotle applied the notion *arché* (principle) to particular things. The principle of a particular thing defines the conditions of possibility for that thing: for a thing to exist, there has to be its principle, and without having its principle, no thing could possibly come into existence. This sense of "principle" comes very close to the neoConfucian conception of *li*. Hence, we shall adopt this translation as well.

In the neo-Confucian discourse, principle is the unifying principle of the universe, and thus it can be rendered as the cosmic order, the cosmic pattern, "the network of veins" (Graham 1992, 13), or as the neo-Confucians have it: heavenly principle (*tianli*). At the same time, in each particular thing there is its particular principle. Principle in particular things can

be understood as the norm of particular things; it stands for the paradigmatic state of the particular thing toward which it should and would develop if aided by humans. Principle is not only the principle of the natural world but also the principle of the human world. As principle of the human world, it includes human's inborn essence (the *li* of human nature), the way to handle affairs (the *li* of affairs), the norm of human relationships (the *li* of humans), and so on. In particular, the unifying principle in nature and the multiple principles in particular things prescribe the norm of conduct for human beings: We have a moral obligation to interact with nature and to handle particular things in accordance with their natures, so that the world will flourish under our care and particular things will thrive under our treatment. This is a shared neo-Confucian conviction in their pursuit of the ultimate Principle.

According to Sir Martin Rees, "Science advances by discerning patterns and regularities in nature, so that more and more phenomena can be subsumed into general categories and laws". Among neo-Confucians, Zhu Xi's may have come closest to developing a systematic knowledge of the natural world. However, even Zhu Xi's notion of particular principle ends up being more a moral norm for human beings than a natural scientific notion. Later scholars in the Cheng—Zhu school did not inherit Zhu Xi's interest in natural knowledge. The opposing school led by Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming further turned the investigation inward: to study the principle inside one's mind since mind is principle.

In the history of Chinese philosophy, the two important notions of *dao* and principle (*li*) are often used together or interchangeably. Both designate the ultimate order of the world. Initially, the two concepts were slightly different. *Dao* is universal, while principle (*li*) is particular. According to the Hanfeizi, "Dao is the ground for everything and the sanction for all principles of things. The principle (*li*) for a particular thing is what makes up the thing's pattern, while *Dao* is what completes all things.... The principle is what regulates a thing, thus different things have different principles. *Dao* comprehensively sanctions all principles of the myriad things". This distinction is sometimes preserved in neo-Confucian discourse on principle, as Zhu Xi claims, "Dao is the unifying name, while principle concerns particular things". According to Wang Fuzhi, "Dao is the common principle (*li*) of heaven and earth, humans and things". However, the

universal/particular distinction between dao and principle is not commonly observed in neo-Confucian discourse, since most neo-Confucians also separate both dao into universal Dao and particular daos, and "principle" into universal principle ("heavenly principle") and particular principles.

A second distinction between dao and principle is that dao represents the progressive order of nature, while principle represents the finished pattern. Dao has a dynamic sense, while principle has the static sense. In Zhang Zai's usage, dao refers to the ongoing progression of the transformation of qi, while li refers to the pattern in such transformations. Wang Fuzhi also takes dao to represent the dynamic interchange between yin and yang, and he takes li to represent the internal logic of qi. In other words, Dao produces things, while principle represents their order. A related distinction that can be drawn between dao and li is that the former has a sense of origination, universality, and comprehensiveness, while the latter simply denotes the essence of particular things. Dao is regarded as the contributor of our moral endowments, the fundamental root of humans' ethical norms. It stands for the highest moral precept exemplified in the world of nature. Only "principle" used in the sense of "heavenly principle" has this connotation.

A final plausible distinction between the two concepts is that dao has the normative connotation of "what should be the case," whereas li generally denotes "what is" or "what is necessarily so," except in the usage by the Cheng—Zhu school. In other words, dao is prescriptive, while li is descriptive. Li is how things naturally are and how qi naturally is. All things have their internal principles and all developments of qi have their internal logic. But only humans possess Dao since the normative dimension pertains to what humans could and ought to do.

Even though we can make the above preliminary distinctions, in most neo-Confucian discourses, dao and li do not have such a clear divide. The Cheng brothers use the two words almost interchangeably. According to a contemporary scholar Dainian Zhang's analysis, the theory of principle developed by Cheng Yi is truly a continuation of the theory of Dao in ancient Chinese philosophy, and his li can be seen as an alias of Dao. Cheng Yi's famous slogan: "Principle is one but the manifestations are many;" should be taken to be "Dao is one but the manifestations are many".

The concerns of neo-Confucians regarding principle (li) can be summarized in the following list of questions:

- 1) Has the universe always followed the same principles (li)? What is the relation between the operation of the world and these principles? Do principles precede existence or are they formed after existence?
- 2) Are universal principles prescriptive (i.e., they determine the way things are) or merely descriptive (i.e., they are the summary of the way things are)?
- 3) What is the nature of the ultimate principle of the universe? Are principles natural or moral, or both?
- 4) What is the content of heavenly principle? Is it the same universal principle that governs all things, or do individual things have individual principles (li)?
- 5) With what capacities do we know the principles of myriad things or the universal heavenly principle? Do humans have any intellectual intuition (intellektuelle Anschauung as Kant calls it), through which we could suddenly perceive the universal cosmic principle? Or should we accumulate knowledge of particular principles in order to understand the universal cosmic principle?

Neo-Confucians share some common assumptions on certain aspects of principle. For one thing, they all believe that there is only one universal principle, though its manifestations are many. Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, for example, often likened the relation of the One and the Many to the moon and its multiple reflections in rivers or lakes. Zhang Zai also stressed that principle is one but manifestations are many. Secondly, neo-Confucians share the view that this universal principle is inherent in all particular things. Zhang Zai's "Western Inscription" depicts the universe as one big family, in which all things are related to one another as brothers, sisters, or companions. Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi's view is that the principle inherent in each object constitutes the nature of the thing. Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming hold the view that the universal principle is inherent in man's mind. Thirdly, neo-Confucians understand the universal principle and the myriad principles to be fundamentally the same, though the myriad things may not completely manifest the inherent principle. Different explanations were offered as to why there

are differences in the manifestations of the one Principle; for example, Zhang Zai attributed them to the varying qualities of the constituting qi. Finally, neo-Confucians share the view that the highest form of principle is simply heavenly principle or the great ultimate (taiji). In this context, principle takes on a moral dimension. According to Zhu Xi, "The great ultimate is simply the principle of the highest good". This supreme principle is a principle with moral attributes, such as humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. Since there is only one all-encompassing principle of the whole universe, the universe itself is endowed with moral attributes. It is a moralistic universe. That the universe has moral attributes seems to be the view shared by Zhou Dunyi, the Cheng brothers, Zhang Zai, Zhu Xi, and Wang Fuzhi.

What kind of cosmic principle could fit the above descriptions? What could be shared by widely different myriad things and yet remain the same? What could be inherent in both natural objects and moral agents alike? The content of principle is not explicitly defined by neo-Confucians. In Part I of this book, we will analyze the various conceptions of principle among neo-Confucians.

Common Assumptions on Principles of Particular Things

Neo-Confucians believe that particular things have particular principles. As Cheng Yi puts it, "As there are things, there must be their specific principles.

One thing necessarily has one principle: Zhu Xi also says, "There is only one principle. As it is applied to man, however, there is in each individual a particular principle." Under this view, different things would have different particular principles, even though all particular principles seem to be integrated into one universal principle.

With regard to particular principles in things, we can provide the following analyses:

- 1) Principle in things is the way things ought to be (the norm of things, the highest standards of things, and the ideal state of things).
- 2) Principle in things is the way things naturally are (the essence of things).
- 3) Principle in things is what makes the things what they are (the blueprint, the foundation of their existence).
- 4) Principle in things is the *raison d'être* (the ultimate purpose) of the particular thing.

- 5) Principle in things is the law that governs or regulates things.

In Parts I and II, we will see lots of discussions on the concept of particular principle in things.

The Notion of Qi—Cosmic Energy

Another essential notion in neo-Confucianism is that of qi (t. (sounding like `chi')—commonly translated as cosmic energy, material force, vital energy, or even ether in some early translations. In this book, this Chinese word will be used as it is, as no English translation could completely convey its connotation. According to a contemporary intellectual historian Dainian Zhang, "The so-called qi in Chinese philosophy is the being before form and matter and what constitutes form and matter. It can be seen as the "primary stuff" [Xunzi's phrase] for form and matter. In today's terminology, qi is the original material for all things" (Zhang 1985/2005, 66). Chung-Ying Cheng gives an enigmatic description of qi that captures the richness of this concept well:

[Qi], an ancient term referring to the indeterminate substance which generates and forms any and every individual thing in the cosmos, no doubt has a rich content. It is formless, yet is the base of all forms. It is the source of everything and the ultimate into which formed things will eventually dissolve. It is non-stationary and forever in a state of flux. It might be conceived as the fluid state of becoming which reveals itself in actualization of natural events and natural objects. But it is best conceived as the indeterminate unlimited material-in-becoming which, through its intrinsic dynamics of alternation and interpenetration of the yin-yang process, generates Five Agencies, and through their union and interaction generate the ten thousand things.

Even if the above two analyses did not help elucidate what qi really is, there is no denial that the notion of qi is fundamental to the Chinese worldview. Laymen and experts alike employ this notion in their daily lives, with more or less different understanding of what qi is. Chinese herbology has an elaborated system on the constitution of yin and yang in various plants and roots; Chinese medicine is the study of the distribution of yin and yang in the human body. Chinese cooking is an art of creating a harmonious balance, a Taiji, between foods of yang nature and yin nature. Chinese martial arts, finally, are manifestations of the individual's internal strength of

yin and yang. In terms of the philosophical notion of qi, from the beginning, Chinese ontology is built on the notion of qi. Qi is taken to be the constituent of all natural phenomena and every concrete thing; qi is also associated with life's conditions and the world's state of affairs. However, even though the notion is frequently employed, there has been no systematic analysis of qi and its many characteristics. We will explain the historical developments of the notion of qi and see how Zhang Zai reconstructed Confucian qi-monism in Chapter 2.

In general, neo-Confucians shared the following assumptions on certain aspects of qi:

- 1) The whole universe is composed of qi, which has two forms: yin and yang. These two forms of qi work against each other in their perpetual motion.
- 2) All things contain both yin and yang to varying degrees. Nothing is purely yang or purely yin.
- 3) Qi condenses to form material objects. When material objects disintegrate, on the other hand, their concrete qi returns to a rarified form.
- 4) The nature of qi can be pure or turbid—in this distinction lies the differences of good and bad, intelligence and lack of it, and so on.
- 5) Particular things partake qi in varying degrees of quality (pure or turbid, lucid or opaque, light or dense, etc.) as well as in different combinations of yin and yang. Variances among individual things are extensive not only in the manifestation of principle but also in the distribution of qi.
- 6) It is qi, not principle, which plays the actual causal role in the physical realm.

However, these neo-Confucians disagree on whether principle is an abstract order or a pattern superimposed onto the physical realm, or principle is simply the inherent order of qi's operations. We will see the different views in Part I of this book.

Chapter Synopsis

This book is divided into three parts. Part I deals with neo-Confucian metaphysics. Part II examines the neo-Confucians' theories of the origin of morality and its foundation in the objective moral reality, whereas Part III delineates their moral methodologies.

Neo-Confucian Metaphysics: From Cosmology to Ontology

The major common themes in neo-Confucian metaphysics include (i) how the universe began and what the original state of the world might have been; (ii) what the ontological hierarchy of the world is—whether there is an abstract, overarching principle presiding over the development of qi; and (iii) what is the relationship between the two essential elements of the universe: principle (li) and qi. These are the key points that will be discussed in Part I on neo-Confucian metaphysics.

Chapter 1 focuses on Zhou Dunyi's controversial thesis about the initial cosmic state, which he calls wuji and taiji. The controversy revolves around the question of whether Zhou Dunyi holds the view that there was nothing (wu) at the beginning of the cosmos. The first section of this chapter will explain the historical controversies on the interpretation of this work. The second section will introduce the philosophical debate on being (you) and nothingness (wu) prior to Zhou's times, to see whether his wuji notion is related to the notion of wu. The final section will give a new interpretation of Zhou Dunyi's notion of wuji and further develop his cosmological view.

Chapter 2 introduces Zhang Zai's theory of qi as a form of qi-naturalism. Zhang Zai constructed a systematic philosophy that builds on the traditional notion of qi. He incorporated the notion of qi into his metaphysics as well as his ethics. Before Zhang Zai, there had been cosmogony originating with primordial qi (yuanqi) and ontology with qi as the basic constituent of all things primarily in the Daoist tradition. This chapter will trace the theory of qi to its Daoist roots, and see how the notion of qi was employed both in Daoists' cosmological explanation and in their ontological analysis. It will then introduce the theory of qi as developed by Zhang Zai, and examine how he went back to the theory of qi in the Yijing and used it to develop a neoConfucian theory of qi.

Chapter 3 presents the metaphysical views held by the Cheng brothers as well as Zhu Xi. In contemporary terms, the main focus in Chapter 3 is on the existence of the law of nature, that is, whether the universe is a cosmic accident or is driven by specific eternal laws of nature. The notion of principle (or heavenly principle) was already present in Zhang Zai's theory of qi, but it was the Cheng brothers, in particular, Cheng Yi, who

expanded on the notion, and their discussion paved the way for the neo-Confucian discourse on the "principle of Heaven" (tianli). This chapter begins with the explication of the notion of principle (li) and its various renditions in English. It then analyzes how the Cheng brothers, and later Zhu Xi, developed an ontological hierarchy that posits nonreductionism of principle. It also investigates the relation between the universal Principle and particular things. The chapter analyzes the metaphysical worldview presented by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi as a form of "normative realism."

In Chapter 4, we focus on the further development of the philosophy of qi under Wang Fuzhi's elaboration. Due to the scarcity of translations (Wing-tsit Chan's *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* contains only a snippet of Wang's 20-some volumes), Wang Fuzhi is by far the most undeservingly neglected neo-Confucian in the English-speaking world. Wang Fuzhi was a great synthesizer of the theory of qi and the theory of principle: his basic view is that principle is inherent in qi. This chapter will open with Wang Fuzhi's metaphysics and extend to his views on the human world. For Wang Fuzhi, the realm of heaven and the realm of humans are simply one unified whole. There is no transcendent realm beyond the human world, and it is the same element, qi, and the same principle, which permeate the realm of heaven as well as the realm of humans. Hence, his metaphysical view underlies his philosophy of human affairs—in particular, his philosophy of human nature, his moral philosophy, as well as his philosophy of human history. This chapter depicts Wang Fuzhi's philosophy as the philosophy of Principle Inherent in qi, since it is the relationship between principle and qi that explains everything for him.

Human Nature, Human Mind, and the Foundation of Human Morality

What is the origin of human morality? What makes morality possible in human society? Are human beings intrinsically moral creatures, or are we conditioned to be moral agents through social and political regulations? Do we have moral "instincts" and natural moral sentiments? Classical Confucianism, represented by Confucius and Mencius, takes the stance that humans are intrinsically good and that morality is the natural development originating from humans' innate goodness. If morality derives from humans' inborn nature, then how do we explain the lack of morality in some human conduct? How do we explain the fact that not everyone became a moral agent?

One of Chinese Buddhism's basic tenets is that the root of suffering as well as the origin of immorality is humans' emotions and desires. Chinese Buddhist philosophers denounce our natural emotions and desires; along with the denunciation, they also renounce natural human relationships such as family, marriage, and kinship. In the wake of the dominance of Chinese Buddhism, neo-Confucian philosophers were intent on analyzing the relationship between heavenly principle and human emotions/desires.

The main topic of Part II consists in a major debate between the school of nature and the school of mind. The former school is represented by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, who claim that human nature exemplifies the universal moral principle. The latter school is represented by Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming, who take the human mind to be the actual realization of the universal moral principle. This debate concerns whether the foundation of morality is primarily metaphysical or mental. The first school constructs metaphysics of morality that takes moral attributes to be intrinsic to human existence; the second focuses on moral intuitions and moral knowledge as ways to foster moral agency. The analysis of this rich and longstanding debate will be presented from the fresh perspective of contemporary moral psychology. Construed broadly, moral psychology investigates the connection between humans' moral behavior and their psychological makeup. Neo-Confucians had varying responses to the question of what makes human morality possible, and many of them developed a sophisticated moral psychology, in which they analyzed the relation between morality and the mind's many functions.

Chapter 5 focuses on Zhu Xi's famous slogan: "Human nature is Principle" or "Cosmic principle is exemplified in human nature." It places Zhu Xi's theory of human nature in the context of his moral metaphysics. According to Zhu Xi, the highest form of principle is simply heavenly principle or the supreme ultimate (Taiji t). Zhu Xi takes the supreme ultimate to be the principle of the highest good. This supreme principle is the principle with moral attributes, such as humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. There is only one all-encompassing principle of the whole universe, and it is inherent in our very existence. Under this worldview, Zhu Xi advocates the theory of moral essence ("nature" (xing)). The moral reality lies in our moral essence. This is Zhu Xi's moral realism. This

chapter analyzes Zhu Xi's theory as internal moral realism.

Chapter 6 continues the investigation of the universal moral principle realized in the human mind, and turns to the contrasting view presented by Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming. Lu Xiangshan advocates the view that the universal principle is inherent in the human mind. Wang Yangming goes further and asserts that the mind is principle itself. This chapter analyses the views of Lu and Wang and shows how they depict a different metaphysics of mind from that of the Cheng—Zhu school. It further explains Wang's famous one-body thesis "We are one body with the world" in the context of his metaphysics, which we will compare with contemporary pragmatist metaphysics.

Chapter 7 introduces Wang Fuzhi's revolutionary thesis that treats human nature as developing, rather than as some inborn essence complete at birth. Wang Fuzhi's theory of human nature is grounded in his metaphysics of qi: since qi is constantly changing, human nature is not simply what one is endowed with at birth, it is also what is developed throughout one's life. According to Wang Fuzhi, as we continue to interact with the natural environment and human conditions, we are immersed in the ongoing permeations of qi. We make decisions and take actions, and our essences are shaped by our experiences in life. As a result, not only our natural qualities but also our moral essence would become more developed and perfected on a daily basis. In other words, we do not have a determinate essence fixed for life. This is his ingenious thesis of daily renewal of human nature. He developed a sophisticated moral psychology to analyze the connection between morality and mind. This chapter analyzes Wang Fuzhi's moral psychology and explains how he establishes the foundation of morality on humans' moral sentiments, natural emotions, desires, volition, and furthermore, reflection.

The Cultivation of Virtue, Moral Personality, and the Construction of a Moral World

Part III continues from Part II and reconstructs neo-Confucians' moral philosophy in the context of contemporary virtue ethics and developmental psychology. While Part II provides the metaphysical foundation of moral attributes, Part III deals with the implementation of neo-Confucian moral programs. We will be analyzing various neo-Confucians' views

on the realization of moral ideals both in the individual and in the world. In this context, we will also examine the various methods of moral knowledge proposed by these neo-Confucian philosophers.

In contemporary research on Confucianism, there is now an emerging direction to consult empirical sciences as a new way to resituate and reassess its ethical teachings. For example, Edward Slingerland cites empirical evidence from cognitive science to support the ethical model of virtue ethics; in particular, he argues that Mencius's moral theory anticipates some of the scientific observations about the human mind, and can be a useful resource for "formulating a modern, empirically responsible ethical model". Reber and Slingerland (2011) appeals to empirical findings in cognitive science to validate Confucius's pedagogy of internalizing social norms through intensive, lifelong practice. Bongrae Seok (2008) places Mencius's theory of four moral sprouts in the context of recent developments in cognitive science regarding humans' mental faculty as the foundations of morality. Flanagan and Williams (2010) compares and contrasts Mencius's four moral sprouts against Jonathan Haidt's five psychological modules for human morality and culture. By comparing classical Confucian ethical theories against modern scientific assertions about the human mind and human nature, we can give these ancient theories new meanings, thereby to understand why Confucianism has had such a wide-ranging, long-lasting impact on Asian culture. As Donald J. Munro points out, "Ethical principles must be consistent with human nature in order for people to find them compelling and motivating" (Munro 2002, 131). Part III of this book continues this direction to connect issues in neo-Confucianism with contemporary perspectives in psychology and moral philosophy.

More than 2,000 years ago, Hanfeizi already launched an attack on Confucius's moral ideals from the perspective of empirical evidence: "People within the four seas loved his doctrine of humanity and praised his doctrine of righteousness. And yet only 70 people became his devoted pupils. The reason is that few people value humanity and it is difficult to practice righteousness" (The Hanfeizi, Chapter 49, translated by Wing-tsit Chan, in Chan 1963, 258). Hanfeizi's point is that the majority of ordinary people would not act the way Confucius implored, and thus the Confucian ethical teaching does not have any empirical validity. In the contemporary ethical

discourse, there are also criticisms of virtue ethics using empirical studies in social psychology and cognitive science as evidence. A great challenge to virtue ethics comes from situationism. John Doris in *Lack of Character* (2002) argues that changes in people's behavior are more due to situational factors than their character traits. Doris advocates situationism and argues that moral traits are situationally sensitive. Doris characterizes virtue ethics in terms of globalism. Globalism is the view that personality is "an evaluatively integrated association of robust traits;" traits that can help their possessors maintain stable and consistent behavioral patterns against situational pressures. Doris thinks that personality or characterological psychology presupposes globalism, and virtue ethicists are typically concerned with this kind of psychology in their emphasis on cultivating virtue. Personality psychology and characterological moral psychology appeal to people's character or personality traits in their explanation of human behavior. Such explanations, however popular among common folks, are empirically unfounded according to Doris. There are no global character traits, which empirical scientists can invoke as the explanatory basis for human's moral behavior. With case studies in social psychology, Doris shows that people routinely behave inconsistently across different situations, and a large contributing factor to their behavior is situational variables, many of which are morally trivial.

According to situationism, lack of good conduct in certain situations is not an indication of character flaws; at the same time, behaving morally in certain situations also does not manifest a superior moral personality. Virtue ethicists place their bet on cultivating robustly enduring virtues in moral agents, when in the end there is no such proof for the consistency or the stability of moral virtues; furthermore, there is no integration of character traits in moral agents.

Situations trump character; therefore, virtue ethicists are misguided to seek the cultivation of moral character or robust moral traits. Doris thus recommends that we abandon the vain pursuit of cultivating virtue or moral character in ethical discourse, and turn our attention more toward situational factors. The goal of moral cultivation should be to foster morality-inducing situations, and the focus of one's ethical attention should be on avoiding situations that might induce morally

questionable behavior. Since neo-Confucian moral theories fall into the category of virtue ethics, Doris's claim is a direct challenge to neo-Confucianism. Several chapters in Part III will address this challenge and examine how each neo-Confucian philosopher's proposal on cultivating moral virtue could meet the challenge of situationism.

In Chapter 8, we shall reconstruct Zhang Zai's moral philosophy in the context of moral personality development in cognitive science and developmental psychology. This chapter will explicate Zhang Zai's moral program in terms of the sociocognitive model of moral personality development, since the key elements in Zhang Zai's moral program match the key features of the socio-cognitive model. Zhang Zai's moral philosophy is a moral program that depicts moral development as progressive, primarily cognitive, and originating in autonomous volition. Individual agents must be self-regulating in choosing the right goals; they must learn from others through reading, discussion with friends, and emulating the highest moral exemplars—the sages. Their moral development is partly the result of proper social influences (such as schooling and societal rules of propriety), partly the realization of self-governance and self-regulation. This chapter addresses the question whether Zhang Zai's moral program would be threatened by Doris's situationism.

Chapter 9 introduces the virtue ethics of the Cheng brothers. Whereas Zhang Zai's moral philosophy can be analyzed in terms of the social-cognitive model, the moral theory of the Cheng brothers is closer to that of globalism, the claim that there are "robust" moral traits that one can sustain across situations. The Cheng brothers acknowledge that these moral traits need to be cultivated, and the aim of their moral teaching is to define the essential virtues that lay the foundation for a stable moral character. This chapter will investigate whether the Cheng brother's globalist virtue ethics could meet the challenge of moral skepticism about the existence of robust moral character. It will also investigate what the Cheng brothers mean by "true knowledge" in their form of virtue epistemology, and what they set up as the aim of knowledge as well as the satisfaction conditions for knowledge.

Chapter 10 is devoted to Zhu Xi's virtue ethics and analyzes it as a form of ethical rationalism. Zhu Xi highlights sagehood as the common moral goal for all

moral agents, and he advocates that to reach sagehood, one must take an intellectual approach to understanding the principle inherent in one's own nature, the principles in the nature of external objects and affairs, and, finally, the universal moral principle represented as the principle of heaven. Zhu Xi's moral epistemology is the path from investigating particular principles to the holistic grasp of the universal moral principle inherent in all our handlings of particular things. To him, the natural states of particular things already contain normative imperatives for our appropriate interactions with particular things. In other words, the descriptive sense of the nature of a particular thing at the same time implies the prescriptive sense of our conduct with respect to this particular kind of things. This chapter analyzes how Zhu Xi combines the descriptive and the normative dimensions in his moral epistemology, thereby deriving Ought from Is.

Chapter 11 focuses on Wang Yangming's theory of Liangzhi, the innate faculty of pure knowing or moral consciousness. This chapter analyzes Wang Yangming's notion of Liangzhi as a form of higher-order perception (HOP). A higher-order perception is an "introspective consciousness" or "the inner perception of current states and activities in our own mind" (Armstrong 2004). Wang Yangming's teaching of Liangzhi stresses the mind's intuitive seeing right from wrong in one's own thinking. Our knowing right from wrong is a form of moral intuition, which is inherent in us at the start of our moral cultivation. At the same time, it is a form of self-monitoring and self-rectification, as the self is watching the self's every passing idea. This chapter introduces the phrase moral reflexivity for Wang Yangming's moral methodology. To Wang Yangming, the most important task is to convince others that they are already born as sages and they do not need to look elsewhere for moral inspiration. He advocates that everyone is endowed with this pure knowing faculty at birth. Only when one has embraced this philosophy can one achieve the moral/spiritual transformation that Wang Yangming aims to bring about in his audience. His moral program is built on the individual's faith and optimism in the self's capability. This chapter also analyzes Wang Yangming's theory of moral knowledge presented in his thesis of the unity of knowledge and action.

Chapter 12 concludes neo-Confucian moral theories with the socioethical program of moral cultivation

developed by Wang Fuzhi. The main idea behind this program is that to construct a moral world, we cannot count on the moral agent's isolated moral conscience or moral sentiments. The conscience or moral sentiments have to be integrated into the whole society, so that moral conduct becomes the norm rather than the exception. The social atmosphere and group mentality can have an affective power on the individual's thinking and action. It is therefore crucial to establish a moral world if we want to enhance individual moral agents' moral resolve. This final chapter examines how Wang Fuzhi's theory, based on Mencius's ideas, leads to a realistic proposal for constructing a moral world. At the end, it goes beyond mere philosophical explication to suggest a socioethical program that can be developed out of Wang Fuzhi's ideas.

This final part of the book redefines neo-Confucian moral philosophies as various forms of virtue ethics, using different theoretical models in moral psychology and cognitive science as comparative schemata. When neo-Confucian virtue ethics is expected to be empirically responsible, its ultimate goal of attaining sagehood is placed in the reality of the psychology of ordinary people. Is it too idealistic? Is it portraying a utopian ethical goal that does not reflect human psychology and goes beyond what ordinary people could accomplish in their lifetime? Should ethicists aim to present theories that reflect what people are like (the Is) or to present the normative goals that transform people from what they are to what they ought to be (the Ought)? Should ethics be based on the ethicist's metaphysical conception of one's relation to the world? Is such a metaphysically oriented neo-Confucian ethics practicable or even credible with our contemporary mentality? These are all the questions that remain to be considered.

The Philosophers:

Zhou Dunyi

From miscellaneous sources, we gather the impression that Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073) was highly respected in his times. He founded a school in order to teach Confucianism to the youth, and local people all voluntarily contributed money or labor. He was someone with a high sense of integrity and a great sympathy for all living things. One time a harsh superior wanted to execute a prisoner who did not deserve the death penalty, and Zhou Dunyi argued vehemently for the prisoner's sake. When it was to no

avail, Zhou wanted to resign from his post. His selfless decision changed the superior's mind and in the end, the prisoner's life was spared. Zhou Dunyi was also generous in helping others in need, and took it calmly even when there was not enough rice for his wife to cook. Another famous anecdote told that Zhou Dunyi never cut weeds, because in his eyes weeds and grass were all in the same family, equally valuable. He even enjoyed the sight of tall and unruly weeds outside the windows of his study, in that it was a sign of vitality. Zhou Dunyi was known as someone with little material desire. The Cheng brothers said that from him, they learned to pursue the simple pleasures that delighted Confucius as well as his exemplary student Yan Hui. One of Zhou Dunyi's philosophical doctrines is "no desire." This doctrine has been likened to the Daoist teaching of the reduction of desire, or the Buddhist teaching of the elimination of desire. Whatever the inspiration was, Zhou Dunyi apparently lived up to his own standard.

Zhang Zai

Zhang Zai (1020-1077) studied Buddhism and Daoism when he was young but was not intellectually satisfied with either of them. He later returned to the study of the Confucian classics and found his true calling as a scholar and a teacher. In his 30s, he lectured on the Yijing and his distant nephews Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi were in the audience. Thereafter the three of them began a lifelong scholarly exchange of philosophical ideas.

Zhang Zai passed the civic exam when he was already 36, and held various local official posts for 12 years. He had a brief fling with a political career in the imperial court, but did not have much success because he and his brother both openly criticized the policy of the prime minister at the time. He eventually resigned from his position and returned to his hometown Hengqu for retirement. He was thus known as Mr. Hengqu. This was the period for his philosophical advancement since he led a reclusive life, and devoted all his energy to thinking, reading, and writing. Others described him as sitting alone in a room the whole day, with many bamboo books by his sides. He kept on reading and thinking, and if he had any thought, he immediately wrote them down. Sometimes he would even wake up in the middle of the night, lit a candle, and continued to work. He composed several commentaries on the classics, most notably was his commentary on the Yijing. During this time he also

wrote his own philosophical masterpiece, *Correcting Youthful Ignorance* (Zhengmeng), which greatly influenced Wang Fuzhi three hundred years later. He died from illness at the age of 57, with no money left for burial. His former students had to rush to his side to take care of the funeral (Huang 1987).

Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi

Cheng Hao (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107) were brothers separated by merely one year. Their writings had been collected together from the start as "The Posthumous Work of the Chengs" and many of their conversations or comments were grouped under "recorded conversations of two Cheng masters." Even though their philosophical ideas were similar and their discourses were often recorded without specific reference to the source, one could still discern subtle differences in the two brothers' philosophical interests that had profound impact. From the two Cheng brothers emerged two different directions of neo-Confucian thought. Cheng Hao, alias Mr. Mingdao, influenced the ideas of Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming, whose philosophy has been called "the School of Mind" (xinxue). Cheng Yi, alias Mr. Yichuan, on the other hand, was later promoted by Zhu Xi (1130-1200) to become the founder of "the School of Principle" (lixue) or "the School of Nature" (xingxue). Both of them studied with Zhou Dunyi for one year when they were teenagers, and they were related to Zhang Zai as distant nephews. In their discourses, they made frequent reference to Zhang Zai's ideas and his work; in particular, the latter's "Western Inscription." Both of them corresponded with Zhang Zai on philosophical ideas. The two brothers continued Zhou Dunyi and Zhang Zai's revival of Confucianism, and further enriched the philosophy with many topics and concepts that later became the defining themes of neo-Confucianism. Therefore, we can say that what we now call "Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism" really emerged with them. According to renowned historian Feng Youlan, the real establishment of neo-Confucianism as an organized school really began with the Cheng brothers.

Under Zhou Dunyi's influence, Cheng Hao aspired to become an intellectual at a young age, and devoted his time to studying the Confucian classics. He passed the civic exam at the age of 26, and had various assignments as the local governor. He was known as a benevolent and fair official, winning the love and respect of the people under his governance. He always had the motto "regarding the people as if

they were wounded" by his seat to remind himself to be tender and caring with them. One of Cheng Hao's most notable accomplishments was education of people in the city of Jincheng. He was assigned the post of magistrate in Jincheng, which was backward and full of illiterate citizens at that time. For hundreds of years, no one in that town had ever succeeded in passing the civic exams to earn an official post. Cheng Hao gathered the most intelligent youths and founded an academy to educate them. He provided them with lodging and food as well as school supplies, and gave them intensive education. In 10 years, hundreds of people passed the civic exams and more than 10 people received governmental positions. After Cheng Hao had left the post, the people of Jincheng still credited him for the transformation of their culture. Even to this day, there are many historical remains associated with Cheng Hao. The city of Jincheng is currently rebuilding Cheng Hao's Mingdao Academy.

Cheng Hao died of an illness at the age of 54, whereas his younger brother by one year Cheng Yi lived to his 70s and spent most of his adult life in teaching. Hence, the latter had a lot more discourse recorded by his students. Unlike his brother Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi turned down many offers for government posts, and even once remarked "I would only consider the offer when I am too starved to even get out of the house one day" (Li 1986, 49). The only post that he would be willing to accept later was to be the mentor to the young emperor. In contrast to Cheng Hao's easy-going and amiable personality, Cheng Yi was allegedly a stern and serious person. Even with the young emperor, he would not relax his austere mannerism. His students regarded him with awe and reverence. Once when two new students went to visit him for the first time, he had a conversation with them and then closed his eyes to meditate. Without knowing whether the interview was over, the two men stood by his sides and did not dare to stir him up. When he eventually opened his eyes a long while later, he found them still standing there and sent them home. They came out to find that the snow outside had already accumulated one foot high. These two students later became famous followers of Cheng Yi and developed their philosophical views under his instruction. This incident became a famous story and there is even a Chinese phrase, "standing in the snow within the Cheng Gate" (chengmen lixue),

coined after this event to depict a student's utmost respect and earnest attitude toward the teacher.

Zhu Xi

If it were not for Zhu Xi (1130-1200), there probably would not have been neo-Confucianism. His contribution to neo-Confucianism was not only his promotion of the philosophical ideas of Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai and the Cheng brothers but also the establishment of his own systematic philosophy. His coedited anthology of these early neo-Confucians' writings and remarks, *Reflections on Things at Hand* (Jinsilu, translated into English by Chan Wing-tsit, is an essential primer for anyone wishing to study neo-Confucianism.

Zhu Xi was an astute student since early childhood. When he was four, his father pointed to the sky and taught him "heaven." He immediately asked: "What is it above heaven then?" which impressed his father greatly. In his youth, Zhu Xi was more interested in Buddhism and Daoism, but gradually came to the realization that the society's religious fascination with searching for the Buddha or with the Daoist pursuit of immortality had led the nation to a tattered state. At the age of 30 he went to see his father's former classmate, a Confucian master Li Tong, and stayed for several months to learn from him. Li Tong's instruction convinced him that Confucianism has a more profound teaching and a sounder social effect. He henceforth abandoned Buddhism and devoted himself to the revival of classic Confucianism.

Zhu Xi passed the prestigious civic exam at the young age of 19, and began a long series of official positions. His main interest was in teaching and writing, however. In 1178, with the emperor's support, he renovated an old and deserted academy named the White Deer Cave (bailudong) Academy and turned it into a thriving academy for scholars. He was in charge of the academy and invited guest speakers, enriched its library, and set up a systematic education. The structure of this academy would later become the model for other academies in China in the next seven hundred years. The academy, located in Jiangxi province, China, with a monument for Zhu Xi inside, is now a national cultural treasure. Zhu Xi was also responsible for selecting two chapters from the *Book of Rites* (Liji), that is, the "Doctrine of the Mean" and the "Great Learning; to list them together with the *Analects* and the *Mengzi*, as the Four Books (Sishu), His commentary on the Four Classics became the standard

texts for the civic exams in the next few hundreds of years, until the exam system was abolished in 1905. His influence in the Chinese intellectual as well as political history was insurmountable.

In his old age, however, Zhu Xi was caught in a political rivalry between two high officials, and he supported the prime minister who was framed and exiled. In retaliation, the succeeding prime minister accused Zhu Xi of preaching falsehood, and launched a six-year political persecution targeting him and his followers. Some of his students were exiled and some imprisoned. In 1200, Zhu Xi had lost his eyesight in the left eye and the right eye was also almost blind, but he worked even harder to organize his previous writings to complete them before he died. He passed away at the age of 71, and even with the official ban against people attending his funeral, there were still over one thousand attendees.

Lu Xiangshan

Lu Xiangshan (1139-1193) was born as Lu Jiuyuan, but was later more generally known as Mr. Xiangshan because he taught at Xiangshan Academy for some time and left a profound influence on the scholars who studied with him. Similar to Zhu Xi, he was also a child prodigy in philosophical thinking. When he was merely three or four, he asked his father: Where do heaven and earth end? His father smiled but did not answer. He pondered on this question to the point of losing sleep and forgetting to eat. In his early teens, when he read the annotation in an ancient book about the meaning of the Chinese word for the universe, *yuzou*, which denotes both space and time, he suddenly came to the realization and declared: The universe's affairs are all my own affairs; my own affairs are the affairs of the universe. From this point on, he developed his own philosophical system that took a different direction from that of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, known as the Cheng—Zhu school. Three hundred years later, Wang Yangming would be so inspired by his ideas that a rival school of the Cheng—Zhu school emerged: the Lu—Wang school. The former advocated that principle is inherent in human nature, while the latter pronounced that the entire universe is in our mind and principle is in the mind. In Chinese intellectual history, the former is called the School of Nature (*xingxue*) and the latter is called the School of Mind (*xin xue*).

After passing the civic exam at the age of 34, Lu Xiangshan held several governmental positions in

addition to teaching at Xiangshan Academy for four years. On his last post, he was well loved and respected by the local people for his benevolent governance and his grand achievement in eliminating theft and robbery. Unfortunately, he contracted some illness and died one year later. For his burial, thousands of people crowded the streets and alleys just to pay their final tribute to him. He did not produce much philosophical writing, and did not care for writing commentary on the classics. His proud statement was: "The Six Classics are merely footnotes to me!".

Wang Yangming

"Wang Yangming" is the alias of Wang Shouren (1472-1529), who was commonly known as Mr. Yangming on account of the nickname he adopted when he was sent to exile and lived in the Yangming Grotto in Guizhou province for three years. The grotto is now one of China's nationally protected cultural relics.

When Wang Yangming was little, he did not begin to talk until the age of five. But as soon as he talked, he recited a book that his grandfather used to read to him. He came from a scholarly lineage and received excellent education from his grandfather before the age of ten. He went with his father to Beijing when he was 11 and traveled with the latter to many remote regions outside China's borders. As a young man, he loved riding horses and archery and did not do well with the government's civic exams. In 1499, at the age of 28, he finally passed the exam and earned the qualifications to enter into politics. His political career was turbulent, however. The emperor at the time had a favorite court eunuch, who managed to have the emperor cane and dismiss the senior officials who tried to persuade the emperor to get rid of this eunuch. Wang Yangming saw the injustice in this and presented a remonstrative letter to the emperor. Both the emperor and the eunuch were infuriated by his audacity. As a result, Wang Yangming was publicly caned 40 times at the imperial court, and then sent away to exile in Guizhou, where he resided in his namesake, the Yangming Grotto. The grotto was located in a remote mountain far away from the populace. It was damp and unsuitable for living, and his health deteriorated. The locals took pity on him and volunteered to build a simple wooden house outside the grotto. To amuse himself and also to lift his morale, Wang Yangming nicknamed himself "Yangming," and christened this house "What

Uncouthness Cabin" (helouxuan) derived from the Analects: "If the gentleman were to reside there, what uncouthness would there be?" .

Three years later, after the eunuch was executed as the result of another political clash, Wang Yangming was again called back to the imperial court and offered various positions. His military talents were soon recognized and appreciated by a high official, and he was sent to quell the rebels who were starting a revolution in the South. He captured the ringleader alive, but the officials by the emperor's side suggested that he let the ringleader go, so that the emperor could again capture him to earn the credit for ending the unrest. Wang Yangming thought that this would only lead to unnecessary bloodshed, and decided to give up his political career. He returned home on the false pretense of being ill.

After the next emperor took the throne in 1521, Wang Yangming was again offered governmental positions, but the new emperor found him to be insolent and arrogant. In 1527, he was called upon to quell several other revolts that were getting out of control, and despite his success, he did not gain the emperor's appreciation. The long travels in his military service also ruined his health, so he delivered his resignation and returned home without waiting for the emperor's approval. All his tides were nearly stripped because of this defiant act. Nevertheless, the local people all worshiped him. He died on the way back home, and when his hearse traveled to the province of his home state, soldiers and townsfolk all lined up the roadsides in tears. It was recorded that at his deathbed, an accompanying student asked if he had any last words. His reply was: "The mind is totally luminous and bright. What is the need to say anything more?".

Wang Yangming was disillusioned with Zhu Xi's teaching after he jeopardized his health from following the latter's teaching to investigate the principle in external things. He spent day and night trying to study the bamboo trees, and on the seventh day he became seriously ill (Chan 1963, 249). From this experience, he concluded that to seek the "principle of Heaven," we do not need to look outside of our own mind. Inspired by Lu Xiangshan's teaching, he founded the school of mind. He wrote a poem describing his intellectual awakening:

Everyone has within an unerring compass;

The root and source of the myriad transformations lies in the mind.
I laugh when I think that, earlier, I saw things the other way around;
Following branches and leaves, I searched outside!

(Ivanhoe 2009, 181. Cited in van Norden 2014)

After neo-Confucianism spread to other parts of Asia, Yangming studies in Japan were equally fervent as Zhu Xi studies were in Korea. According to Robert C. Neville, Wang Yangming's influence in East Asia is roughly comparable to Descartes's influence in the West.

Wang Fuzhi

Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692) (alias "Chuanshan) was the most prolific philosopher in Chinese history. The Complete Posthumous Works of Chuanshan (chuanshan yishu quanji) includes 21 volumes of his own writings, and this is not even his whole work since some were destroyed or lost during the turmoil of his life. He wrote extensive commentary on the Four Books and the Five Classics, and these commentaries contain his highly sophisticated metaphysics, epistemology, and moral philosophy. He gave detailed analysis of historical trends and events, and developed an innovative philosophy of history. He presented his perspective on Chinese politics and his patriotism in a small book III On Yellow Emperor (huang shu), which inspired many Chinese intellectuals after his times. He also delivered his views on two major Daoist works, the Daodejing and the Zhuangzi, in several complete commentaries. His aesthetics is represented in his commentary of ancient poems and poems of the Tang dynasty as well as of the Song dynasty. In addition, he was an inspired author of voluminous fine poetry, which also exemplifies his aesthetic view.

Wang Fuzhi was born at the end of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), in the midst of political upheaval when the royal family of Ming no longer could sustain its political power and national security. His father was a learned scholar, so he grew up in a highly intellectual environment. At the age of seven, Wang Fuzhi had completed reading all 13 classics. When he was 25, some local lord kidnaped his father and demanded his service in exchange for his father's life. Wang maimed himself badly and had others carried him to the bandits. The bandits had no way but to let both the father and the son go. The following year, the Manchus invaded China and established a new dynasty (the Qing dynasty, 1644-1911). The Ming

royalties fled to the south and established a new government. Upon reflection on how the previous neo-Confucianism in the Ming dynasty (in particular, Wang Yangming's school of mind that focuses on meditation and thinking) has brought about the dynasty's cultural as well as political downfall, Wang Fuzhi began his writing career to renew what he took to be the true spirit of Confucianism.

The next few years brought constant struggles between the rump Ming government and the new powerful Manchu government. Wang initially participated in the resistance movement along with his father, uncle and two brothers, but all of them died in the battlefield. He then formed numerous resistance troops with fellow idealists, but kept losing his associates through defeats in wars. When he was serving the Ming emperor in the South, he was nearly imprisoned for speaking up against political factionalism. This experience angered him so much that he spit up blood. Wang Fuzhi eventually concluded that it would be a futile task to restore the Ming royalty. In 1661, the last emperor of the Ming dynasty was caught and the Manchus took control over the whole China. Refusing to collaborate and to avoid being constantly solicited by local authorities for his service, Wang Fuzhi escaped to remote mountains and fled from one place to another. He eventually settled down in a hut at the foot of a barren mountain that he named "Chuanshan" (literally "boat mountain," named after a huge boulder in the shape of a boat on this mountain). Wang Fuzhi stayed here for the remainder of his life, and hence took up the alias "Wang Chuanshan." He chose this place because he felt ashamed to be under a foreign rule and yet could not find any way out of this predicament. In his Memoir of Chuanshan (chuanshanji), he wrote:

People of the past could choose wherever they wanted to travel and find the best place to settle down. I, on the other hand, cannot find a single inch of the land under heaven to suit my sorrowful mood. ... Those who can look up the sky with no regret, and look down at the ground with no sorrow, should have beautiful landscape for their abodes. For me, however, even if thorny bushes surrounded my lodging and thick frost covered the land, the place I live would still be beyond my share. ... In the morning of springtime or the dusk of fall, I only wanted to seal my windows with mud and close

myself in. What is there any point in choosing anywhere else? ... This is why Chuanshan (the Boat Mountain) is my mountain. It has nothing to keep its name spread afar and nothing to be passed down to future generations. When I am old and gone, the Boat Mountain will simply return to its standing as a barren mountain.... This is where I will spend the rest of life until I die.

Wang Fuzhi died at the age of 74. He devoted more than 40 years to writing and completed more than 100 books, the manuscripts of which were collected and organized by his son 14 years after his death. It was not until 1842 that his complete works were put into print. Some of his works were thus lost forever.

It is no exaggeration to claim that among neo-Confucians, Wang Fuzhi had the most sophisticated system of philosophy. His contribution to Confucianism was that he went back to classical Confucianism to revive its true spirit. His philosophy incorporated the quintessence of the Yijing and the other Five Classics as well as the doctrines of the Analects and Mencius. His personal credo was "The Six Classics make it incumbent upon me to break a new path and present a new facet; and he devoted most of his mature life to the reconstruction of these classics. With his reconstruction, he brought the discourse of Confucianism to a new height. In a contemporary scholar Yun Chen's words: "Wang Chuanshan extended human cultivation of the self to human acts of reforming the world; and reintroduced the topics of the nature and culture into the Confucian ontology. Confucianism was truly released from the study of the internal nature and mind. Only at this juncture did the holistic lifeworld (lebenswelt), as well as a cultural creation in the broad sense, obtain an ontological legitimacy".

This introduction will end with a poem written by Wang Fuzhi, as it depicts well the neo-Confucian spirit in their tumultuous lives:

Wherein lies our life?
It is being manipulated by the cruel fate
into multiple shapes,
Even if one puts up all the struggles,
one cannot fight with fate.
Who'd have the extra heart
to be sentimental about it?
After pondering over life hundreds of times,
I decide to just hand it over to the wind
for the creation of the music of heaven.
After all wars are over;

after all chess games are finished,
 Who still sets the boundaries?
 Let us be the faint trace of smoke,
 drifting through the clear blue sky;
 Let us be the light wings of butterflies,
 fluttering by the silent flowers.
 Let us laugh about how thousands of years,
 would turn into oblivion in a split second.
 Let us be a tiny dove,
 or be a giant roc,
 in concord with chance.
 Looking back at the countryside,
 I see the exuberant sea of spring.
 Facing toward the human world,
 I roam about freely,
 Through hardships, through adversity,
 I will not change my Way.
 Wang Fu-chih (1619-1692) <>

[Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty](#) (Korean Studies of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies) by James B. Palais [University of Washington Press, 9780295974552; [paper reprint edition](#), 9780295993782]

Winner of the John Whitney Hall Book Prize, sponsored by the Association for Asian Studies, James B. Palais' magnum opus remains a main resource for understanding Korean political and religious history. As the *Journal of Asian Studies* noted on its initial appearance 1996 it marked a watershed in East Asian studies in English of Confucian statecraft and Korean studies of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392 -1910) It continues to remain for decades, a cornerstone of Korean Studies and required reading for specialists and students alike who are interested in Confucian statecraft and institutions in East Asia. This reprint edition is welcome.

Seventeenth-century Korea was a country in crisis—successive invasions by Hideyoshi and the Manchus had rocked the Chosŏn dynasty (1392 -1910), which already was weakened by maladministration, internecine bureaucratic factionalism, unfair taxation, concentration of wealth, military problems, and other ills. Yu Hyŏngwŏn (1622–1673, pen name, Pan'gye), a recluse scholar, responded to this time of chaos and uncertainty by writing his modestly titled *Pan'gye surok* (The Jottings of Pan'gye), a virtual encyclopedia of Confucian statecraft, designed to support his plan for a revived and reformed Korean system of government.

Although Yu was ignored in his own time by all but a few admirers and disciples, his ideas became prominent by the mid-eighteenth century as discussions were underway to solve problems in taxation, military service, and commercial activity. Yu has been viewed by Korean and Japanese scholars as a forerunner of modernization, but in [Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty](#), Palais challenges this view, demonstrating that Yu was instead an outstanding example of the premodern tradition.

Palais uses Yu Hyŏngwŏn's mammoth, pivotal text to examine the development and shape of the major institutions of Chosŏn dynasty Korea. He has included a thorough treatment of the many Chinese classical and historical texts that Yu used as well as the available Korean primary sources and Korean and Japanese secondary scholarship. Palais traces the history of each of Yu's subjects from the beginning of the dynasty and pursues developments through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He stresses both the classical and historical roots of Yu's reform ideas and analyzes the nature and degree of proto-capitalistic changes, such as the use of metallic currency, the introduction of wage labor into the agrarian economy, the development of unregulated commercial activity, and the appearance of industries with more differentiation of labor.

Because it contains much comparative material, [Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty](#) continues to be of interest to scholars of China and Japan, as well as to Korea specialists. It also has much to say to scholars of agrarian society, slavery, landholding systems, bureaucracy, and developing economies.

[Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty](#) was preceded by 5 years with a study of the unique stressors modernity created during the ending decades of the Chosŏn dynasty. [Politics and Policy in Traditional Korea](#) (Harvard East Asian Monographs) by James B. Palais [Harvard University Asia Center, 9780674687714] Palais theorizes in his important book on Korea that the remarkable longevity of the Yi dynasty (1392-1910) was related to the difficulties the country experienced in adapting to the modern world. He suggests that the aristocratic and hierarchical social system, which was the source of

stability of the dynasty, was also the cause of its weakness.

The period from 1864 to 1873 was one in which the monarchy attempted to increase and expand central power at the expense of the powerful aristocracy. But the effort failed, and 1874 saw a rebirth of bureaucratic and aristocratic dominance. What this meant when Korea was "opened" two years later to the outside world was that the country was poorly suited to the attainment of modern national objectives--the braggadocio of state wealth and power--in competition with other nations. Thus, any sense of national purpose was subverted, and the leadership could not generate the unified support needed for either modernization or domestic harmony. The consequences for the twentieth and twentieth-first-centuries have been fateful.

Excerpt: The Complexities of Korean Confucian Statecraft

[Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty](#) is devoted to a study of Confucian statecraft in the last half of the Chosŏn dynasty with respect not only to its ideas, but to its relevance to government policy and action. The material presented in the text reveals that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to define Confucian statecraft in action in simple terms for a few reasons. The ideas that constituted the Confucian statecraft tradition were not always internally consistent. The conflict between historical contingency and ideal Confucian objectives inhibited or obstructed the achievement of those objectives; antinomies within Confucian thought and practice guaranteed conflict over the definition of goals and priorities; and the impossibility of recovering the ideal norms of classical antiquity because of the irreversibility of the transition from the Chou feudalism to Ch'in centralized bureaucracy meant that difference of opinion was unavoidable over the crucial question of compromise between the ideal and the real. For these reasons, the statecraft thought of Yu Hyŏngwŏn, which has constituted the focus of this study, cannot be taken as the only, the best, or the most representative example of Korean Confucian statecraft thought in Korea. Some of his ideas were truly unusual and some were acceptable to most Confucians, but others were rejected as unworkable, even by those who regarded themselves as his intellectual disciples. The reason why

I chose him as the focus for this study was because he was the first Korean scholar of the Chosŏn dynasty to write a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the deficiencies of his society in the seventeenth century, providing us with an excellent entrée into statecraft writing and the nature and complexity of a Korean Confucian society under stress. His scheme for the rectification of institutions provides a template for us to compare the ideas and policies of both scholars and officials involved in the contemplation of policy to the end of the dynasty.

The Incompleteness of the Confucian Transformation

At the beginning of the Chosŏn dynasty, there were very few people in Korean society who would be regarded as thoroughgoing Confucians because despite the presence of Confucian ideas for two millennia, Buddhism functioned as the dominant religion at the upper levels of society, and folk religion, which included animistic spirit worship and shamanism, was pervasive among the rural peasantry. The new dynasty was ushered in by a small coterie of converts to the Neo-Confucian doctrines of Sung dynasty China, particularly as digested and recapitulated by Chu Hsi in the twelfth century. These men set out on an effort to convert all of Korea to belief in Neo-Confucian principles and the practice of Confucian norms.

They and their successors at the top of government and society went a long way to achieving their aims, but they never fully completed their task. Even though the peasants were eventually converted to Confucian ancestor worship and patrilineal family organization and the like, they never fully discarded their fear of the spirits in general. Total conversion of Korean society to Confucian belief was also hindered because its educational enterprise was underfunded. The early Chosŏn state's official school system proved a failure even before the end of the fifteenth century, and even the private academies after the mid-sixteenth century were not created to educate all benighted peasants. Their Confucian overlords needed them more in the fields than in the schoolroom.

The inadequacy of mass education was not the only reason for the violation of Confucian norms and standards in real life. Many of the officials who had been schooled and indoctrinated in Confucian moral standards placed private interest over the public good, took bribes to enrich themselves and their own

families, exploited peasants and slaves to increase their wealth, and foreclosed on mortgages to expand their landed properties instead of fulfilling their role as moral exemplars for society at large. Even though Neo-Confucian bureaucrats were supposed to run Korean affairs as they would a moral order, many of them were incapable of living up to the high standards of the moral code.

In this sense, the history of the **Ŏn dynasty could be** viewed as a morality play in which a solid core of true believers did battle with the reality of human weakness and foible. Neo-Confucians understood the persistence of human imperfection because they had been taught that inner goodness in the mind was obscured or obstructed by psychophysical force. Historical experience had also demonstrated that dynasties were not static or perpetual; they had a life of their own that led to decline marked by the breakdown of social order and rebellion in which the forces of evil seemed to win the day.

Confucianism, however, was not discredited despite its failure to halt moral and dynastic decline because of the view that chaos and disorder was the fault of leadership, education, or institutions, not the moral philosophy itself. Confucian standards could outlive one dynasty and be resuscitated by the next. Confucian thought was thus preserved as the dominant system of belief and the source of statecraft wisdom from the Sung through Ch'ing dynasties in China despite the overthrow of individual dynasties. Korea had only one dynasty dominated by the Confucian vision, the Chosŏn **dynasty. It should have come to** an end in 1592 when Hideyoshi invaded Korea because by that time the Chosŏn **state had been weakened** by maladministration, internecine bureaucratic factionalism, unfair taxation, the concentration of wealth, the evasion of responsibility, and the deterioration of national defense. If Confucian statecraft were to be judged by consideration of the results of a government run by Confucians, Confucian statecraft should have been deemed a failure in 1592. But when the war was over in 1598 both the Chosŏn **state a**nd the Confucian philosophy that guided it remained intact.

Confucianism during Contingent Circumstance
When Neo-Confucianism was adopted as the leading belief and ideology at the beginning of the Chosŏn dynasty, society and social institutions were already well developed. The state was organized as a monarchical bureaucracy, and society was structured

hierarchically based on hereditary or semi-hereditary principles, including strict discrimination between status categories. This situation alone meant that the early Chosŏn **Neo**-Confucians had inherited institutions that were less than ideal.

Monarchy and Centralized Bureaucracy. The existence of a ruler or monarch had been recognized by Confucians as a necessity for civilized government since Confucius himself, but absolute monarchy and a centralized government organization had always been major problems for Confucian statecraft thinkers. Rulers could be a danger and threat to the Confucian moral and social order because they were usually more concerned with the retention of their political power than conformity to moral norms. Confucians had an ambiguous if not contradictory attitude toward rulers, particularly the bad ones. Mencius had taught that since an immoral ruler lost his Heavenly Mandate to rule, the population had the right to overthrow him and replace him with another. Confucians might justifiably withdraw their loyalty from such an immoral ruler, but they might also feel that it was their duty to stick with him to lead him from immorality to morality.

Because Confucian thought emphasized loyalty to the ruler, some have believed that Confucian thought was conducive to the creation of monarchical despotism, especially in the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties in China. The Korean situation was somewhat different because most Confucian officials were drawn from yangban families with a long history of honor, wealth, prestige, and status that outshone the royal clan. It is true that at the beginning of the dynasty they supported an army general in his usurpation of the throne because they felt that greater royal authority was essential for transforming society from Buddhism and animism to Confucian belief. But once the new dynasty was in place, the Confucian officials began what became a protracted battle against most kings to preserve their own families' hold on power, wealth, and position, and to induce them to accept Confucian standards of statecraft.

When the Chosŏn **dynasty appeared, Korea had** long been organized as a centralized bureaucracy, but centralization had been incomplete, at least by the standards of most Chinese dynasties. The Neo-Confucian supporters of the new dynasty successfully overcame that deficiency by extending central control to all the districts of the kingdom, but they were never

enamored of centralized bureaucracy as the best form of government organization because it represented the political system of the Ch'in dynasty that had destroyed the beloved feudal political configuration of the Chou dynasty in the late third century B.C.

The Ch'in bureaucratic system was based on Legalist thought that seemed diametrically opposed to Confucian moral philosophy. The Legalists took a negative view of human nature, eschewed moral education and persuasion as useless methods for the establishment of order, and insisted on the necessity of reward and punishment as the only means for keeping human beings under control. All Confucian officials who served bureaucratic dynasties after the Ch'in had to use punishment as the means for enforcing conformity. Some sought to temper it with Confucian compassion, but others became such adept users of coercion that punishment became as much a feature of the bureaucratic Confucian state as moral suasion. Even the most moralistic Neo-Confucians resorted to punishment as the ultimate recourse for forcing the ignorant and recalcitrant to conform to Confucian moral ideals, revealed only so clearly in Yu Hyōngwō's regulations for the conduct of his proposed schools. Yet most Confucians believed that the unmitigated use of punishment was symptomatic of the moral failure of the ruler and the state.

Unfortunately, centralized bureaucracy had proved to be permanent, and Confucians had to adjust to these unfortunate circumstances as the only way for their philosophy to survive. The conflict between the two ideals — moral suasion versus coercion — was never solved, and the dividing line between the two was left to arbitrary judgment or circumstance.

The Social Legacy: Heredity, Property, and Slavery. The ruling class of the early Chosŏn dynasty consisted of yangban families that constituted a semi-aristocratic bureaucratic elite that owed much of their prominence to the inheritance of status, and they ruled over a slave society sustained by the system of inherited slave status. Neo-Confucians in the first two centuries of the dynasty barely raised the question of the moral conflict between Confucian principles and semi-hereditary bureaucracy and hereditary slavery. It was not until the immense pressure exerted on the Chosŏn state by a series of catastrophic invasions after 1592 that the Confucian bureaucrats began to

think of requiring idle yangban and slaves to perform military service.

The inheritance of social status, whether yangban or slave, was not only responsible for revenue shortages and inadequate defense because of tax-exemption privileges, it also contributed significantly to obstructing the achievement of the Confucian ideal of expanded opportunity for education and officeholding. The preservation of class interest by yangban landlords and slaveowners was the main obstacle to converting society to a moral basis for the distribution of prestige, office, and wealth, but reform was made doubly difficult by the antinomies within the Confucian moral system. Confucians were morally obliged to preserve the patrimony of their families, including slaves as well as real estate, and to show the utmost respect for one's elders and superiors in the social order, a moral obligation used by landlords and slaveowners to legitimize private property and slavery.

Even though the idealistic Confucians agreed that the virtuous ruler was obliged to guarantee subsistence to the common peasant, ideally through the grant of a minimal plot of arable land according to the well-field model of the Chou dynasty, they were faced with the reality of private property that had determined land tenure in Korea for over a millennium. Since the early Chosŏn kings ignored appeals for nationalization and egalitarian redistribution, they confirmed the private property of the landlords and opened the door to the recreation of the same conditions in the maldistribution of wealth that had prevailed in the late fourteenth century. As a result, most Confucians paid only lip service to the notion of national ownership and egalitarian redistribution.

Even less attention was paid to hereditary slavery that had been in practice since the tenth or eleventh centuries, possibly because slavery itself had never been condemned as immoral. At least the question of hereditary enslavement of the innocent should have been raised by committed Confucians, but few did so. In any case, the class interests of the landlords and slaveowners in a slave society constituted an insuperable obstacle to idealistic Confucian purists.

Agriculture over Commerce and Industry

These class interests were abetted by the overpowering and enduring belief by Confucian scholars and officials alike that agricultural production

was the only legitimate way to produce wealth. Food and clothing were necessary to subsistence, but all else was superfluous and contributed to unnecessary, ostentatious, and immoral consumption. Industry and commerce were acknowledged as necessary activities, but only in a limited way. Artisans had a role to play in providing the population with necessary nonagricultural goods, but any expansion in the production of luxury items would corrupt the morals of the people. Likewise, commerce was necessary for the circulation of goods, but any excessive profiteering would reduce the production of necessities by inducing peasants to abandon their primary agricultural tasks in pursuit of commercial profit.

These ideal principles were compromised in real life because the nobility, yangban, landlords, and the rich could enjoy the luxuries of life, the skilled artisans were employed, often by the state, in producing the brocades, silks, fine pottery, and other "unnecessary" items of conspicuous consumption, and merchants were subsidized, often with monopoly licenses, to provide those items to the king and upper class. Only the peasants were left to fulfill the Confucian moral norms of frugality, but more by deprivation and the lack of wealth than by adherence to abstract moral norms. These violations of Confucian norms of simplicity, frugality, and modesty existed in every dynasty because those with the wealth to buy luxury goods refused to dispense with them. Confucians had either to engage in constant scolding of the recalcitrant or resign themselves to tacit or hypocritical acceptance of human weakness. The Physiocratic emphasis on agricultural production and the concomitant denigration of industrial and commercial activity in Korean Confucian thought supported the preeminent economic and political position of the landlords by hindering the accumulation of wealth by artisans and merchants, and by forbidding their participation in the competition for bureaucratic office.

International trade did not provide a major stimulus to commerce in general because of the restrictions of the tributary system with China, the suspicion and lack of trust between Koreans and their Chinese or Manchu suzerains, the predatory aggressions of the Wakō pirates from Japan in the fifteenth century, the involvement of the Japanese with their own internal wars in the sixteenth century, and the re-imposition of severe limits on foreign trade activity after the Shimabara Rebellion of 1636. In fact, these real limits on international trade probably accounted as much as

Confucian doctrine for the restrictions on the development of the economy.

Bureaucratic Routinization and Crisis

Chinese had experienced the rise and fall of dynasties so frequently in their long history that they became convinced that dynasties had a life of their own governed as much by bureaucratic routinization and laxity as the loss of moral fiber. Korean dynasties lasted for much longer periods than the Chinese for several complex reasons, but the Chosŏn dynasty began to exhibit characteristics of bureaucratic deterioration by the end of the fifteenth century.

Laxity and corruption in administration that increased over time meant that registration of the taxpaying population was not maintained, taxes and services were levied more heavily on the poorest peasants, and military service was eroded by evasion.

Bureaucratic laxity and corruption was exacerbated by the elimination of salaries for all clerks at the beginning of the dynasty. The policy was undertaken by the regular officials to elevate themselves over the influential local hyangni or local clerk class of the late Koryŏ and prevent them from rising to the regular bureaucracy, but it forced all clerks into a life of corruption by demanding fees and gratuities to make a living.

By the end of the sixteenth century the capacity of the bureaucracy to rectify the problems of maladministration was weakened by the emergence of internecine factional strife within the bureaucracy after 1575. The unfortunate consequence of this was the devastation wrought by Hideyoshi's invasions in the 1590s. Someone looking at Korea in 1598 after the last of the Japanese returned home, might well have concluded that both the Chosŏn dynasty and the experiment in Confucian statecraft had been a failure.

The Seventeenth-Century Government Reform Program Even before the Japanese invasions several Confucian bureaucrats had sounded the clarion call of reform. Yulgok (Yi I), by his analysis of the failure of domestic institutions and the weakness of the military, and Cho Hŏn, by his comparison of Chosŏn deficiencies with Ming advantages in administration, commerce, and other areas, led the appeal for institutional rectification, but their appeals were largely ignored.

Ironically the devastation of the Imjin Wars solved some of the major problems of the dynasty and gave

Confucian statecraft a second chance. While the destruction of land and property reduced both individual wealth as well as state revenue, it alleviated population pressure on the land, induced a period of tax remission, and allowed peasants a period to revive agricultural production. Even though the government had a lower tax base, it could begin land and population registration again as a basis for future revenues and service. The irregularity of the local product tribute tax and the injustice of its operation in practice led to conversion of the system. Intimate contact with Ming officials made Korean officials more aware of the far greater development of commerce and economic activity in China than Korea, and stimulated the emulation of some Ming commercial practices. In short, national catastrophe laid the basis for a reform effort in the seventeenth century that was by no means totally successful, but resulted in important institutional reforms.

Defeat in battle awakened the regime to the problem of tax and service evasion and stimulated measures to broaden requirements by bringing idle yang-ban, tax evaders, and slaves into the military service system. It stimulated the establishment of new divisions and the adoption of Western firearms. The leading role in this reform effort was played by active officials rather than armchair scholars.

Of course, the record of accomplishment in this century was mixed. The most obvious failure in the reform effort was the attempt to reconstitute a viable military force. The formation of new divisions was influenced more by political considerations than by the logic of national defense, and the Yi Kwal rebellion of 1624 shifted priorities from national defense to the prevention of rebellion.

A second factor was the inability of the regime to recruit and retain a sufficient force of foot soldiers, and to recognize the importance of firearms and training in their use. The government must have relaxed its efforts after conclusion of a treaty with the Japanese in 1609 and underestimated the military strength of the Manchus.

Probably the most important reason for the disasters of the two Manchu invasions of 1627 and 1637, however, was the change in foreign policy from Kwang-haegun's regime, a change that has to be attributed to Confucian influence. It was, after all, the Westerner faction that seized power in a coup d'état in 1623 and insisted on outright support for the Ming

dynasty because of its moral obligation to the Ming Wan-li emperor for his (belated) dispatch of reinforcements to Korea in 1592. The Westerners were intellectually and morally incapable of continuing Kwanghaegun's more pragmatic policy of adaptation and delay. What was worse, after the Manchu imposition of sovereignty over Korea, it became impossible for Korean kings to rebuild Korean military forces in the face of Manchu surveillance.

Under the protection of the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty, however, the threat of foreign invasion was removed and a strong military defense became unnecessary. The armed forces were kept in place mainly to ensure domestic tranquility, but because its cost was far too large for that purpose, it functioned more and more as an oppressive mode of taxation. Since military service was deemed demeaning to begin with, the tendency to evade it grew, and a smaller and smaller group of commoner peasants were left to carry the whole fiscal burden. The most serious weakness of the Ch'ing peace, however, was the desuetude with which officials considered military defense because when the Ch'ing state lost its power in the nineteenth century to defend itself, let alone its Korean tributary, Korea found itself helpless and isolated.

The need for more adult males for the payment of the military support tax, if not actual duty as soldiers, continued to stimulate plans for drawing more slaves into the military service system or liberating them from inherited slavery. During the Imjin Wars slaves were incorporated in considerable numbers into the sog'o units and manumitted in return for military merit or purchase, but after the war the price of purchase was too high to allow much reduction of the slave population. The need for adult males, subject to military service, however, kept slaves as military support taxpayers. The same motive also explains the origin in official circles of the long debate over the matrilineal rule for the manumission of offspring of the sons of commoner mothers in mixed slave/commoner marriages, first instituted in 1669. This marked an important step in the state's interference with the slaveowner's control over his slaves.

The idea for reforming the local products tribute system began in the late fifteenth century, but the stimulus needed to accomplish the task also occurred because of the Imjin Wars. The illicit system of tribute contracting underway since the late fifteenth century

demonstrated the advantages of market purchases of goods over in-kind tax payments, and state officials simply applied to the whole country what had already been tried by some officials — financing the cost by an extra tax. The taedong reform carried out in the seventeenth century contributed to even greater commercial activity than before.

Almost the same officials who championed the adoption of the taedong reform also pioneered the introduction of metallic currency. From their observation of the Ming economy they realized that metallic currency was needed to overcome the cumbersome use of grain and cloth as media of exchange to lubricate market transactions.

The reform of the military system, the matrilineal rule in mixed marriages, the taedong law, and the currency reform of the seventeenth century represented a series of positive responses to serious problems by active Confucian officials. Yu defended his position on the grounds that tribute, particularly royal tribute, was an immoral and unrestrained exercise in monarchical acquisitiveness that deserved to be brought under control by a more reasonable system of taxation.

His admiration for hired or wage labor as a means of replacing slave cultivators on the estates of the large landlords or uncompensated labor service by commoners certainly appeared as a rational and innovative response to changing circumstances rather than a dogmatic mimicking of classical precedent. He argued that wage or hired labor was preferable to slave labor on moral grounds because it would eliminate the cruel and coercive treatment of slaves, and on apparently liberal grounds because hired laborers entered into employment by free choice and willing agreement.

These arguments undeniably had aspects of humaneness and liberalism to them, but his thinking was by no means free of the constraints relevant to his times. He did not argue that wage labor had proved its superiority by his own observation of contemporary facts, but rather by hearsay information about wage labor in China. Wage labor was not a new phenomenon; it had been around since long before the beginning of the dynasty without doing damage to Korean social custom. In fact, he argued that hired labor would not promote the freedom of the individual laborer at all. To the contrary, he guaranteed that the Chinese experience

demonstrated that hired laborers were as respectful and subordinate to their employers as Confucian standards required. Choosing one's employer was neither to produce freedom of choice in society at large, or to transform laborers into commodities and wage slaves in a capitalist system.

One of Yu's overarching themes was the establishment of a truly moral society ruled by moral officials. He denigrated the examination system for its failure to producing honest and dedicated officials, but he saw the answer in adapting ancient institutions, particularly resuscitating the moribund official school system and initiating the face-to-face evaluation of candidates for office. Yu's ideal society was to be as hierarchical as contemporary Korean society, but on an almost completely different basis — demonstrated superiority in Confucian ethical behavior.

Yu was a defender of popular or peasant welfare, but his sympathies for the common peasants, slaves, lowly clerks, and women were often balanced or offset by his commitment to the necessity of hierarchical relations. He sought to level the playing ground by having the state confiscate the landed property and reduce the slaves of the yangban and landlords, but he often made certain concessions to social reality by accommodating aspects of inherited status that favored members of the noble family, merit subjects and their relatives, and the sons of officials without office of their own, and to denigrate nothoi, clerks, slaves, and women. He was willing to prolong the period of slavery because he felt that the yangban were emotionally and physically as yet incapable of dispensing with their slave labor. At one point, he even assured the yangban families that his reforms would not destroy them because their wealth and traditional respect for education would guarantee the success of their sons in his new system of schools. He could make such concessions to existing privilege because of his commitment to the propriety of hierarchical respect relations, and his sympathy for the members of his own class.

His plan to refurbish the schools would only have provided for the body of regular officials. He also had to cure the endemic corruption of the petty clerks without elevating them to the same level as the regular officials. His solution was to provide them with salaries through an improved system of taxation. Whether guaranteed salaries for clerks would have eliminated corruption as Yu hoped is something that

one can never know because it was never tried, but it would certainly have been an improvement over the existing situation.

Finally, at the lowest end of the bureaucracy, the local district, where the magistrate and his irregular local clerks, village headman, and village officials came into direct contact with the people, he hoped to overcome the damage done by corrupt local officials by replacing them with semiautonomous institutions like community compacts and village granaries, copied from models created in the Sung dynasty, staffed by prominent men of virtue. They were to take charge of teaching villagers and common peasants to practice Confucian moral standards, provide mutual aid, relief, and loans, and implement mutual surveillance against criminals and wrongdoers.

Unfortunately, Yu's plan for the moral reformation of all levels of the bureaucracy was the least effective of all his ideas. The examination system was never replaced by a refurbished school system and a serious and sustained method of recommendation. A salary system for petty clerks was never instituted to the end of the dynasty, and the community compacts were attempted only in a few instances. Only the adoption of village autonomy for the administration of loans was attempted under the Taewongun in the 1860s. Otherwise, local nonofficial organizations were dominated almost exclusively by local yangban in protection of their own interests and local clerks were left unchecked to profit from bribery.

Yu's recommendations for improvements in the economy, particularly the use of metallic cash, did have some influence on the next century. When Yu began to write his masterwork around 1650, active officials were already attempting to introduce metallic currency to lubricate market transactions. Yu responded to their initiative and sought to add some wisdom to it by consulting the Chinese classics and histories.

Consulting the classics did not necessarily mean that he was conservatively tied to backward economic ideas because what he found in those sources was often more developed than contemporary practice in Korea. In fact, Chou China appeared to have had a larger commercial sector than Korea, certainly a more advanced use of money. He found that industry and commerce were not evil, as some ideologues believed, but necessary for the production and circulation of items of utility among the population. [t was just that

they were secondary to agricultural production and had to be limited lest the attractiveness of profit lured too many peasants from the primary occupation of agricultural production.

Yu agreed with the most progressive Korean officials of his time that market development should be encouraged, certainly as a means of reforming the corrupted tribute system. He admired Cho Hōrls reports of the more advanced Ming economy, but he did not intend to move as far as the Chinese had by allowing sons of merchants to take the examinations. Since he included land allotments for merchants in his ideal land distribution scheme, it is obvious that he expected commercial activity only to supplement basic income from farming, not replace it. His economic vision was quite a bit behind late Ming economic developments, not to mention earlier dynasties.

Nonetheless, it was his fear of the adverse consequences of inflation because of mistakes in the management of currency in past Chinese dynasties that makes him look quite conservative. To be sure, many economists in favor of sound money and stability in the twentieth century fear the adverse consequences of inflationary policies, but this concern for stability does not interfere with their progressive perspective on the capacity of a healthy capitalist economy to expand steadily. Yu, however, was witnessing the beginnings of a cash economy when the mistrust of the value of that cash was powerful. The slightest symptom of inflation was liable to destroy confidence in the cash and destroy the whole experiment. For that reason, he felt that the only secure way to use cash was to limit its type to the penny cash, where the face value was only slightly more than the intrinsic worth of the metal.

A money system based exclusively on copper pennies was by itself a brake on the potential for expanding the economy. He favored it because his economic concepts were tied closely to moral rather than utilitarian objectives. Nickles, dimes, and quarters, let alone dollar bills, were not only sure guarantees of inflation, they were also evil seeds that would burgeon into moral decay by stimulating greed and avarice, destroying frugality, and leading the peasants to abandon their fields in search of easy profit.

In short, Yu's economic thought was progressive by comparison with the relatively backward situation of

Korea in the sixteenth century, but quite limited with respect to developments in Ming China or Tokugawa Japan, let alone the West.

Eighteenth-Century Developments: Institutional Changes

There were four major institutional changes in the eighteenth century about which Yu Hyōngwō **had** something to say: slavery, military service, land, and the economy. The reform of the slave system was probably the most significant of any reform in the dynasty. The matrilineal succession rule was adopted permanently in 1730, official slaves were abolished in 1801, and the percentage of private slaves in the population dropped below 10 percent after 1780, but the abolition of hereditary slavery and of slavery altogether did not occur until the end of the nineteenth century. Scholars like Kim Yongsōp **would like to** attribute this phenomenon to the emergence of an entrepreneurial spirit among the peasantry that allowed slave cultivators to accumulate surpluses and buy their way out of slavery, but the concrete evidence for this thesis is weak. Even though the high opportunity cost involved in recapturing runaway slaves and the easy economical alternative of replacing slaves with tenants and hired laborers were more likely causes, it is difficult to discount the effect of Yu's direct challenge to slavery on Confucian moral grounds, particularly because his views became widely known among the educated class in the late eighteenth century. His contribution to the decline of slavery and Korea as a slave society may be his most outstanding contribution to the improvement of Korean life.

Yu had much less direct influence on the debate over the equal service reform (kyunyōkpō p) **of 1750, a** misnomer if there ever was one. Yu's idea had been to reconstitute and rebuild the military establishment by which the military cloth tax paid by a discrete group of support taxpayers would finance rotating duty soldiers. He had also argued for the reintroduction of military affairs into the education and training of officials, the adoption of Western firearms, and the reorganization of a defense system.

By the eighteenth century, however, the Chosōn military system lost its raison d'être and the military cloth tax became a bane on the existence of the commoner peasant. Because of the widespread evasion of registration and service, the shrinking number of commoner peasants had to bear the full weight of the military cloth tax. Yu did not anticipate

this outcome, but his concern for the maldistribution of tax burdens was carried on by many other active officials, who promoted some method of lightening the tax load on commoner peasants by shifting slaves to commoner status and including the service-exempt yangban and the legions of tax-evading scholars and putative students in the ranks of the support taxpayers. Slaves did escape servitude primarily by running away, but they escaped the net of the military service registrars by fair means or foul. The result of three quarters of a century of discussion to extend the military cloth tax to yangban was disappointing, however, because King Yōngjo **finally** capitulated to their interests and only reduced the tax on commoners. The tax reduction had but temporary and limited effects, for by the middle of the nineteenth century it became one of the major causes of peasant rebellion.

Another issue was the land tax, an issue where Yu's ideas were far beyond the capacity of his age. He had recognized that the maldistribution of land, not just the land tax, was the primary cause of peasant poverty in an agrarian society. His appeal for national confiscation and redistribution did not elicit much of a response in the seventeenth century because the land tax was still quite light. The adoption of the taedongmi rice surtax on land to provide funds to replace local tribute, however, increased the severity of the land tax in the structure of taxation.

Even then the nominal land tax rate remained relatively low, but the trend toward the concentration of land in the hands of large landlords, the loss of land by smallholders, and their decline to landless sharecroppers and laborers exacerbated their economic hardship. By the end of the eighteenth century, the time had become ripe for remedial action. The armchair statecraft scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, often referred to as the Sirhak school, were by no means unified on the solution. Some like Tasan (Chōng Yagyong) **baded** the radical nationalization and redistribution plan, but others like Sōngho (Yi Ik) **opted for a more** conservative land limitation system than Yu Hyōngwō **ris** **Most serious officials dismissed** redistribution as unrealistic because the defense of landed property had become impregnable. The turning point was reached in the 1790s when King Chōrjo **put out a call for advice on the land question** but he failed to take any serious action to alleviate

the problems of land distribution and taxation. The land problem carried over into the nineteenth century with disastrous consequences, because it was identified as one of the three major causes of the Imsul rebellion of 1862.

The third of the major causes of that rebellion was the maladministration of credit, loans, and relief handled mainly by district magistrates and their clerks. As more peasant smallholders were reduced to the margin of subsistence by the loss of land to landlords and then driven over the edge to starvation by natural disaster, they were reduced to dependency on relief payments and loans. Unable to repay the loans because of their marginal economic position, the loans were turned over and the interest payments became a permanent tax. When rebellion broke out in 1862 the peasants directed their ire against the district magistrates and their clerks, the ones responsible for the administration of the land and military service taxes and the collection of interest payments on loans.

In the recovery plan of the Taewongun in the 1860s, a few of Yu Hyōngwō's recommendations for action played a small role. His plan for nationalization and redistribution was simply ignored, only a half-hearted effort was made to carry out a cadastral survey to register cultivated land for fairer collection of the land tax, and his suggestion for the adoption of recommendation in the selection of officials was tried as a supplement to the examination system. The Taewongun was the first to mint multiple denomination cash, as the more advanced eighteenth century experts on currency had advocated, but that policy was contrary to Yu's advice to limit metallic currency to penny cash. His prediction that it would produce inflation came true.

On the other hand, his idea of extending military service to all male adults but officials, modified during the debate in the eighteenth century to an extension of the military service tax to yangban households, was finally adopted. And his recommendation for the transfer of relief and loan administration from the district magistrates to the leadership of prominent gentry was adopted.

It was not to be expected that Yu's seventeenth-century perspective would have remained relevant to nineteenth-century circumstance, but Yu did inspire a number of well-known reformers in the eighteenth century, and the germ of several of his reform ideas

was preserved in the frost of two centuries of administrative deterioration, recalled to life by the Taewongun to save the dynasty from collapse.

Commerce and Industry

Yu Hyōngwō **learned much** from the debate over the emergence of a more active commercial economy in the seventeenth century, and he was one of the spokesmen for progress in the context of that time. He expected commerce to play a more active role in the economy than in the past century, and he welcomed the introduction of copper cash to promote a more fluid exchange system, but his ideas were only known to a few until the turn of the eighteenth century. When they did, some of his ideas that were progressive for the seventeenth century had become conservative in the eighteenth.

The reason was that King Sukchong was unable to manage the currency to prevent inflation in those arteries of trade that used cash, and he shut down the mints in frustration. The fear of inflation was inherited by King Yōngjo **in the 1720s, who believed that a** return to a noncash agrarian economy would be better for the Korean population. The policies of these two kings did not reflect the dominant opinion at court. In fact, the kings were far less enlightened or progressive than a number of officials, contrary to Kings T'aejong, Sejong, and Sejo who unsuccessfully sought to introduce metallic and paper money into Korea in the fifteenth century. Only reluctantly was King Yōngjo **persuaded that cash had become a** permanent aspect of Korean commerce, and that minting cash was the best way to solve the economic bottlenecks created by long-term deflation.

Even though a number of active officials had become more open and progressive in their attitude toward currency and suggested the minting of multiple-denomination and silver cash and paper money, Yōngjo **refused to go beyond penny cash, a policy** left intact until the Taewongun's regime in the 1860s. This was essentially the same attitude of Yu Hyōngwō **n in the mid** - 1600s, but after currency became indispensable to the economy, the fear of inflation and penny cash led to deflation and a serious brake on economic growth.

The development of commerce had also led to the rise of private, unlicensed merchants and artisans — even members of the official establishment who engaged in both private as well as official production of goods — who challenged the licensed monopolies and took

over an increasing share of the market without government permission. This phenomenon represented a departure from the licensed monopoly system of the early Chosŏn dynasty, but government officials tolerated it nonetheless. They did not ban it as an unacceptable violation of Confucian principle. In fact, Confucian officials often warned against direct government involvement in business activity because it was too demeaning, too close to the selfish pursuit of profit.

Yu Hyŏngwŏ **n had no idea that this development** would take place, but his armchair statecraft successors as well as government officials devised policy recommendations to deal with the problem. The debate, however, was not conducted in twentieth-century terms between free trade versus a state-managed economy. On the contrary, the eighteenth-century Korean economy looked more like the kind of goulash economic system currently underway in China in the early 1990s, except that industrial factory production had no place in Korea at that time. In addition to the licensed monopoly shops of the capital and slave and commoner artisans of the government, there were private artisans and merchants. Wholesale merchants cornered the market in goods like rice and fish, or put out raw materials to peasant cotton spinners and weavers, official artisans supplemented their income by using their spare time to produce goods for the private market, and rotating duty soldiers in the capital entered the hat and glove trade to compete with licensed shops. The competitors with licensed monopolies did not always challenge the system of monopoly in favor of a completely free market; many demanded memberships in the ranks of the privileged monopolists themselves.

Yu Suwŏn **in the 1720s did argue for more** organization by the government of the small-scale merchants to form oligopolies that would reduce the evils of the untrammelled pursuit of profit while maintaining competition to engender efficiency and cheaper prices. His Confucian perspective did not prevent him from considering positive aspects of commercial organization beyond the framework of licensed monopoly. Pak Chega and Pak Chiwŏn **also** urged increased international trade because they admired its greater development in China, where it was not deemed un-Confucian. Nonetheless, almost all agreed that commerce and industry would remain subordinate to agriculture.

In any case, the armchair scholars were not the architects of government policy on the economy. Instead, the government mediated the dispute by a compromise between the licensed and unlicensed merchants and artisans that divided the market between them. This solution apparently was acceptable to most, and the economy neither reverted to restricted monopoly nor advanced much toward industrial capitalism until sometime after the introduction of foreign trade in the 1880s. Korean Confucian thought could easily have tolerated greater commercial activity than what existed in Korea, but the stimuli to greater production and trade were lacking in the economy.

Commercial agriculture did not receive a big boost until the export of grain to Japan in the 1880s, and a serious start to industrial capitalism did not occur until the cessation of the ban on private business by the Japanese colonial regime after 1919. Contrary to much scholarly opinion, by the end of the dynasty the commercial and industrial economy did not really transform the agrarian, agricultural economy.

Statecraft Scholarship and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty
Recent scholarship on the late Chosŏn period has distorted an understanding of some of the fundamental aspects of that society because of its search for proof to demonstrate the capacity of the Korean people to achieve change and progress on their own initiative. That body of scholarship has been successful in demonstrating some of the major changes that did take place, such as the growth of the nonagricultural commercial sector, the decline of slavery, and the shifts in the tax system. But the desire to demonstrate progress has shifted attention away from the domination of agriculture, the maintenance of yangban power, and the influence of Confucian statecraft concepts on the thinking of the educated class.

Confucian statecraft ideas were by no means translated directly into policy choices, as this book should make clear, but the emphasis on the moral basis for government never lost force even while the state was losing ground to human weakness, corruption, and immorality. The goal of producing a moral order according to Confucian standards was maintained. The primacy of agriculture and the fear of the immoral consequences of commerce and the profit motive were still deemed important, but not enough to blind the vision of Confucian officials and scholars to some advantages of economic activity.

Despite the growth of the commercial economy, merchants and artisans were still few and too weak to challenge the predominance of the yangban families who monopolized education, dominated the upper bureaucracy, and controlled the chief source of wealth, land and agricultural production.

Finally, the locus of statecraft ideals remained the institutions of Chinese antiquity described in the Chinese classics; the chief source of wisdom in the conduct of practical statecraft was the immense literature on Chinese history and institutions; the main prop of Korea's security was still the protection afforded by the suzerain state, the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty, until the Sino-Japanese War of 1894. These elements may be lugubrious reminders of subjugation to foreign culture for modern Korean nationalists, but they also are symbols of the membership and participation of the Korean Confucians in a world much broader than the confines of the Korean peninsula, governed by levels of complexity and civilization far higher than most in world history. <>

[The Analects of Dasan, Volume I: A Korean Syncretic Reading](#) by Hongkyung Kim [Oxford University Press, 9780190624996]

[The Analects of Dasan, Volume II: A Korean Syncretic Reading](#) by Hongkyung Kim [Oxford University Press, 9780190686215]

With extensive research and creative interpretations, Dasan's *Noneo gogeuim ju* (*Old and New Commentaries of the Analects*) has been evaluated in the academia of Korean Studies as a crystallization of his studies on the Confucian classics. Dasan (Jeong Yak-yong: 1762-1836) attempted through this book to synthesize and overcome the lengthy scholarly tradition of the classical studies of the *Analects*, leading it not only to represent one of the greatest achievements of Korean Confucianism but also demonstrate an innovative prospect for the progress of Confucian philosophy, positioning it as one of the ground-breaking works in all Confucian legacies in East Asia. Originally consisting of forty volumes in traditional book binding, his *Noneo gogeuim ju* contains one hundred and seventy-five new interpretations on the *Analects*, hundreds of "arguments" about the neo-Confucian commentaries, hundreds of references to the scholarly works of the *Analects*, thousands of supportive quotations from various East Asian classics for the author's arguments, and hundreds of philological discussions. These two volumes comprise the beginning

of an English translation of *Noneo gogeuim ju* with the translator's comments on the innovative ideas and interpretations of Dasan on the *Analects*. [Future volumes pending]

Excerpt:

Dasan W, "a tea mountain," was the pen name of the Korean Confucian scholar whose reading of the *Analects* provides the subject of this book. To follow the old Confucian style of introducing a highly respected person: he was a member of the twenty-third generation of the Jeong T family, whose ancestral seat was Naju (originally Aphae), and the two characters yak and yong constituted his personal name. His full name was Jeong Yak-yong (1762-1836). He is also remembered by various pen names besides Dasan, including Yeolsu Sammija Yeoyudang, Tak-ong and Sa-am *v. Yeolsu, "the Yeol water," refers to the Han River, in whose upper region he was born and interred. Sammija, "the master with three eyebrows," suggests how he was distinguished from others, not only by a scar that smallpox left him with but also by his talents. Yeoyudang, "a hall of hesitation," attests to his awareness of certain dangers during a stage of his life that caused him to confine himself, as it were, in hesitation. Tak-ong, "an old man on a bamboo mat," may signify the abject conditions in which he lived. Finally, Sa-am, derived from a passage in Constant Mean,¹ connotes his confidence in understanding people.

All the pen names paint a picture of Dasan's life. He was born into a family of the Southerners faction that, generation after generation, lived in the vicinity of the capital around the Han River and with which he was affiliated for the entirety of his life. He was undoubtedly an outstanding scholar. He was targeted by his rivals and victimized in the first grand-scale persecution of Joseon Catholics in 1801, as a result of which he was banished. He must have endured a scarcity of resources, especially right after his banishment. Despite all of the hardships he

had to face, he was confident that he was passing down his understanding of the Way to the next one hundred generations. However, he is usually remembered by the pen name Dasan, because most of his major works, including his *Analects*, were either drafted or finished during his eighteen-year exile, for ten years of which (1808-1818) he stayed in a "grass hut" by a small mountain full of tea trees. Ironically, he rarely used this pen name to identify himself,

probably because it brought up memories of pain and frustration that he experienced from the deaths of loved ones, the ruin of his family, political atrocities, widespread poverty, and unrealized dreams. Thus the world is still harsh to him because in its memory, it forces him to remain in exile.

Dasan is one of the most revered cultural heroes in Korea today. Not only have streets, buildings, and parks in Korea been named after him, but the provincial government in Dasan's hometown has also recently announced that it will build "a green environment-friendly new city following the ideas of Dasan," to be named Dasan. Taking advantage of his reputation, the local government plans to sell numerous apartment units to Korean citizens. The city of Seoul also operates a municipal service for "answering all questions" that is named the Dasan Call Center, because Koreans tend to regard Dasan as the most knowledgeable individual of traditional Korea.

Dasan's reputation, however, is relatively modern. Although two major works of sociopolitical analysis by him, *Heumheum sinseo* and *Mongmin simseo*, were printed during the imperial age of Korea under the auspices of Emperor Gwangmu (r. 1863-1907, King Gojong prior to 1897) in 1901 and 1902, respectively, he remained underestimated by the majority of Korean scholars until the 1930s because he lacked philosophical appeal to either the mainstream Confucian scholars or the rising tide of young intellectuals: he criticized mainstream Confucians for sacrificing so much to defend the legitimacy of neo-Confucianism, but he was one of those same Confucian scholars in the eyes of the young proponents of the modernity projects in Korea.

The historical context changed significantly in 1931, when Singan hoe the unified pan-Korean organization struggling for independence, disintegrated. Afterward a certain nationalist group that dissociated itself from leftists responded to an urgent need to restore the nation's dignity by proving the eminence of Korean history and culture, in order eventually to regain national sovereignty. It was a Korean reaction to the aggressive efforts of Japanese imperialists to degrade Korean tradition, which was later dubbed the Joseon studies movement. The leading scholars in this movement—including An Jae-hong (1891-1965), Jeong In-bo (1893—?), Baek Nam-un (1894-1979), and Mun Il-pyeong (1888-1939)—did not wish to link Korea's intellectual tradition so closely with neo-

Confucianism, so they naturally turned their attention to cultural and scholarly accomplishments made by "outsiders" to Joseon academia. Dasan's works attracted their interest.

In 1938 a Korean publisher, Sinjoseon sa, finished printing a multivolume set of Dasan's writings in their entirety, under the title *Yeoyudang jeonseo* (Entire Works of Yeoyudang), four years after the first volume was printed. This achievement would not have been possible without the assiduous dedication of the owner of the company, Kwon Tae-hwi. This monumental and inspiring Sinjoseon sa edition of *Yeoyudang jeonseo* (Sinjo edition hereafter) consisted of 154 volumes in seven collections, which were published in seventy-six books in modern book binding (a collection of poetry and essays

in twenty-six volumes; a collection of writings on Confucian classics in fifty volumes; a collection of writings on rituals in twenty-five volumes; a collection of writings on music in four volumes; a collection of writings on administration and laws in thirty-nine volumes; a collection of writings on geography in eight volumes; and a collection of medical studies in six volumes). Readers were excited about this "new excavation" and hoped to hear from experts about how Dasan contributed to the distinction of Korea's long intellectual tradition. The responses of leading scholars of the Joseon studies movement to this demand were in agreement with Jeong In-bo's claim that "our research on the one man Dasan definitely represents our research on the history of Joseon and on Korean near-modern thought."⁹ In 1936, amid the ongoing publication of Dasan's works, these scholars began to shed much-needed light on Dasan's life and philosophy. Following the completion of the publication, Choe Ik-hwan (1897—?) wrote a series of interpretative essays on *Yeoyudang jeonseo*, sixty-five in total, which were later integrated into the publication of the first modern monograph on Dasan.¹⁰ His essays provide crucial information on the collection: that the structure of *Yeoyudang jeonseo*, in which Dasan's poems and essays appear first, before his commentaries on the Confucian classics, mirrors neither that of "Self-Written Epitaph" nor that of "the Complete Table of Contents of *Yeolsu jeonseo*," which was attached to the final drafted edition of *Yeoyudang Jeonseo*; in line with this, Dasan apparently opted for "Yeolsu," his pen name associated with his hometown, as the title of the collection; and the base manuscript was marked with

the title Yeoyudang jip , not Yeoyudang jeonsoe." Notwithstanding the textual disputes surrounding the Sinjo edition, scholarly research on Dasan continued, owing to the Sinjo edition's merits.

At the early stages of research in Korea on Dasan, the understanding of Jang Jiyeon (1864-1921) Of Dasan's scholarship was definitive. In his book Joseon Yukyo yeonwon, Jang distinguished Dasan (along with Yu Hyeong-won) from mainstream neo-Confucian scholars for his expertise in matters of government and people's welfare. Although Jang also recognized Dasan as an established scholar in Confucian classical studies and literature, what set him apart, for Jang, were his views on sociopolitical issues. The leading scholars of the Joseon studies movement also highlighted the practicality of Dasan's reformative ideas. While all these scholars adopted the notion sil (practicality) in defining Dasan's scholarly achievements, Choe Nam-seon (1890-1957) used an existing term, silhak (practical learning), to describe the sociopolitical work of a larger group of scholars, including Dasan, who are now referred to as scholars of Practical Learning (Silhak). All of the pioneering articles written by Yun Yong-kyun (1903-1931), Jeong In-bo, and An Jae-hong were dedicated to revealing the significance of Dasan's scholarship in the same context. The first monograph on Dasan, by Choe Ik-hwan, likewise focused on Dasan's trilogy on social reform rather than his other works, although it purported to be an integral introduction of Dasan and Practical Learning. As for South Korean scholarship, Hong I-seop opened a new horizon in 1959 by publishing a book on Dasan's political and economic thought, an elaboration of this pervasive understanding of Dasan's work.

Although Han U-geun raised questions about the ambiguity of the term silhak, since it was used sometimes to refer to Confucianism itself, no substantial argument was ever made against the perspective of Dasan's work as a crystallization of the movement of Practical Learning. Indeed, Dasan's readers were delighted by the even bolder suggestion of linking his ideas with modernity, proposed initially by Cheon Gwan-u in a public lecture in 1967, since they sought a vernacular origin for modern establishments in Korea's philosophical tradition. Yi U-seong attempted to help people understand the complexity of the ideas of Practical Learning by placing the leading scholars in this intellectual movement in three different categories:

the school of government and social merits, the school of economic development and betterment of people's lives, and the school of scholarly investigations of actual things. In Yi's view, which has been adopted for Korean secondary education textbooks, Dasan made complete the ideas of the school of government and social merits. On the other hand, Yi Eul-ho uniquely focused on Dasan's research on the Confucian classics, including Noneo gogeeum ju, in this period when Dasan's sociopolitical proposals were emphasized. He should be given credit for starting the discussion of Dasan's interpretation of the classical texts, a discussion to which this book is more closely related. However, Yi Eul-ho, despite his unique association with one of the branches of the study of Dasan's works, was like other scholars in that he wished to separate Dasan from the neo-Confucian tradition, characterizing Dasan's entire classical studies as a return to "the learning by Zhu-Si waters" (where Confucius taught his disciples). All in all, earlier Korean scholars agreed that the movement of Practical Learning (the only major intellectual current opposed to neo-Confucianism in Joseon's intellectual history) culminated in Dasan's writings, which impressively enriched the literature of the country.

As a matter of fact, it is truly challenging now to summarize Korean scholarship on Dasan precisely because there is an awe-inspiring number of monographs and articles about Dasan. Through them, scholars have attempted to convince readers of their new "discoveries" of various aspects of Dasan. The Foundation of Dasan's Scholarship and Culture, for example, provides a list more than eighty pages long of scholarly works on Dasan. Recent discourse on Dasan, however, seems to reflect three changes from early Korean scholarship on the topic. First, the conventional conception of Dasan's philosophy as exemplary of Practical Learning has faced counter-arguments from relatively young scholars. They tend to emphasize continuity and mutual influence among various philosophies in the late Joseon period. As a result of this challenge, it now seems crude to locate Dasan exclusively in the orbit of anti-neo-Confucianism or intellectual defiance of neo-Confucian orthodoxy.

Second, while Dasan's sociopolitical views still form the basis of his high reputation among readers, a growing number of scholars have found that his classical studies yield more insights about his philosophical inspirations than they originally

anticipated. Given that a larger portion of Dasan's writings concerns Confucian classics, this trend will likely continue unabated, and a quantitative growth of articles and monographs dedicated to illuminating Dasan's classical studies is now evident. Third, today's researchers on Dasan have specialized in narrowly defined topics rather than drawing grand conclusions. This is only natural, given the circumstances in Korea, where widely available information on Dasan renders it easy to take one's overall familiarity with Dasan's works for granted. This book has been shaped by the new Korean scholarship, as is evident in my approach to Dasan's scrupulous studies of the Analects. My task will be to show how Dasan's works attempted to synthesize all past Confucian commentaries and the philosophical ideas contained therein.

The original title of Dasan's commentary on the Analects is *Noneo gogeuim ju*, which translates to the Old and New Commentaries on the Analects. *Ju* in the title appears as *Ju* in an earlier edition without bearing a different meaning.

In this book, I use the former ideogram because I have based my translation on the *Sinjo* edition, the first printed edition of *Noneo gogeuim ju*. Needless to say, there must have been at least one base manuscript for the *Sinjo* edition. In this regard, many accept Jeong In-bo's claim that the base manuscript for the *Sinjo* edition was the alleged "finalized" manuscript of Yeoyudang jeonseo that was preserved by Jeong Gyu-yeong (1872-1927), Dasan's great-great-grandson, who was known to have risked his own life to save it from a flood in 1925, was the base edition for the publication. The so-called finalized manuscript, however, seems to have later been owned by several people, who each had a different part. It is unclear how closely these fragmentary manuscripts resembled the real "finalized one." Thus, it would be safer to say that scholars have not yet discovered the one that was actually used for printing the *Sinjo* edition. As for the manuscript of *Noneo gogeuim ju*, Kyujanggak at Seoul National University is the only place in Korea that has it. The entire Kyujanggak edition of Yeoyudang jeonseo, including *Noneo gogeuim ju*, is evidently the result of careful reflection on Dasan's revisions of the earliest manuscript. This is confirmed by a comparison of the Kyujanggak edition with an earlier manuscript that contains Dasan's marginal notes for revision. In other words, the Kyujanggak edition of *Noneo gogeuim ju* seems to be, in effect, a revision of the earliest manuscript, based on Dasan's instructions in his

marginal notes. Another manuscript that includes a complete version of *Noneo gogeuim ju* may be found in the Osaka Municipal Library in Japan, but scholars have conjectured that it might be a copy of the Kyujanggak edition. In addition to these manuscripts, *Noneo sucha* (Brief Notes on the Analects) is worth mentioning since it is an abridged version of *Noneo gogeuim ju*. It is currently preserved in two manuscripts, one in Kyujanggak and one in the Asami Collection at the University of California, Berkeley.

I believe that it is necessary to add Dasan's *Noneo gogeuim ju* to the list of mustread commentaries on the Analects. First of all, his reading is quite independent. Although he was inspired by existing works on the Analects, his reading is bold, critical, and creative. Beyond the 175 arguments in "Original Meanings," he dared to supplement the readings of his predecessors or to create entirely new readings in almost every chapter. He was uncompromising whenever he refuted the transmitted interpretations and provided new ones. On his temperament, his second older brother once remarked, "My younger brother has no shortcomings in personality. But it is a flaw that he is not tolerant." Dasan shares this comment in his own writings, acknowledging that his second older brother is the one who really knows who he is. Fortunately, lacking tolerance is a virtue for scholars. Dasan was not intimidated by any authority figures and was brave enough to establish his own reading of the Analects. This spirit of independence permeates *Noneo gogeuim ju* from the first to the last chapters.

Dasan also dedicates a significant portion of *Noneo gogeuim ju* to discussing Confucian philosophy. In East Asia, from the seventeenth century onward, philosophical defiance of neo-Confucian orthodoxy is evident in three countries: China, Japan, and Korea. In the wake of Manchu's emergence, Chinese scholars embarked on a comprehensive reexamination of the Chinese imperial system and sought a new paradigm that could substitute for neo-Confucianism, which resulted in the formation of the Evidential Studies. Similarly, Japanese scholars attempted to give local meanings to Confucian sociopolitical and ethical thought in defining the "ancient meaning" of the Confucian classics. They eventually drifted away from neo-Confucian philosophy. The Korean movement of Practical Learning paralleled these movements, in that it tended to focus on practical issues and critique neo-Confucian ideas. Scholars in this movement, like those in the Evidential Studies and Ancient Learning, also

looked for concrete evidence for their theories and respected ancient Confucian lore.

However, the Korean movement should be distinguished from the radical reactions to neo-Confucianism that occurred in the other two countries. This is because it never totally severed its relationship with neo-Confucianism. Joseon was too thoroughly ruled according to neo-Confucian principles to support an aggressive movement for total detachment from them. The intellectuals were well disciplined in neo-Confucian ideology and truly accepted its values. Today's South Korean scholarship, taking for granted this distinctive trait that derived from the Korean reaction to neo-Confucian dominance, tends to eschew a clear-cut division between Practical Learning and neo-Confucianism. Opening a debate on this issue, Yi U-seong stated that Practical Learning, especially the philosophy of Yu Hyeong-won, essentially derived from neo-Confucianism, and his theory was buttressed and complemented by the work of Kim Jun-seok. In the same context, Ji Du-hwan asserted that until the emergence of Northern Learning in the eighteenth century, no scholar in Practical Learning abandoned neo-Confucian ontological, epistemological, and metaphysical discussions. More recently, some young Korean historians, encouraged by Han Yeong-u and Choe Wan-su, have accounted for the formation of Practical Learning by using such concepts as the "ancient learning of the six classics," the "era of true view landscape," the "society of scholar-officials in Seoul," and the "scholars at Pavilion Chimryu." Though their views differ on the origin of Practical Learning, these new approaches similarly relate Practical Learning to neo-Confucianism. In the West, James Palais contended that the reformative political suggestions made by proponents of Practical Learning were by no means innovative but instead derived from the theoretical Zhou institutions. Some specialists in Korean religion and philosophy, such as Donald Baker and Mark Setton, have also opposed the separation of Practical Learning from Joseon neo-Confucianism.

The compromising aspect of Practical Learning is observable in Dasan's *Noneo gogeu* ju, too. He respected Zhu Xi's scholarship and never went too far in his criticisms of neo-Confucianism. This is especially evident when Dasan is compared with Dazai Jun (1680-1747) in terms of their differing attitudes toward neo-Confucianism. Throughout his interpretations of the Confucian classics, Dasan

always honors Zhu Xi, calling him "Master Zhu," whereas Dazai frequently attempts to debase Zhu Xi's reputation by calling him by his personal name, Xi. Interestingly, when Dasan quotes a passage in which Dazai mentions Zhu Xi, he changes "Xi" to "Master Zhu," presumably because he cannot leave the master's personal name as it appears in Dazai's writing. Actually, the alleged core values of Practical Learning—criticism, practicality, and practical evidence—are more conspicuous in Dazai Jun's writings than in those of comparable Joseon scholars, including Dasan. A comparison between Dasan and Mao Qiling serves to bolster this distinction, for Mao's interpretation of the Confucian classical texts was solidly aimed at criticizing Zhu Xi's views, while Dasan's remained reverent to them.

Indeed, Dasan's esteem for "Master Zhu" is clearly illustrated in his criticism of Dazai's and Mao's attacks on neo-Confucianism:

Master Cheng [Cheng Yi] said, "Why have filial piety and brotherly respect existed in human nature from the beginning?" This does not mean that there is no principle in human nature to enable people to practice filial piety and brotherly respect, but that they are accomplished in the outer world. However, Xiaoshan [Mao Qiling] intended persistently to oppose the theories ... [s]o his theories have become more distorted. Notwithstanding that Dazai has no idea of what the moral principle is, he tenaciously opposed the theories of neo-Confucianism. How absurd this is!

These are denigrations of what Dasan saw as a radical attempt to uproot the foundation of neo-Confucian moral philosophy. Thus, the perspectives of those who attempt to separate Dasan's philosophy from neo-Confucianism are hardly free from distortion.

Koreans' efforts to negotiate with neo-Confucianism in their reformative intellectual movement may be deemed indicative of the premodern elements that exist in traditional Korean philosophy. This view was initially suggested by imperial Japanese scholars but was also held by many "modernist" cultural analysts in Korea. The compromise Koreans made with neo-Confucianism is still a matter of debate, with significant historical implications. However, it appears self-evident that the legacy of neo-Confucianism could not be abandoned in the various discussions within

Confucianism because it was a great synthesis of all Confucian traditions that had existed prior to its emergence. Neo-Confucianism undeniably endured throughout the most crucial Confucian era. In contrast to Qing and Tokugawa scholars, Dasan attempted to integrate this crucial component into his philosophy through the traditional Confucian framework.

This syncretic aspect of Dasan's thought, which allowed him to adopt any ideas he found convincing, may raise a question: what was the criterion for his adoption of ideas, if there was any? Indeed, one of the impressions readers may have while reading Dasan's *Noneo gogeuim ju* is that judgments permeate his writings. Ethical judgments for discerning the good from the bad are unavoidable to any Confucian, since Confucianism itself is didactically judgmental. However, Dasan did not withhold judgment even in his investigations of philological meanings, provenances of words, historical events, figures pertinent to the given passages, details of Confucian rituals and institutions, and so on. Almost every time he raised a dispute, he tried to reach his conclusions by making judgments. When taking in this plethora of judgments, the reader may wonder what Dasan's criterial basis for making these judgments was, provided that the judgments were consistent with one another. On this subject, I would like to center on his frequent use in his writings of the concept *li*, which can be translated as "principle" or "reason."

To begin with, I will explain how frequently Dasan adopted this notion of *li* in his writings. According to my examination of the database of Korean classics provided by the Institution for Translation of Korean Classics, *Yeoyudang jeonseo* contains 2,042 pieces of writing in which the character *li* appears, regardless of the length, genre, and nature of the writing. After eliminating instances in which this character is used as a verb meaning "to control" or "to manage," more than seventeen hundred works by Dasan remain that contain the philosophical notion of *li*. The frequency with which it appears should be contrasted with that of other important concepts in Dasan's philosophy, such as *tian* (heaven; appears in 3,028 pieces of writing in *Yeoyudang jeonseo*), *ren* (humanity; 878), *de* (virtue; 1,599), *li* (ritual propriety; 2,733), *xing* (human nature; 604), *xiao* (filial piety; 782), *zhong* (loyalty; 511), and *xu* (reciprocity; 192). Only pieces of writing that contain the concepts *tian* and *li* (ritual propriety) outnumber those that contain *li* (principle). This is remarkable in consideration of the fact that the

concept of "principle" has been abandoned in common discourse about Dasan's philosophy, whereas "heaven" and "ritual" have been stressed as pivotal components of it.

In *Noneo gogeuim ju*, Dasan uses the concept *li* (principle) 322 times. This fact is also remarkable when one considers the frequency of other important concepts in *Noneo gogeuim ju*: *tian* (919), *ren* (849), *de* (513), *li* (ritual propriety: 1,382), *xing* (258), *xiao* (223), *zhong* (193), and *xu* (97). Although Dasan uses some significant concepts more frequently in *Noneo gogeuim ju*, note that they are the ones Confucius himself discussed, whereas the concept *li* (principle) did not even emerge in Confucius's time. This examination, I believe, is sufficient to show that *li* (principle) is one of the essential notions in Dasan's interpretation of the *Analects*.

Dasan often combines in his writings this concept with other concepts to form an important notion, as in the following examples: moral principle, principle in human relationship, universal principle, principle of Heaven, investigations on principle, principle of things, principle of the Way, true principle, right principle, principle of human beings, fundamental principle, principle of order, utmost principle and principle in mysterious function. He sometimes also uses the concept *li* to refer to the "principles" in various sciences or disciplines. Examples of this include: principle in governing, principles in farming, principles in diseases, principles of yang, principles in medicines, principles in management of living, principles in geography, principles in entertainment, principles in geomancy, and principles of comets.

More important is the fact that this concept, "principle" or "reason," is categorical in Dasan's philosophical paradigm and criterial in his reasoning. His discussions can easily be thought of as examinations of the compatibility of given topics to "principle" or "reason." If he judges a given philosophical discourse, a political suggestion, or even a philological argument as compatible with "principle" or "reason," he regards it as valid; if not, it is invalid. Because of this, readers have often discovered in many of his arguments a recurrence of such expressions as "being compatible with principle," "basing our reasoning on principle" "in discussion of principle," "going against principle," "in light of principle," "in observance of principle," "understanding principle," "fitting into principle," "having no principle," "distorting principle,"

"illuminating principle," and "in accord with principle." These expressions consistently play crucial roles in his discussions and in many cases, are associated with his conclusions. Even when he discusses empirical and experimental issues, such as strategies for improving people's lives or the observance of ancient Confucian rituals, he often returns to his final judgment: are they harmonious with "principle" or "reason?" He seemed to feel that he could strengthen the validity of his arguments by doing so, probably if the "principle" or "reason" was universal.

Of course, Dasan was not concerned with neo-Confucian metaphysical discourses on the relationship between li (principle) and qi (vital force), the mechanisms of human nature and sentiment, the subtle but distinctive conceptualizations of various perspectives on human nature, the structure of the mind-heart, epistemological possibilities and methodologies for understanding neo-Confucian principles, and so on. He seemed to avoid these complicated discussions because he believed they were unnecessary. He regarded these discourses as studies of "human nature and principle" and criticized them for their excessive inclination toward metaphysics. In his philosophy, however, "human nature and principle" make up one of the many possible combinations of a Confucian value and "principle," just as neo-Confucianism is one of several Confucian schools in the history of Confucianism. Therefore, the paucity of discussion in his work of conventional themes in neo-Confucian metaphysics should not be regarded as a rejection of the concept of "principle." He actually noted that this concept had been discussed in many classical texts, such as *Constant Mean*, *Record of Rites*, *Commentaries on the Changes*, *Mencius*, *Poetry*, *Zuo's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn*, *Changes*, *Huainanzi*, *Huangdi neijing*, and *Han shu*. After examining these sources with regard to the concept of "principle," he concluded: "[All these concepts] have been derived from either regularity of pulses or regularity in governing or regularity of laws. Is there any trustful ground for the neo-Confucian assertion that directly relates human nature to principle?" Consequently, he attempted to keep his distance from only excessive metaphysical discussions in the "studies of human nature and principle," while accepting and utilizing the concept of "principle."

In light of this academic orientation, I suggest that Dasan's philosophy be conceptualized as the

"Learning of Practical Principle" instead of *Silhak* (Practical Learning). Pre-Qin Confucian scholars emphasized practicality, and neo-Confucian scholars developed Confucian metaphysical theory by adopting universality—the principle. What Dasan wished to achieve in his commentary on the *Analects* was to synthesize these Confucian legacies to create a new theoretical paradigm. Terming his scholarship "Learning of Practical Principle," credits him with attempting to integrate all transmitted Confucian philosophies into a syncretic or synthetic system.

In fact, the neo-Confucian theory of "principle" itself has two dimensions: a dimension consisting of "one principle" as a pure pronouncement of taiji and a dimension consisting of "diversified principles" as the embodiment of the one principle in specific beings. The one principle is substantial, abstract, and noumenal, whereas the diversified principles are always associated with phenomena. If they are associated with concrete human relationships, they are collectively called "principles in human relationships." In this respect, they are believed to mirror one of the two aspects of the principle—that is, principle as "deontological rule." If they are associated with physical beings in nature, they are collectively called "principles of things." In this respect, they are believed to mirror another aspect of the principle—that is, principle as "ontological ground." In their discussions of humanity, neo-Confucian theorists perceive that "human nature of original thus-ness" and "human nature of vital and physical forces]" match the one principle and the diversified principles and proceed toward more complicated discussions of the relationship between them and mind-heart, a concept of human subjectivity.

Among the concepts introduced in this brief explanation of the neo-Confucian theory of principle, those that Dasan most vehemently opposed were the one principle and human nature of original thus-ness:

This is the so-called human nature of original thus-ness, but there is nothing more detrimental than this theory in betraying Heaven, neglecting the mandate of moral behavior, distorting principle, and bringing harm to the good. Human beings have no dual natures. It is like the fact that rice in its nature favors water and has no other nature of favoring dryness.... [T]he theory of the original goodness of human nature is the real idea of the ancient sages and

not an individual argument of a private school. Nevertheless, neo-Confucian scholars see it as incomplete. Is this contention in accord with principle? If principle is truly one, how can it be diversified? I am afraid that the theory of one principle is not reasonable.

As he denied the core idea of neo-Confucian metaphysics, he also disagreed with neo-Confucian applications of the *ti-yong* paradigm to the relationships between the one principle and the diversified principles and between the two different human natures. In his view, it was consistent with Buddhist and Daoist theologies to say that "[the Way of Confucius] begins with one principle, becomes diversified in myriad things in the midst of changes, and [is] eventually integrated into the one principle again." Dasan's assessment of these neo-Confucian theories matches his criticism of the "studies of human nature and principle" because these theories were its main topics. However, while being critical of neo-Confucian indulgence in metaphysical discourses, he still approved of many "principles," if they were manifested in reality. In other words, he actively employed the concept of principle when his discussions arrived at the topic of the diversified principles, although he did not accept the distinction between the one principle and the diversified principles.

However, questions still remain: what is the difference between the neo-Confucian "one principle" and that principle of Dasan that is variously referred to as "principle of Heaven," "universal principle," "fundamental principle," and "principle of the Way?" How does the neo-Confucian understanding of human nature, revolving as it does around "human nature of original thusness," differ from Dasan's understanding of human nature? If he denied the transcendental aspect of "principle," why did he frequently reduce his investigations on many topics to a deductive judgment in order to see if the opinions were compatible with principle? Such reductionism is premised on a single or much simpler cause of the universe, which is inevitably transcendental.

Dasan might have played the same game neo-Confucians did: pieces of prescribed Confucian norms were given, and he was expected to assemble those pieces to build the structure for a moral philosophy. And Confucianism's confrontation with Buddhism may perhaps have required philosophers at that time to build metaphysical and ontological grounds for

morals. Even though Dasan refused to blindly accept the neo-Confucian structure because he had experienced the abusive effects of the neo-Confucian indulgence in metaphysical discourses, by and large he could not avoid working on the same project. He may have attempted to diminish the transcendental connotations of "principle of Heaven" when he stated that "the principle of Heaven means the humanity that has been accomplished with the utmost sincerity, commiseration, and compassion that have penetrated Heaven and Earth. They are the actual virtues observed when a filial son deplored his fate of having immoral parents [as in the case of King Shun]." Still, Dasan's principle is an ontological and categorical one, as suggested in his statement "if something is compatible with the principle of Heaven there is nothing wrong in it." In his moral philosophy, he substituted the "one principle" with various notions of "principle," including the "principle of Heaven," "universal principle," "fundamental principle," and "principle in the Way." Despite Dasan's intent to shun metaphysical discourses, all these concepts played analogous roles in their respective moral philosophical contexts.

Just as he resisted "one principle," he also removed the concept of "human nature of original thus-ness" from his lexicon. However, this does not mean that he truly abandoned the philosophical implications of the concept—that is, the optimistic and idealistic understanding of the possibility for self-perfection. In the same manner as he dealt with the "one principle," he rejected human nature of original thus-ness, replacing it with another metaphysical concept: in this case, the concept of "Dao-mind]." One of the better-known propositions in Dasan's philosophy is "human nature is the mind-heart's natural tendency to favor something." He suggested this because he thought it necessary to deny the neo-Confucian view of human nature, that is, "human nature is no more than principle," in order to undermine neo-Confucian abuse of abstract notions. However, he tempered what was naturally favored by the mind-heart with a sense of disciplinarian censorship, reminiscent of on the notion of "commonality of human psychology" in Mencius:

"In my examination, human nature is the mind-heart's natural tendency to favor something. Like vegetables favoring excrement and algae favoring water, human nature favors the good. When it comes to the discussion of human nature, I

would say that everyone is delighted with the good and ashamed of evil. Therefore, when one behaves morally, her mind-heart becomes filled with delight; when one behaves immorally, her mind-heart becomes filled with self-dissatisfaction.... (Biased on these examples, I know that the good is what the mind-heart is delighted with and evil is what the mind-heart is ashamed of.)”

Dasan asserts here that the intrinsic psychology of human beings tends toward the good. He conceptualizes this intrinsic psychological tendency in his philosophy as Dao-mind: "Dao-mind always wants to practice the good and enables us to choose the good. If one continues to listen to what Dao-mind wants to do, it is called following human nature: following human nature is being compliant with the mandate of Heaven." Actually, Dasan admits that Dao-mind is a metaphysical concept when he says, "the nature of Dao-mind is to have neither form nor substantial quality; it is ultimately subtle and ultimately elusive." With this claim, Dasan's Dao-mind comes to overlap with Zhu Xi's human nature of original thus-ness.

In Confucianism, it was neo-Confucianism that conceptualized the ontological foundation for the universality of Confucian morals as principle. Neo-Confucian scholars perceived that an awareness of reasonability in Confucian morality underlay all Confucian teachings, and with reference to Huayan philosophy and certain Confucian classics, they made "principle" pivotal in their philosophy. The goal of this activity was to strengthen, prioritize, and absolutize the Confucian norms. Dasan positively recognized this contribution, and his philosophy also posited a transcendental regularity to the world, which was often conceptualized in conjunction with notions of "principle." Although he might not have agreed that his principles were transcendental, it is evident that his philosophy presumed it.

The problem with neo-Confucianism, as Dasan saw it, derived from excessive emphasis on the metaphysical affirmation of Confucian norms. He pointed out that the defect of Song Confucianism was the imbalance between its metaphysical interpretation and relevant evidence. He claimed that this stemmed from its narrow speculation on principle, which brought about the enervation of practices. Based on this estimation, Dasan attempted to integrate into his philosophy

certain topics, such as social reform and modern science, that contemporary interpreters have considered predominant ideas in the so-called Practical Learning. However, as I have already suggested, it would be more accurate to designate his views on these topics the Learning of Practical Principle, because his suggestions for social reform were about "practical principles in human relationships" and his studies on the modern sciences were about the "practical principles of things."

In my understanding, the most outstanding tendency in Korean philosophy, evident in certain representative philosophers' works, is the pursuit of universality and emphasis on humanity. Even though the forms this combination vary and consequently have generated a diversity of thought, these two main themes permeated the thinking of these philosophers, who shared a premise that each human being represents universality. Over the course of constructing this characteristic, philosophers often adopted a syncretic approach to the existing theories, which they would synthesize and integrate into a new paradigm. Dasan's philosophy demonstrates this characteristic of Korean philosophy well: he tried to synthesize the old and new commentaries on the Analects and thereby paid tribute to the original Analects; he tried to synthesize the old Confucian teachings on practical issues and the neo-Confucian learning of principle to form the learning of practical principle; he tried to synthesize the moral principle and the principles of human relationships and things to suggest a new dimension of the philosophy of principle; and he tried to combine the new Confucian developments in China and Japan with the persistent Korean awareness of moral foundations. This sense of moderation or syncretism extends in Noneo gogeu ju to his efforts to bring balance between inner cultivation and social merit, between refined cultural expressions and natural substance, between ideals and reality, between textual investigations and contemplation, and between words and meaning. All these endeavors aimed at reconfirming universality—principles, reasonability, Dao-mind, and Heaven—in order to help promote humanity in his society.

Dasan was aware that his time required a new philosophy and perceived the responsibilities of the time. Since it is a time of decline and disorder, we cannot fastidiously criticize immoral deeds such as lords not acting like lords, subjects not acting like subjects, parents not acting like parents, and children

not acting like children, in the same way as we might do in an age of purity and peace. Therefore, when the noble person chooses to act, he naturally considers the responsibilities of the time. These days, people always say that the sages were inclined to neither yes nor no, and thus they want to blindly practice the Way regardless of the circumstances. How can this be deemed as the words from those who understand the time?

I believe that this remark succinctly presents the essence of Dasan's philosophy. As he said, in a time when "the Confucian scholars replied to the kings, who talked to us with a sense of urgency, only with the great principles and the great laws," he himself attempted to respond to the responsibilities of his time.

An Overview of the Original Meanings Volume 1

1. The virtues of humanity, rightness, ritual propriety, and wisdom are accomplished through practices and not the principles that exist in one's mind-heart.' (1.2)
2. The phrase "I would call him learned" should be read in association with the passage headed "To learn extensively" in Book 19 "Zi Zhang." (1.7)
3. A pause should be placed after "frugal," to make "Our Master is temperate, benign, respectful, and frugal" a separate sentence. (1.10)
4. As for the sentences "trustworthiness is close to rightness" and "respectfulness is close to ritual propriety," one should follow the old interpretations. (1.13)
5. The sentence zhong xing gong zhi means that all stars move together with the celestial axis and is not meant to convey a sense of nonaction. (2.1)
6. The expression er shun means that people's words do not sound offensive to Confucius. (2.4)
7. Regarding the sentence "Even dogs and horses attend people," one should follow Bao Xian's (7 BCE-65 CE) comment. (2.7)
8. Xiansheng and dizi do not refer to parents and children.³ (2.8)
9. The phrase "renewing the past learning and acquiring new knowledge" refers to one of the benefits of being a teacher. (2.11)
10. Yiduan does not refer to the ideas of Yang Zhu, Mo Di, Buddha, or Lao Dan. (2.16)
11. The phrase ju zhi ("raise up the honest") means to raise up the worthies; the phrase cuo wang("place them over the crooked") does not mean to abandon the wicked. (2.19)
12. The clamp and the collar-bar connect two different things in the same manner in which trustworthiness associates two different persons. (2.22)
13. Any state that succeeds the Zhou will not change the rituals of the Zhou even a hundred ages hence. (2.23)
14. The theory that the Xia I, the Yin N, and the Zhou, respectively, prioritized wholeheartedness, natural substance, and refined expression is basically fallacious and derives from a discussion among scholars of apocryphal texts. (2.23)
15. The Ji family [was not the major chief descendant of the three families. (3.1)
16. "Having rulers in a barbaric state" means that a ruler preserves his position by adopting the ways of barbarians in a state. (3.5)
17. Xia er yin means that the contenders drink when they lose an archery match. (3.7)
18. I discussed the meaning of the Di sacrifice. (3.10)
19. The kitchen god and the inner room god are not among the gods of the five sacrificial rituals. (3.13)
20. The reason Confucius asked about everything when he entered the Grand Shrine was that the state of Lu It violated ritual propriety in performing their rituals in the shrine. (3.15)
21. The saying "in ritual archery, hitting the mark is not emphasized" pertains to archery for greeting guests from other states and archery for official banquets. (3.16)
22. The sacrificial sheep for the announcement of the first day were reserved for serving the king's envoys. (3.17)
23. The phrase "it is sad but not hurtful" pertains to the Juaner ode. (3.20)
24. About the phrase "Guan Zhong married three women," one should follow Bao Xian's interpretation. (3.22)
25. The reason King Wu's music was said not absolutely to yield the good lies in his incomplete merits, not his virtue. (3.25)

An Overview of the Original Meanings Volume 2

26. The saying *li ren wei mei* ("For one's dwelling, humanity is beautiful") is an admonition regarding one's dwelling in humanity and does not convey the meaning of wisely selecting one's abode. (4.1)
27. The phrase *de zhi*, in relation to poverty and lowliness, means that one has come to avoid poverty and lowliness. (4.5)
28. The saying "My Way is penetrated by one thing" regards the correlation of minds, which involves measuring another's mind through my mind, and has nothing to do with presenting the secret word about transmitting the Way. (4.15)
29. One's understanding of rightness is derived from Dao-mind; one's understanding of profit is derived from human-mind. (4.16)
30. The phrase *xian zhi bu cong* means to make it apparent that you intend not to follow your parents. (4.18)
31. Nangong Tao, Nangong Yue, and Nangong Kuo are three different people. (5.1)
32. The remark "I would have to get on a small raft and float about on the sea" is intended to describe Zi Lu's volition. (5.6)
33. In respect of the sentence, "Both you and I are not equal to him," one should follow Bao Xian's interpretation. (5.8)
34. Kong Wenzhi was a substantially evil man. The remark "he was not ashamed to ask questions to his inferiors" was expediently made. (5.14)
35. "Keeping the augural tortoise in his house" constitutes one separate occasion. And "making the pillar tops in the shape of mountains and painting water chestnuts on the short pillars above the crossbeams" constitutes another. They should not be considered sequential in our discussion. (5.17)
36. The expression "If one thought twice, one would be fine" is intended to show that Ji Wenzhi was not able to think three times from the beginning. (5.19)
37. The remark "When his state lacked the Way, he was foolish" implies that Ning Wuzi dared to confront difficulties, being unconcerned about his own person. (5.20)
38. The expression *fei ran cheng zhang* ("already made beautiful patterns on silk") originally used silk as a metaphor. (5.21)
39. The remark "They did not keep old hostilities in mind" is pertinent to Bo Yi's and Shu Qi's relationship with their father and brother. (5.22)
40. Weisheng Gao's dishonesty pertains to a remark he made to his neighbor, not to the fact that he begged his neighbor for vinegar. (5.23)
41. Zuoqiu Ming is a single person. (5.24)
42. The expression *nei zi song* ("inwardly struggle to overcome them") is pertinent to the conflict between the mandate of Heaven and human desires. (5.26)
43. The phrase *bu er guo* ("nor did he vacillate over his mistakes") implies that Yan Hui was not committed to two different things [with regard to correcting his mistake.] (6.2)
44. Zi Hua's crime lies in the fact that he was not concerned about food for his mother. (6.3)
45. "The son of a black ox" is a metaphoric expression that means that the father was better than the son. (6.5)
46. The expression *re yue zhi* ("[The others] reach this state for days or for a month") is identical in meaning to the expression "Only a few people could practice it for a long time." (6.6)
47. The phrase *zhong dao er fei* ("collapse in the middle of the road") means that one's body collapses due to his strength being exhausted, not that one gives up his study. (6.11)
48. The phrase *xing bu you jing* ("does not take a byway when coming to the government office") means that he took the right path to come to work at the government office. (6.13)
49. There has existed a wrong understanding of refined expressions and natural substance [1]. (6.17)
50. The chapter, which starts with the phrase "If a gu has no edges," is dedicated to a discussion of names and reality. (6.24)
51. The phrase *jing you ren* should be read as *jing you ren* ("humanity is in a pitfall"). (6.25)
52. The Master visited Nan Zi to overcome Weis political disorder and restore the grace between the parents and children. (6.27)
53. There originally existed rituals in which the great officials could meet with the lesser lords. (6.27)
54. Wei ("do") in the question "Will Our Master do like the lord of Wei did" should be read

- as wei in the sentence "Zeng Xi would not do like Guan Zhong did." (7.15)
55. The "plain water" in the expression "having plain water to drink" refers to one of the six drinks that are introduced by Rites of Zhou. (7.16)
56. Regarding the expression wu shi er xue yi in all editions of Noneo gogeuru ju ("Study Changes at fifty"), one should follow the old commentary. (7.17)
57. The phrase san ren xing ("Even when walking in a party of three people") means that I walk along with a couple of people only. (7.22)
58. The remark "Allow people to come; do not allow them to withdraw" is an old saying. (7.30)

An Overview of the Original Meanings Volume 3 etc.

The best practical book that offers useful and authoritative divination tips on the significance of the I Ching oracle is

[I Ching: The Symbolic Life](#) by Stephen Karcher [BookSurge Publishing, 9781439253465]

Karcher has many other editions of the I Ching floating around but this one he produced himself and was not constrained by the publisher's commercial and marketing plans. This edition is a close synopsis of the wisdom of the I Ching he has gleaned after a life time of study. It works well as an oracle.

Stephen Karcher, Ph.D., is one of today's most creative and controversial writers and practitioners in the field of Yijing studies, divination and myth. He is an internationally recognized scholar, translator and initiated diviner, teaching and lecturing on the Yijing and other divination systems in the US, Great Britain, France, Spain, Switzerland and South Africa. As Research Director of the Eranos Foundation in Ascona, Switzerland (1988-1996), he pioneered a depth psychological approach to divination. A prolific author, he has published many books and articles in the field of comparative mythology, divination, depth psychology and religious experience. He "liberates meanings ... that have been missing from our understanding for a couple of thousand years ... revealing a whole new landscape of interpretation

that makes previous translations feel cramped by comparison." Stephen lives in Ojai, California.

Two other I Ching translations I feel work well are

The now classic [The I Ching, or, Book of Changes](#) by Richard Wilhelm and Cary F. Baynes. You can get a new one for 20.00 and a used one for 5.00.

One that accounts for the revolution in documents, since the 1960s is [The Complete I Ching — 10th Anniversary Edition: The Definitive Translation by Taoist Master Alfred Huang](#).

Put simply archeological digs in China revealed early editions of the I Ching that have been studied by Karcher and Huang but not Wilhelm/Baynes.

[Critical Readings on Tang China](#) (4 vols.) edited by Paul W. Kroll [Critical Readings, Brill Academic, 9789004281134]

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The Tang dynasty, lasting from 618 to 907, was the high point of medieval Chinese history, featuring unprecedented achievements in governmental organization, economic and territorial expansion, literature, the arts, and

religion. Many Tang practices continued, with various developments, to influence Chinese society for the next thousand years. For these and other reasons the Tang has been a key focus of Western sinologists. This volume presents English-language reprints of fifty-seven critical studies of the Tang, in the three general categories of political history, literature and cultural history, and religion. The articles and book chapters included here are important scholarly benchmarks that will serve as the starting-point for anyone interested in the study of medieval China. <>

[Hidden and Visible Realms: Early Medieval Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic](#) compiled by Liu Yiqing, edited and translated by Zhenjun Zhang [Columbia University Press, 9780231187169]

Chinese culture of the Six Dynasties period (220–589) saw a blossoming of stories of the fantastic. Zhiguai, “records of the strange” or “accounts of anomalies,” tell of encounters with otherness, in which inexplicable and uncanny phenomena interrupt mundane human affairs. They depict deities, ghosts, and monsters; heaven, the underworld, and the immortal lands; omens, metamorphoses, and trafficking between humans and supernatural beings; and legendary figures, strange creatures, and natural wonders in the human world.

[Hidden and Visible Realms](#), traditionally attributed to Liu Yiqing, is one of the most significant zhiguai collections, distinguished by its varied contents, elegant writing style, and fascinating stories. It is also among the earliest collections heavily influenced by Buddhist beliefs, values, and concerns. Beyond the traditional zhiguai narratives, it includes tales of karmic retribution, reincarnation, and Buddhist ghosts, hell, and magic. In this annotated first complete English translation, Zhenjun Zhang gives English-speaking readers a sense of the wealth and wonder of the zhiguai canon. *Hidden and Visible Realms* opens a window into the lives, customs, and religious beliefs and practices of early medieval China and the cultural history of Chinese Buddhism. In the introduction, Zhang explains the key themes and textual history of the work.

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The appearance of zhiguai (accounts of anomalies), or "tales of the supernatural," was an important cultural phenomenon in the history of China. Liu Yiqing's (403-444) *Hidden and Visible Realms* (Youming lu) was one of the most important zhiguai collections in early medieval China, or the Six Dynasties period (220-589). This collection is distinguished by its varied contents, elegant writing style, and fascinating stories, and by the fact that it is among the earliest collections that were heavily influenced by Buddhism. Besides the traditional themes that appear in the genre of zhiguai, many new themes bearing Buddhist beliefs, values, and concerns appear here for the first time. In addition, *Hidden and Visible Realms* was not one of the collections of miraculous tales written by Buddhists for laymen, intended to assist in propagating Buddhism,¹ such as the *Records of Manifest Miracles* (Xuanyan ji) or the *Signs from the Unseen Realm* (Mingxiang ji). Instead, it was miscellaneous in nature, drawing mainly on folklore that was widely spread throughout society. In this lies its unique value for the study of the cultural history of Chinese Buddhism. For these reasons, *Hidden and Visible Realms* deserves to be read by anyone interested in this era and in the rise of Buddhism.

The Zhiguai Tradition and the Youming Lu
 The zhiguai tradition is rooted in the pre-Qin period of China.

Early individual records of anomalies were included in the historical texts. When they were separated from history and spread independently, the zhiguai as a genre emerged.¹ This explains why some scholars consider zhiguai a branch of history.¹ Zhiguai collections first appeared independently as early as the Warring States period.¹ The genre developed during the Han dynasty, flourished during the Six Dynasties, and continued until the end of the Qing dynasty.

During the Han, Wei, and Six Dynasties period, a variety of collections appeared in large numbers.

According to their contents, Li Jianguo classifies the zhiguai collections into three categories:

1) records of anomalies associated with specific sites, such as the *Comprehensive Charts of Terrestrial Phenomena* (Kuo di tu) and Zhang Hua's *W* (232-300) *A Treatise of Curiosities* (Bowu zhi); 2) miscellaneous biographies, such as Liu Xiang's (ca. 77-6 BCE) *Biographies of Exemplary Immortals* (Liexian zhuan MIA) and Wang Jia's *Uncollected Records* (Shiyi ji); and 3) miscellaneous records of anomalies, such as Chen Shi's (104-187) *Records of Marvels Heard* (Yiwen ji) and Cao Pi's *If* (220-226) *Arrayed Marvels* (Lieyi zhuan). The last category flourished during the Six Dynasties period, and Gan Bao's *T* (fl. 335-349) *In Search of the Supernatural* (Soushen ji) and Liu Yiqing's *Hidden and Visible Realms* are the most important and famous ones.¹ It can also be useful to divide zhiguai collections based on their relationship to religion: those collections that tend to especially promote a single religion or religious idea, such as the *Records of Manifest Miracles*, *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, and *Biographies of Exemplary Immortals*; and those that do not, including *In Search of the Supernatural* and *Hidden and Visible Realms*.

Almost no zhiguai collection survives in its original form.¹ Fortunately, however, from the fourth century forward important zhiguai were widely quoted in the *leishu* M1, reference works arranged by category, which have become invaluable sources of early zhiguai. Lu Xun's *Collected Lost Old Stories* (Guxiaoshuo gouchen), a monumental work first published in 1938, was the earliest attempt to extensively recompile early zhiguai collections from the quotations in the *leishu*. Today it is still the most important text for zhiguai studies.

The Nature of Zhiguai as a Cultural Phenomenon

The nature of zhiguai as a cultural phenomenon is also significant, and it is closely related to the compilers' sources. Gan Bao says in his "Preface to *In Search of the Supernatural*," "I inspected the previously recorded [stories] in old books and collected the lost anecdotes of the time." This is a clarification of the sources of the zhiguai: besides selecting stories from a variety of earlier texts, the compilers recorded local folktales that were

widespread at that time as well as stories directly told by individuals. For this reason, zhíguai stories are often considered to be from oral tradition and related to popular culture.

However, some scholars disagree with this assumption. Robert Campany, for example, argues in his *Strange Writing*: "authors (of anomaly accounts), with few exceptions, must have drawn mostly on written documents as opposed to oral sources."

Campany's observation on the sources of zhiguai is probably true for the genre as a whole, but it is clear that some collections of the third category of zhiguai (miscellaneous records of anomalies), such as *In Search of the Supernatural*, *Hidden and Visible Realms*, and *A Garden of Marvels* (Yiyuan), are among the "few exceptions." According to Li Jianguo's research, less than one-quarter of the tales in *Hidden and Visible Realms* are taken from older books. Most pieces appear for the first time in the collection and are mainly about current events of the Jin and the Song periods. Therefore the whole book reflects a strong sense of the time in which it was written/compiled. In addition, the majority of tales in *Hidden and Visible Realms* are anecdotes about scholars, commoners, Buddhist monks, and laymen living in this period. Many of these pieces could be considered records from people of the compiler's local community as well as part of oral tradition. The cases of *In Search of the Supernatural* and *Hidden and Visible Realms* are fairly similar in this regard. Thus the zhiguai accounts were not necessarily devoid of "folklore" tracts.

Significance of Zhiguai: Why Should They Be Read?

The *Analects* (Lunyu) says, "The topics the Master did not speak of were prodigies, force, disorder, and gods," indicating Confucius's prioritization of mundane practicalities and neglect of the supernatural. The fact that almost all the zhiguai collections were lost soon after their compilation can be taken as an indication of their status in Confucian culture. Then, why did zhiguai exist and why were they circulated?

It seems easy to find the motive behind and aim of a zhíguai collection if it is explicitly promoting Buddhist or Daoist teachings, but it is harder to know the aims of the collections with miscellaneous contents that were compiled by general intellectuals, though some compilers might have been followers of Gan Bao, who himself claimed he was attempting "to make clear that the way of spirits is not a fabrication." As mentioned above, tales of the supernatural were viewed as history in ancient China. Their historical value, the fact/event, is beyond doubt an important factor behind their circulation.

Many scholars also read zhiguai for entertainment. For instance, Tao Qian (365-427), the compiler of the *Sequel to In Search of the Supernatural* (Soushen houji), writes in a poem:

I skim through the "Story of King Mu"
and view the pictures in the *Classic of Seas
and Mountains*.

A glance encompasses the ends of the
universe—
where is there any joy, if not these?

Both the "Story of King Mu" and the *Classic of Seas and Mountains* he mentions in the poem are noted early zhiguai. Since Tao Qian loves zhiguai so much, the purpose of his compiling the zhiguai collection, the *Sequel to In Search of the Supernatural*, was most likely entertaining himself as well as his readers. Gan Bao addresses a similar idea in his preface to *In Search of the Supernatural*:

I will count myself fortunate if in the future
curious scholars come along, note the bases
of these stories and find things within them
to enlighten their hearts and fill their eyes.
And I will be fortunate as well to escape
reproach for this book Gan Bao addresses
readers of his zhiguai collection as "curious
gentlemen", indicating that curiosity, or
interest, was at least one of the major
reasons for the circulation of the zhiguai
texts.

In other words, readability (the quality to attract curiosity) of the works is essential to their survival. Gan Bao also directly talks about his motivation for collecting and reading zhiguai—"youxin yumu" rendered by DeWoskin and Crump as "enlighten their hearts and fill their eyes." It may also be

rendered as "set their minds wandering by filling their eyes," referring to the free and relaxed state of mind in the process of enjoying literary works, instead of observing historical events or obtaining information.

Additionally, in ancient China collecting and reporting anomalies to the authorities was considered essential to governance, undoubtedly another reason for the circulation of zhiguai.

In recent years, "historical" reading of zhiguai has become popular. An indication is the appearance of a model of reading local religious culture through medieval zhiguai. The pioneering work is Glen Dud-bridge's *Religious Experience and Lay Society in T'ang China: A Reading of Tai Fu's Kuang-i chi*, and the most recent works include Campany's *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China*, Dudbridge's *A Portrait of Five Dynasties China: From the Memoirs of Wang Renyu (880-956)*, and probably my own *Buddhism and Tales of the Supernatural in Early Medieval China: A Study of Liu Yiqing's Youming lu*.

In the preface to his selected zhiguai collection, *A Garden of Marvels*, Campany lists four reasons to read the zhiguai texts in view of history: 1) these texts offer unparalleled material for the history of Chinese religion, as well as evidence that there was religion beyond the great tradition (elite religion) and their specialists; 2) these texts—especially the ones in narrative form—provide many glimpses of aspects of ordinary social life and material culture that can be hard to discern from other surviving evidence; 3) zhiguai texts preserve anecdotes about individuals and events known from more formal histories and often throw new light on them; 4) they are worth reading precisely because they were not inventions of a few individuals but instead artifacts of many people's exchange of stories and representations.

It is clear that Campany highlights the value of zhiguai as unofficial writings in the study of religions and history, but he neglects their literary value because he does not consider them literary works. While agreeing with Campany's insightful arguments, I would like to add two more reasons to augment his list: the zhiguai texts provide samples

of early fictional works for the study of Chinese fiction; and the zhiguai texts—especially those possessing a complete plot—are enjoyable to read. <>

[Gender, Power, and Talent: the Journey of Daoist Priestesses in Tang China](#) by Jinhua Jia [Columbia University Press, 9780231184441]

During the Tang dynasty (618–907), changes in political policies, the religious landscape, and gender relations opened the possibility for Daoist women to play an unprecedented role in religious and public life. Women, from imperial princesses to the daughters of commoner families, could be ordained as Daoist priestesses and become religious leaders, teachers, and practitioners in their own right. Some achieved remarkable accomplishments: one wrote and transmitted texts on meditation and inner cultivation; another, a physician, authored a treatise on therapeutic methods, medical theory, and longevity techniques. Priestess-poets composed major works, and talented priestess-artists produced stunning calligraphy.

In [Gender, Power, and Talent](#), Jinhua Jia draws on a wealth of previously untapped sources to explain how Daoist priestesses distinguished themselves as a distinct gendered religious and social group. She describes the life journey of priestesses from palace women to abbesses and ordinary practitioners, touching on their varied reasons for entering the Daoist orders, the role of social and religious institutions, forms of spiritual experience, and the relationships between gendered identities and cultural representations. Jia takes the reader inside convents and cloisters, demonstrating how they functioned both as a female space for self-determination and as a public platform for both religious and social spheres. The first comprehensive study of the lives and roles of Daoist priestesses in Tang China, [Gender, Power, and Talent](#) restores women to the landscape of Chinese religion and literature and proposes new methodologies for the growing field of gender and religion.

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Excerpt: Although the history of Daoism in China has enjoyed an extensive literature in recent decades, limited attention has so far been paid to the experience of Daoist women. In seeking to fill this gap, I provide in this book a full-length study of Daoist priestesses who distinguished themselves as a gendered religio-social group during the Tang dynasty (618-907). Applying a gender-critical approach combined with religious and literary studies, I bring to light many previously overlooked or understudied sources to describe the life journey of the Daoist priestesses during the heyday of their religious tradition. In particular, I explore how these priestesses took up the Daoist priesthood as their career and realized their individual worth with meaningful presentations. Interacting and negotiating with religious and social forces and norms as the Daoist tradition developed in parallel with Tang society, the priestesses were active in both the religious and social spheres, where they enjoyed many different accomplishments not only in religious leadership, theory, and practice, but also in politics, literature, and the arts.

The emergence of Daoist priestesses in the Tang as a distinct religio-social group was unprecedented in the history of Chinese women. Within the complicated historical context of the Tang era that helped bring about this unique phenomenon, the most fundamental factors were changes in political

policies, the religious landscape, and gender relations.

From the beginning, the 'rang ruling house had traced its ancestry to Laozi, the alleged founder of Daoism. Although at first this was used as political legitimization rather than religious preference, the Tang emperors gradually developed a genuine interest in Daoism, eventually transforming the tradition into the state religion. For its part, the Daoist movement, originating in the late Han dynasty of the second century, developed various social, scriptural, or ritual lineages in the following centuries. In the fifth and sixth centuries, around the divisional Northern and Southern Dynasties period (420-589), Daoism began developing a sense of identity, and leading Daoists worked to canonize and systematize their scriptures, rituals, and lineages. By the Tang dynasty, the ruling house and Daoist leaders were efficiently collaborating to complete the project of integrating various Daoist lineages and to institutionalize the religion. The government formulated important policies, such as allotting farmland, issuing law codes, institutionalizing a Daoist registration system, and establishing specific offices to sponsor and regulate Daoist abbeys and individual Daoists. The Daoist tradition itself also strengthened the integration and unification of its major components and lineages, packaging an overall Daoist image. The result of all these efforts was the full-fledged establishment of Daoist monasticism and a hierarchical ordination system encompassing the transmission of scriptures, precepts, and registers (daolu) from all previous major lineages.' It was within this dynamic political and religious context that women were able to forge new identities and new roles for themselves as Daoist priestesses, living a communal life in the convents and forming their own communities.

The changing pattern in gender relations was yet another critical factor in the rise of the Daoist priestesses, in turn altering the gendered power structure of Tang society. Although the Tang government maintained the traditional gender system, it also provided enough flexibility to allow social relations between the two sexes to undergo significant changes. Meanwhile, other forces and developments in the social, religious, and cultural

dimensions were encouraging further shifts in gender patterns. The rise of Empress Wu (r. 684-705) as the only enthroned female ruler in Chinese history demonstrated the effects of these new gender patterns, while her forceful rule in turn influenced the reshaping of the gendered power structure. The emergence of a group of writing women, from female court officials to the many female poets included in the Yaochi xinyong ji (Anthology of New Poetry from the Turquoise Pond), also marked and promoted a powerful change in gender patterns.

Another influence on reconstructing gender relations that pervaded the entire Tang era was a growth in the culture of romance, developing from a variety of religious, cultural, literary, and social impulses. The Daoist tradition had developed a religious practice of using sexuality, whether of a physical or a spiritual nature, to attain longevity and immortality, and such practices persisted into the Tang. The continuing popularity of the goddess cult, which was associated with sensual appeal, erotic desire, and romantic passion, also promoted romantic sentiments. Romanticized secular love stories described in the literati's poetry and narratives were a third element encouraging the growth of romantic culture. The culture of jinshi (graduates who took the imperial examinations) in the capital city Chang'an also accelerated these sentimental tendencies through their intimate or romantic relationships with courtesans.

From the beginning of Daoism, women had been active in the various Daoist lineages from the late Han to the divisional period, both as religious practitioners and leaders. It was only during the Tang era, however, that Daoist priestesses emerged as a religio-social group with its own gendered identity within the historical context I have described. According to an official statistic of the Kaiyuan reign period (713-741), 550 of 1,687 Daoist abbeys (32.6 percent) were convents, indicating that about one-third of the Daoist priesthood was composed of priestesses. The Daoist ordination system designed specific vestments for them, and the priestesses were expressly designated as nüguan (female official), nüguan (female headress), or nüdaoshi (female Daoist priest). There was even a particular musical tune

composed specifically to eulogize them. Moreover, Tang era documents usually distinguished Daoist priestesses from three other religious groups— Daoist priests, Buddhist monks, and Buddhist nuns.

Daoist convents were economically independent, thanks to land allotments by the Tang government and private donations. Supported by an independent economy, the priestesses mostly lived a communal life, formed their own communities, and enjoyed their own autonomous sphere. They also reached out to the public, giving sermons, performing rituals, and becoming mentors to people of varied statuses. In addition, some priestesses took on other social roles, as politicians, poets, and artists. Ordained royal princesses exerted considerable influence on contemporary religious and political matters, while talented priestess-poets represented a new stage in the development of Chinese women's poetry and priestess-artists produced excellent calligraphic artworks. Moreover, the popular cult of erotic goddesses was extended to include Daoist priestesses, who were regarded as semi-goddesses or female immortals.¹ The priestess-poets in turn analogized themselves as goddesses and immortals and empowered themselves with similar attributes. All these religious and social roles thus provided opportunities for the priestesses to trespass the traditional twin pillars of the so-called three followings—sancong, a woman following her father at home, her husband in marriage, and her son(s) in widowhood—and the separate spheres of the inner (domestic or private) and outer (public; *neiwai zhi bie*), and thereby become a considerable force in their own right in the operational system of religion and society.¹

In this first book to focus specifically on the priestesses of Tang Daoism, I have based my research on a gender-critical framework. Although the institutional structure of traditional society in general marginalized women, under certain historical conditions the sociocultural context could facilitate the discursive production of women's dynamic functions. This is especially true in the case of religion, as religious faith and practice often served as a source of encouragement and empowerment for women in specific historical and cultural contexts.¹ The notion of gender identity as

constitutive of culture, society, and discourse also means there were possibilities for emancipatory remodeling of identity.¹ Furthermore, the "gender-critical turn" has urged historians to examine the ways in which gendered identities are substantively constructed and to relate their findings to a range of activities, social organizations, and cultural representations. Gender studies encompasses both paradigms of descriptive and historically oriented women's studies and theoretically grounded and critically oriented feminist studies.¹ The gender-critical framework is therefore a more inclusive and efficient approach to our study of Daoist women and their relationships with religious, cultural, and social institutions.

In recent decades, the modern victimization of traditional Chinese women has been questioned by many feminist historians. Applying gender as an analytical category, they have compared the traditional gender norms with contrasting evidence of women's social practices, and they have explored the roles taken by women and the contributions to the functioning of society that these roles enabled. Although family and kinship have been the central concern of this scholarship, other female activities and roles, beyond the function of daughter, wife, and mother, also have been discussed, including roles as economic producers, courtesans, teachers, writers, healers, religious figures, and even social reformers. These scholars have presented a historical picture of how traditional women of different social statuses and time periods negotiated with social and cultural norms and forces and acted meaningfully and rewardingly in a world that was structured to their disadvantage. These studies have indeed provided invaluable methodological inspiration for the writing of this book.

A number of scholars have paid attention to Tang Daoist priestesses. In their study on Daoist women, Catherine Despeux and Livia Kohn included a pioneering section describing the overall experience of the Tang priestesses. A number of articles and theses have focused on the priestess-poets and priestess-princesses, and other priestesses also have been studied to a certain extent. Some scholars have further explored the religious experience of Tang priestesses based on

Du Guangting's (850-933) *Records of the Assembled Immortals of the Walled City* (Yongcheng jixian lu; hereafter *Jixian lu*), from which about seventeen hagiographies of Tang Daoist women are extant. A careful examination of all these hagiographies, however, reveals that Du Guangting greatly modified or rewrote the original sources to serve his own agenda of presenting ideal images of Daoist women. For example, according to several historical records, Wang Fengxian, described in Du's hagiography as a Daoist female saint, in fact ordered, in cold blood, the murder of the commissioner Gao Pian (d. 887) and several hundred members of his family. Using these hagiographies to reconstruct the religious experiences of their subjects and to praise them as Daoist "saints," as some studies have done, thus becomes problematic.

Another major problem in studying Tang Daoist priestesses concerns their gendered identity. Throughout the Tang dynasty, the identification of these women (including those who wrote many love poems) as Daoist priestesses was never questioned. However, from the Song (960-1279) to the Qing (1644-1911) eras, a few traditional scholars reidentified Tang priestesses as "courtesans," deprecating them as "licentious" for their public activities and relative freedom in gender relations as well as for their love poetry," even though their actions and poems contained nothing of a pornographic or licentious nature. Many modern scholars have also followed this biased criticism, the result being the construction of a conventional narrative that greatly hinders any sort of in-depth, comprehensive assessment of the priestesses' achievements.

In this book, I seek to remedy these problems by conducting a historical, comprehensive study on the Tang Daoist priestesses. Since the hagiographies of Du Guangting's *Jixian lu* are not reliable sources for studying the actual lives and practices of these priestesses, I have instead searched for and collected other types of sources, and in doing so I have recovered many previously overlooked materials, which constitute mainly three groups of sources. The first group consists of epitaphic and monastic inscriptions either written for or related to Tang Daoist priestesses. Russell Kirkland has

studied the two inscriptions regarding the priestess Huang Lingwei (ca. 642-721) by Yan Zhenqing (709-785), while Yao Ping has made a brief survey of thirteen epitaphs written for Daoist priestesses, and Jiao Jie has added three to Yao's list. I, in turn, have collected additional epitaphic inscriptions, for a total of forty from both transmitted and recently unearthed materials. Although epitaphs written for religious figures may be seen as a kind of hagiography, in general they contain more biographical description and more detailed and complicated narrative because they usually follow the narrative formulas of epitaphs written for secular people.

As the editors of the Sui-Tang volume of *The Cambridge History of China* have found, epitaphic materials "provide information that can be checked against the historical record, providing testimony quite independent of the historical process. When this has been the case, they have almost invariably confirmed that the histories are factually reliable." Zhao Chao has further produced a comprehensive survey of how epitaphs have been effectively used for historical studies and have tremendously advanced the research of various fields, with a specific section discussing the historical sources contained in Tang epitaphs." Historians of Chinese women have also found epitaphic biographies written for women helpful in their studies. Of course, there can be considerable variations in different circumstances, and we should always scrutinize epitaphs with a cautious lens, in order to discern the relative prescriptive values, clichés of essential character, and exaggerated judgments invested by their authors' possible agendas.

The second group of sources I have used are manuscripts from Dunhuang, records from official histories, essays and poems by literati, anecdotal narratives, and local and monastic gazetteers. Whereas some scholars have cast doubt on the reliability of the essays collected in the *Quan Tangwen* (Complete Tang Essays) because this collection appeared late in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), many other scholars have indicated that the compilers of the *Quan Tangwen* were serious scholars, and most of the essays they collected can be found in earlier texts. For example, many of the epitaphic inscriptions

included in this collection were probably original rubbings preserved in the imperial library and therefore are in better condition than other sources.

The use of literary works also is not as naive as it may seem to someone outside Chinese literary studies. It is well acknowledged that traditional Chinese poetry and essays were often used as a tool or a kind of diary to record the authors' life experiences, usually in a factual manner, with specific times and places. Chen Yinke (1890-1969), for instance, has set up examples of using literary resources for historical studies. Stephen Owen has also indicated how, in China, "poems are read as describing historical moments and scenes actually present to the historical poet" and "no one felt uncomfortable about constructing biographical chronologies from poems or about using poems as direct sources for cultural history." Although anecdotes were often based on gossip and hearsay, historians of China have recognized that anecdotal gossip is not without certain historical significance. Local gazetteers, though usually appearing in later times, since hardly any survive from the Tang era, are often filled with local materials accumulated from earlier periods and therefore are useful and creditable to a certain extent.

The third group of sources I have used are the priestesses' own poetry, essays, books, and even artistic works, rediscovered from Dunhuang manuscripts or newly unearthed materials. Reading traditional Chinese poems on the presumption that they are basically nonfiction is also significant for interpreting the poets' works and understanding their subjective experiences. Because of China's particular cultural tradition and political system, traditional poets conceived of poetry as a means to gain recognition both from their contemporaries and from future generations. Such poetry has also been useful for both traditional and modern critics in getting to know a poet. For instance, scholars of Chinese women's history have successfully used women's own poetry to explore their emotional experiences. Thus, we can use the works of the priestesses to gain a better understanding of them, though we should always do so carefully and critically so as to be more analytical in reading

beneath their own possible conscious or unconscious agendas.

Whereas previous scholarship has overlooked many of these materials, I use them here to place the study of the priestesses' life journeys on a more solid historical footing, to contextualize their living status, and to gain a more in-depth perspective on their inner feelings and sentiments. Modeling the work on previous studies of Chinese women, I apply the gender-critical approach, combining it with religious and literary studies to tackle the following questions: How was the priestesses' gendered identity substantially constructed in relation to social organizations and cultural representations? How did changes in the religious landscape and gender patterns influence the ways the priestesses viewed themselves and were viewed by their contemporaries? How did they seize the opportunities these changes brought to interact and negotiate with social and religious institutions, thereby becoming dynamic actors in the functioning of Tang society? What is the difference between their actual experience and Du Guangting's depiction of them? Why is it biased to disparage them as "licentious courtesan"? This gender-critical and religious-literary approach and inquiry will permit a satisfactory comprehensive analysis and assessment of the priestesses' religious and social activities, literary and artistic works, and overall accomplishments.

After describing in greater detail the rise of the Daoist priestesses as a religio-social group, through historical contextualization in chapter 1, I turn in the following chapter to ordained royal women in particular, because about twenty-eight princesses and many other royal and palace women were ordained as Daoist priestesses. Although this unprecedented phenomenon can be easily explained by the Tang ruling house's adoption of Laozi as its progenitor and Daoism as the family religion, the actual situation was much more complicated. Drawing upon ten recently unearthed epitaphs and other sources, I first provide a general picture of the ordination of these women and discuss their varied reasons for entering the Daoist order. I then focus on the two most important princesses, Jinxian (689-732) and Yuzhen (691-762), to detail their powerful relations, deeds, and

influences in the religious, political, and cultural spheres.

In chapter 3, I look at ordinary priestesses, using thirty epitaphs in addition to other sources to examine their religious experience and the roles they assumed. I describe in rich detail how the priestesses founded, constructed, and managed their convents and cloisters and how they used them as a locus—both as a female space for self-determination and autonomy and as a public platform for interacting with people of different social strata. I further discuss how they served as qualified mentors and preachers to emperors, palace ladies, high officials, and common people, and how they practiced Daoist longevity techniques and self-cultivation and performed Daoist rituals.

In the two subsequent chapters, I focus on two outstanding priestess-theorists, Liu Moran (773-840), in chapter 4, and Hu Yin (fl. 848), in chapter 5. Liu Moran transmitted or probably even composed an inscription titled *Zuowang lun* (Treatise on Sitting in Oblivion), a Daoist text of meditation and inner cultivation traditionally attributed to the Daoist priest Sima Chengzhen (647-735). I discuss the authorship of this text and of another, also titled *Zuowang lun* and attributed to Sima Chengzhen, and I analyze the contents of the text associated with Liu. I then examine another inscription that we know for certain was written by her, which eulogized the female Daoist Xue Yuanjun (Primal Mistress Xue) and presented some ideas similar to the *Zuowang lun* inscription.

Hu Yin, meanwhile, was a physician and medical theorist active in the first half of the ninth century. She is noted for composing an illustrated text on Daoist longevity techniques and medical theory, elaborating on the Daoist classic *Huangting neijing jing* (Scripture of the Inner Refulgences of the Yellow Court), in which she described the spirits, physiological functions, pathological mechanisms, and therapeutic methods of the viscera of the body and offered detailed instructions on longevity techniques and medical treatments for nurturing these viscera. This text would later have an important influence on Daoist inner cultivation and inner alchemy theories and practice as well as on

traditional Chinese medical and life-nurturing (*yangsheng*) theories.

In the final two chapters, I then turn to the priestess-poets and their works. Although the anthology *Yaochi ji* has long been lost, some fragments were fortunately rediscovered among the Dunhuang manuscripts included in the Russian collections in Saint Petersburg. These fragments consist mainly of the poems of three Daoist priestess-poets, Li Jilan (d. 784), Yuan Chun (d. ca. 779), and Cui Zhongrong (ca. second half of the eighth century). In chapter 6, I first review the compilation, contents, and possibly included poets of this anthology and then use both transmitted and rediscovered poems to study these three priestess-poets. Then, in chapter 7, I reconstruct the biography of Yu Xuanji (ca. 843-868), the most outstanding female poet of the Tang era. By closely reading some of her representative poems, I examine her emotional journey, her feelings of self-esteem and gender awareness, her transformation of the voice and image of women, and her poetic styles and achievements.

Finally, in the conclusion I summarize the discoveries in this book and draw a general picture of the Tang Daoist priestesses' remarkable religious career, which convincingly refutes the biased narrative describing them as "licentious courtesans." I also compare this picture with the ideal image created by Du Guangting in his *Jixian lu* hagiographies, which are examined in the appendix of this book, showing how views of gender relations and gendered subjects of Daoist women changed dramatically during the Tang—Song transition period, thereby opening another new chapter for them. <>

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[Brill's Humanities in China Library](#) makes available in English translation the work of humanities scholars who are shaping academic discourse in China. This series includes academic work examining and analyzing issues related to history, literature, philosophy, culture, society, and religion in China, translated from the original Chinese volumes. These works are invaluable to China Studies scholars and Sinologists, and at the same time enable students and scholars in disciplines outside of those fields to

become acquainted with works that are highly influential in mainland China.

The rise of China as an economic and political power is unquestionably one of the most striking phenomena of global significance as we enter the first decade of the twenty-first century. Ever since the end of the “Cultural Revolution” and the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, tremendous changes have transformed China from an isolated and relatively weak country into a rapidly developing and dynamic society. The scale and speed of such transformations have taken the world—even the Chinese themselves—by surprise; China today is drastically different from, and in a remarkably better condition than, China thirty years ago despite the many economic, social, and political difficulties and problems that yet remain to be dealt with. China scholars in Europe and North America are called upon to provide information and explanation of the rise of China, a country with history and tradition reaching back to antiquity and yet showing amazing strength and cultural virility in the world today. Interest in China is not limited to the traditional field of Sinology or China studies, nor is it confined to the academic world of universities, for more and more people outside of academia are curious about China, about its history and culture, as well as the changes taking place in the contemporary world. The Western news media brings images from China to every household; Sinologists or China scholars publish numerous articles and books to satisfy the general need for understanding: China is receiving a high-level of attention in the West today whether we turn to the scholarly community or look at popular imagination.

In understanding China, however, very little is available in the West that allows the average reader to have a glance at how China and its culture and history are understood by the Chinese themselves. This seems a rather strange omission, but in much of the twentieth century, the neglect of native Chinese scholarship was justified on the grounds of a perception of political control in China, where scholarship, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, was dominated by party ideology and strictly followed a prescribed party line. Such politically controlled scholarship was thought to be more propaganda than real

scholarship, and consequently Western scholars rarely referred to contemporary Chinese scholarship in their works.

In the last thirty years, however, Chinese scholarship and public opinion, like everything else in China, have undergone such tremendous changes that the old stereotype of a politically controlled scholarship no longer holds. New and important archaeological findings in China have changed our knowledge of ancient texts and our understanding of Chinese history in significant ways, and detailed studies of such new materials are available in native Chinese scholarship. Since the 1980s, many Chinese scholars have critically reflected on the nature of scholarship and questioned the old dogma of political and ideological orthodoxy, while many important books have been published that present a new outlook on Chinese history and culture. The time has come for Western scholars and other interested readers to engage academic perspectives originating in China, and making important academic works from China available in English is an important step in this engagement. Translation of influential academic works from China will greatly contribute to our better understanding of China from different perspectives and in different ways, beyond the dichotomies of the inside and the outside, a native Chinese view and a Western observer’s vantage point.

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Excerpt: Tracing the Origins of Chinese Intellectual History in the Three Dynasties (Ancient Times to ca. 6th Century BCE): Remote Antiquity

What is “intellectual history” and what is “Chinese intellectual history?” This is a very complicated question that I can only briefly discuss here. The Chinese characters for “thought” (si 思) and “to think” (xiang 想) both have the radical meaning heart and mind (xin 心), and so intellectual history (sixiangshi) concerns what the Chinese have thought about and how they have thought about it since ancient times. The Chinese character for “history” (shi 史) is said to mean both “fair” or “just” and “to

write down” or “to record.” That is to say history is a branch of learning that traces back the past to discover its traditions and origins. “Chinese” intellectual history, then, discusses why, since ancient times, the Chinese thought this way and not that way. Since history is the basic thread of the discipline called “intellectual history,” to trace Chinese intellectual history, I have to begin the discussion with remote antiquity.

I say “remote antiquity” because, when we want to write intellectual history, we tend to feel that ancient times are very far away from us. Chinese history has already gone through several thousand years, and that history has become a stack of books, a few oracle bone fragments, a few bronzes and scattered historical ruins. These historical resource materials originally embodied the thought, feelings and frames of mind of ancient people, and we find it very difficult to understand them today. What ancient people thought, said and did has already disappeared into the past, and so when we want to engage them in an intellectual dialogue, we feel them to be both remote and unfamiliar. This remoteness separates ancient times from the present while unfamiliarity makes it impossible for us to understand ancient people clearly.

As an example, in the 1970s in a Han dynasty tomb in Mawangdui, a silk manuscript text called The Ten Great Canons (Shi da jing 十大經) was discovered. One chapter entitled “Correcting Chaos” (Zhengluan 正亂) tells a story about the legendary Huangdi or Yellow Emperor, previously recorded to be the “progenitor of human culture” (renwen shizu 人文始祖). Traditional accounts of the Yellow Emperor portray him as a paragon of civilization and benevolence, but this document, dating at least to the first century BCE, relates how the Yellow Emperor captured his rival Chi You, flayed off his skin to make a target, used his hair to make a pennant, made his stomach into a ball and cut his flesh up into mincemeat.

This story involves extreme cruelty and is very different from our general conception, but perhaps it is true to life because quite a few examples of “killing people to bury them with the deceased”

(sharen yi xun 殺) have been found in ancient tombs, and oracle bone inscriptions also record many “human sacrifices” (sharen yi ji 殺). Not only were commoners and prisoners of war killed and sacrificed to the spirits or ancestors, but in ancient times when there was a severe drought, they would immolate shamans or witches to please the spirits (shenling) and pray for rain.

This kind of what we today would regard as barbaric behavior actually continued into eras that are considered quite civilized. Even the paragons of virtue, King Wen (cultured) and King Wu (martial) of the Zhou dynasty, acted in a similar manner. When we read the Remaining Zhou Documents (Yi Zhoushu), we learn that they both acted in a cruel and deceitful fashion. When King Wu defeated the last Shang king, Zhou, he acted just like a blood-thirsty barbarian, and the blood of the slain flowed like a river. When he reached the Shang capital, he shot his enemies’ corpses full of arrows; he hacked off their heads with a sword and slaughtered a large number of prisoners of war as a sacrifice. He also took back to his own territory the Nine Cauldrons (jiu ding) that symbolized the power to rule granted by Heaven together with the priests (wu) and invocators (zhu) who transmitted the will of the spirits.

It would seem that an unfamiliar, mysterious, stately and treacherous atmosphere pervaded that time, but we find it hard to imagine today. Being difficult to imagine makes it feel remote. We might well ask: are these stories of barbaric acts true? If these records are true, then is what the people of remote antiquity thought, their mentalité, impossible for us to comprehend today? Why, also, did the ancient people love to discuss these stories as records of the great deeds of heroes? Was their understanding of the terms barbaric and uncivilized completely different from our modern understanding?

History is remote and unfamiliar, then, especially when we want to discuss intellectual history because we have to try to experience remote antiquity by means of the extant historical resource materials. Perhaps we can reconstruct what really happened in history by reference to these materials, but the mentalité, the feelings, of ancient people are

deeply concealed behind these materials, and this makes it impossible to grasp them clearly. This task is rendered even more difficult because these resource materials are also bound up with their compilers’ imaginations, ideas, concealments, packaging and understandings of the thoughts and feelings of the ancients. This always renders the beginning of intellectual history obscure and hard to perceive.

Should intellectual history just abandon the search for the thought of the most ancient period of history? Should we emulate Hu Shi by simply ignoring Yao (Tang Yao) and Shun (Yu Shun) and the Xia and Shang dynasties and starting our discussion with the later Book of Songs? I think this is unacceptable because thought is, after all, one long river and intellectual history has to search up stream for the beginnings of thought among the ancient Chinese.

There are at least three criteria for discussing the origins of Chinese intellectual history. First, ancient people must actually have “thought.” Everything in the consciousness of ancient people cannot be considered thought. It is only when the activities of ancient people’s consciousness embodies something non-utilitarian that transcends practical everyday life activities and is without concrete implications for production that this activity can be considered “thought.” Second, this thought has to be formed into some sort of consensus, some commonly acknowledged ideas or concepts. That is to say the activities of thought have to reach a certain level of universality. No individual’s wild fantasy can simply be regarded as thought. Thought has to be commonly acknowledged by at least a certain community of people, and this thought, idea or concept must be able to explain more than one fact before it can be regarded as thought. Third, “thought” must be recorded in symbolic fashion such as writing or images because if it is not symbolically displayed in this way it cannot be communicated or transmitted and would be impossible to study. Only when ancient people began to transmit their thoughts and feelings to others and later generations through written words, pictorial representations and material objects did they truly enter into history.

This is simply to say that for us today, it is only when written materials, cultural anthropological knowledge and archeological discoveries are sufficient to recover some ideas and concepts of the ancients that genuine intellectual history is possible.

Let us now begin the search for the fountainhead of Chinese intellectual history on the basis of written materials, cultural anthropological knowledge and archeological discoveries.

The Hundred Schools of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period, I (ca. 6th to 3rd Century BCE): China's "Axial Age"

From the 9th to the 8th century BCE, the Western Zhou dynasty's peaceful order was greatly disturbed. The dynasty was destroyed in 771 BCE, and the Eastern Zhou dynasty began.¹ After the establishment of the Eastern Zhou, the power of the Regional Rulers (zhuhou) gradually increased while the area actually controlled by the Son of Heaven was reduced to a region around today's Luoyang in Henan province. The Son of Heaven had to depend on the support and contributions of the Regional Rulers even to maintain this much territory. The harmonious and integrated order of the tianxia world of all under Heaven had finally collapsed.

With the political world in chaos, the intellectual world was also in turmoil. There were at least three reasons for changes in the Eastern Zhou intellectual world. First, the change in the political order caused the once self-evident "knowledge" and "thought" to lose its authoritative nature. A re-establishment of the worlds of thought and knowledge was inevitable. Second, with the decline and weakness of the Zhou royal house, its monopoly of culture, thought and knowledge passed into the territories of the Regional Rulers. At the same time, the long-term stability and prosperity of Regional States (zhuhouguo 諸侯®) led to the gradual emergence and nurturing of a new group of educated men of culture. The ups and downs of these men of culture at the courts of the Regional Rulers meant that their intellectual positions were in a state of flux. Third, different emphases were placed on knowledge and thought within different professions. This differentiation among educated men of culture

caused similar divisions in knowledge and thought and resulted in the emergence of various disparate schools of thought. Just as the "Tianxia" (The World) chapter of the Zhuangzi has it: " 'the art of the Way (daoshu 道)' in time came to be rent and torn apart by the world."

That "the art of the Way" was "torn apart" was not really a sad ending, but rather a splendid beginning. After the collapse of former truths, people were forced to ponder things for themselves. After the disappearance of their self-evident beliefs, people were forced to re-establish their confidence. After the downfall of their ideas of the order of Heaven and Earth, people were forced to restore the order of the cosmos through their own observations. In this age of intellectual division, people finally began to use their own reason without completely relying on facile truths and conceptions of their gods. From the late years of the Spring and Autumn period to the Warring States era, from the 6th to the 3rd centuries BCE, Chinese intellectual history began to take its own path. This was perhaps, to use Karl Jaspers' term, China's "axial age." [In *The Origin and Goal of History*, 1953 (1949) Karl Jaspers theorized that the time from around 800 to 200 BCE was an "Axial Age" of human civilization, a time that saw the emergence of Confucius, Laozi, the Upanishads, the Buddha, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many other men of wisdom.]

Intellectual Convergence in the Qin and Han Dynasties, from ca. the 3rd Century BCE to ca. the Mid-2nd Century CE: Coda to the Hundred Schools of Thought Contending

The Spring and Autumn and Warring States period was a glorious age in Chinese intellectual history during which China formed its own characteristic systems of knowledge, thought and belief, and these systems dominated the following two thousand years of Chinese intellectual history.

However, if we pay closer attention to the intellectual tendencies of later generations, we cannot but attend more closely to the phenomenon of intellectual convergence that took place during the period from the late Warring States to the

early Western Han. There are a number of reasons why we should do so. First, it was during this period of time that the ancient Chinese knowledge of the cosmos, society and humanity genuinely coalesced into one grand system. Second, the Chinese intellectual world after the unification of the Qin and Han was built upon the foundation of this large, complex, organized system of knowledge. It constituted the background of Chinese culture, combining humanistic and social thought as well as various sorts of knowledge for practical application. Third, the “breakthrough” that took place during China’s “axial age” was different from that in other civilizations. It was not a rejection of or a rupture with past thought and culture; it was rather an inclusion and a continuation of compatible elements—a continuation that included reorganization and new interpretations. Scholars early on summed up the intellectual characteristics of this period as having a tendency towards eclecticism. Indeed, whether it was the Huang-Lao in the early Han or the Confucian doctrines, they both embraced, in their different ways, mutually related phenomena like the Legalist methods of matching names with results (*xingming fashu*), magic arts, preservation of life, immortals, arts of war, Yin and Yang and medical, mantic and numerological arts. All this represented a tendency toward the gradual convergence of systems of knowledge and thought between the end of the Warring States and the Qin-Han era.

Recent archeological discoveries have also provided us with more new materials with which to outline the intellectual trajectory of this period. If we regard the ever increasing store of Qin and Han archeological discoveries as materials that embody ordinary people’s knowledge and thought, then things like silk paintings, wall frescoes, portraits in stone, terra cotta figures and bronze and jade funerary objects can also tell us a great deal about the mentality of the people of that era. If we collect and examine the extant literary remains, regard the large trove of recently unearthed silk manuscripts as background materials for the interpretation and understanding of contemporary intellectual phenomena, and have reference to the various types of archeological discoveries, it should not be difficult to discern that

the main intellectual trend of the time was to continue moving forward on the intellectual path laid down in the past. First, various forms of past knowledge of the cosmos, society and human life (Heaven, Earth and the Human in ancient Chinese terms) was gradually systematized and blended together. Second, these same forms of knowledge were given identical metaphysical foundations and came to be regarded as self-evident in nature. Third, the metaphysical foundations and material operations of knowledge and thought—the ancient Chinese “Way/ Dao” and techniques (or arts, *shu*)—were then connected and formed a set of norms and models.

Although the First Emperor of the Qin dynasty (r. 247–210 BCE) is said to have “burned books and buried scholars,” people continued to think, and their thinking was still quite vigorous even under much political pressure during the chaotic time before the Qin-Han unification. In the Han dynasty, however, due to the establishment of a unified dynasty and the tendency toward a unified consciousness, intellectual history moved from the Zhuangzi’s “the art of the Way in time came to be rent and torn apart by the world” to the Huainanzi’s “the hundred schools have different specializations, yet they all strive to rule (govern *zhi*).” For the sake of ruling or governing, thought had to be re-integrated into one unified and all-inclusive system that would set out a model encompassing both theoretical explanations and interpretations and a practical system of government. This process was known as “returning to unity” and “the integration of the Way and the arts of government.” From the end of the Warring States period, as political unification was about to be established, various thinkers were already at work constructing this grand ideological system. From the Annals of Lü Buwei to the Huainanzi, they all manifested their intention to create one unified system of their own. This vast tendency toward eclecticism, amalgamation and re-integration constituted the mainstream of the intellectual world during those hundred years and more.

The “Hundred Schools of Thought Contending” came to an end not just because the First Emperor of the Qin “burned the books and buried the scholars” or Emperor Wudi (the Marshal Emperor, r.

140–87 BCE) of the Han “banned the hundred schools of thought.” It was also because eclecticism and amalgamation had already made the various schools so compatible that the boundaries between them were increasingly blurred. The price for unification of thought is often the loss of independent characteristics, but this was something about which nothing could be done. History generally proceeds by means of such unavoidable changes about which nothing can be done.

Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism from the End of the Eastern Han to the Early Tang Dynasty, I (ca. Mid-2nd to Mid-7th Centuries): Foreign Influence Enters China
Its particular geographical situation may have limited ancient China’s contact with the outside world, but this did not isolate China from the rest of the world. An increasingly interesting topic in recent years has been the question of just when the ancient Chinese started to make contact with the outside world. What was the scope of this contact and what were its results?

Various ancient texts, like the “King’s Audience” (Wanghui) chapter of the Remaining Zhou Documents, the Biography of Mu Tianzi (Mu Tianzi zhuan) and the Classic of Mountains and Seas, all contain some anecdotal and fanciful narratives concerning the lands on the borders of ancient China. These stories no doubt represent the limits of contemporary Chinese imaginings about the far off world and cannot be given too much credence.¹ Recently, however, reliable archeological discoveries and serious textual study have made it necessary for us to reevaluate ancient Chinese knowledge of the outside world. Ancient Chinese civilization was rather richer than hitherto supposed and communication was somewhat more developed than we had assumed. Although we cannot fathom the relationships between ancient China and the rest of the world on the basis of hearsay evidence, using the reliable evidence now available it is evident that ancient China was not isolated from the larger world. During the Han dynasty due to a number of factors—the Han struggle against the Xiongnu over the control of the Western Regions, the westward migration of the Tokharians (Yuezhi), the rise of the Kushan Empire (Guishuang

Wangchao), the juxtaposition of the Han and the Roman empires, the development of both land and sea transportation technologies—the Chinese vision of the world was suddenly expanded. This vision also began to have genuinely significant influences on the Chinese intellectual world. The “Record of the Dayuan” (Dayuan liezhuan, Dayuan is in today’s Central Asia) in the Records of the Grand Historian and the “Record of the Western Regions” (Xiyu zhuan) in the History of the Former Han Dynasty already demonstrate a rather greater understanding of the world west of the Jade Gate and the Yangguan Pass (both in Gansu). By the Eastern Han, Chinese had reached the Seleucid Empire and understood the Roman Empire in the west (Great Qin, Da Qin 大秦), knew about the Tiele and the Kyrgyz peoples and had reached Lake Baikal in the northwest; as the golden seal with the inscription “Han King of the Wonu” (Han Wonu guowang) discovered in Kyūshū proves, the Chinese certainly had already interacted with the Japanese.

The broadening of the Chinese world inevitably led to cultural intermingling and conflict, and this inevitably led to changes in the Chinese intellectual world. Generally speaking, in an age when the state ideology was maturing and rigidifying, it no longer possessed the internal resources for self-renewal. Even if it did, it would only amount to some internal adjustments that would not influence the overall structure of the intellectual world. At this time, however, the opening out to the world and the collision with different thoughts gave this relatively closed intellectual world some motive forces for change. On the eve of the era we are just about to enter, the most important intellectual resources arriving from outside were from Buddhism that originated in India. In my view, after the Chinese intellectual world had gone through the divisions of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States eras and then developed a systematic ideology during the Han dynasty, it no longer had the internal drive necessary for self-renewal. It was just at this juncture that Buddhism arrived and offered a critical opportunity for the self-adjustment of the Chinese intellectual world.

In great measure, Chinese intellectual history after the Han is simply the history of the transmission of Buddhism and its Sinification, the rise of religious Daoism and its responses to Buddhism, and the continual absorption and blending of Buddhist thought into traditional Chinese thought. During this process of continuous re-discovery of native resources many new ideas and new lines of thought constantly appeared.

Basic Outline of the Mainstream World of Knowledge and Thought in the Seventh Century

It is a formidable task to describe the overall intellectual situation of an entire age, especially one that experienced as dramatic a series of changes as occurred in seventh-century China. There is, however, one way to do this, and that is by examining contemporary books or library catalogues, encyclopedic leishu materials arranged according to subject and commentaries on the classic texts. From these we can map out the general contours of the contemporary intellectual world. Most ancient Chinese knowledge and thought was recorded in texts that were mainly stored in government collections or libraries, and their holdings were recorded in various catalogues. By perusing these catalogues, we can judge the general scope of contemporary knowledge and reading as well as gain a sense of contemporary intellectual interests. Ancient Chinese leishu encyclopedias collected together as many texts as contemporary people could locate and arranged them according to various subject categories so the collection was similar to a modern encyclopedia. This leishu format was, then, a direct presentation of literary materials that allow us to glimpse contemporary attitudes toward the intellectual categories laid out in front of us. The categories exactly constituted the intellectual order of the era. Owing to their interpretations of the classic texts, the annotations and commentaries undoubtedly represent the contemporary understanding of most authoritative knowledge and thought. In ancient China most educated people received their first instruction in these classic texts; their first knowledge was derived from them. The commentaries on the classics read from childhood on provided an abundance of knowledge and

thought while at the same time relying on the authority of the classic texts imperceptibly to set the reasonable boundaries of that knowledge and thought.

If we regard the “Monograph of Arts and Letters” bibliographic section of the History of the Former Han Dynasty as an evaluation of the basic texts of Chinese thought between the Eastern and Western Han, and the “Bibliographical Treatise” (Jingji zhi) of History of the Sui Dynasty as an evaluation of such basic texts at the beginning of the Tang dynasty, we can discern three things about the Chinese intellectual world: its growth, harmonization and change.¹⁰⁰ First, the History of the Former Han Dynasty “Monograph of Arts and Letters” records 13,269 juan, while the History of the Sui Dynasty “Bibliographical Treatise” records 36,708 juan or 2.8 times as many. The quantity of textual production in the Chinese intellectual world had certainly increased a great deal in the previous five hundred years. Second, from the various categories of knowledge recorded in these bibliographies, we can see that Chinese knowledge and thought had undergone a considerable change. Having become a large country, the records naturally demonstrate that the search for historical foundations and the classical texts of previous generations had become a tradition itself. Furthermore, although the knowledge of mantic and medical arts had flourished and grown even more developed for a while, conceptually speaking these ideas were being constantly marginalized and were held in a state of dormancy by the mainstream cultural elite. By contrast knowledge of literature and history—what today is known as “humanistic knowledge” or “the humanities”—increasingly moved to center stage and became the mainstream thought of the Chinese intellectual world. Third, the fact that the quantity of Buddhist and Daoist texts was now quite large demonstrates that in the intervening centuries Buddhism and the Daoist religion had already grown so fast that they formed two of the three legs of the great tripod of traditional Chinese thought and knowledge, thus effectively transforming the structure of ancient Chinese thought. Finally, from the works and

authors recorded in the History of the Sui Dynasty “Bibliographical Treatise”, we can see the traces of mutual penetration and influence in many areas of thought and knowledge. To give a couple of examples: (1) in mainstream classical studies after the Sui-Tang reunification, northern traditional approaches and new changes in southern studies mutually influenced and alternated with each other, and (2) in the medical and mantic knowledge and techniques employed in practical everyday life, Buddhism brought with it a great deal of Indian knowledge and techniques that blended quite easily into the world of Chinese knowledge.

Using the form and categorization of the leishu to discuss the outline of the mainstream intellectual world in the seventh century, we will primarily rely on the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories.

Because I am writing intellectual history here, I have to be concerned with the integration and standardization (or regularization) of knowledge and thought, their order of presentation as derived from the principles of leishu categorization as well as how much literary material that can be used as intellectual resources is actually provided in the works collected and catalogued. Compiled in 624 under Emperor Gaozu of the Tang, the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories assembled together all of the currently available texts and arranged them under a number of intellectual categories, establishing a huge library of knowledge up to the seventh century. The knowledge presented in this library was divided into the categories of Heaven (including seasons of the year), Earth (including prefects, counties, mountains and rivers), the human realm (including rites, music, official positions, penal law, habitations, clothing, boats and carriages, foodstuffs, etc.), Buddhism, Daoism and the ten thousand things (of the material world). We can see from this list of categories that the thought embodied in the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories simply reflected a series of narratives and understandings of the world.

The narratives and understandings in the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories begin with

the categories of Heaven and Earth, symbols of time and space. Heaven was placed in the premier position. All of the included texts, such as the Book of Changes, Book of Documents, Book of Rites, Analects, Laozi, Zhuangzi, the Book of Master Shen, the Book of Master Wen, Erya, Chunqiu yuanming bao, The Armillary Sphere (Huntian yi), Basic Questions of the Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon (Huangdi suwen), transform the astronomical phenomena in the sky above their heads as symbols of morality, philosophy, space and time. In the intellectual world of the seventh century, Heaven constituted the basic foundation of their mutual existence. Then in the Book of Changes, the Book of Shennong (Shennong shu), the Basic Questions of the Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon (Huangdi suwen) and many other literary sources, the Earth was changed into a symbol corresponding to Heaven, and together they constituted the universe in which humanity lived. Then heavenly phenomena and the changes of geographical space constituted the temporal order of the human world, and the seasons of the year appeared between Heaven and Earth. Spring, summer, autumn and winter as well as various kinds of festivals of the year successively divided this human world under Heaven into many different periods of time. The four seasons, twelve months and twenty-four solar divisions not only corresponded to the Five Phases, the five directions, Five Virtues (or Powers) and various other seasonal natural phenomena indicating various elements of political significance and symbolizing movement and change in the human order, but they also gave definite regulation to human life. The various rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices of the festival days intensified the meaning of the human order. In this way, Heaven, Earth and the seasons were manifest in a framework of space and time and functioned to dominate all human and cosmic order as well as bestow a foundation of rationality on that order.

After the symbolic position of Heaven and Earth as the ultimate foundation of everything in space and time was established and confirmed, next are narrated the important ancient Chinese concepts of “emperors and kings” (diwang) and “receiving the Mandate” (literally omens of receiving the Mandate of Heaven, fuming 符命). Emperors (and

Kings) were the masters of the human world. They received the wishes of Heaven from above and governed the lives of the people below. Whether or not the emperors (and kings) were actually reasonable (i.e., worthy to rule) was, however dependent on and restrained by the will of Heaven (receiving the Mandate of Heaven). This meant that the power of the rulers of ancient China was, in theory, limited to some extent by Heaven, and this fact could lend a certain legitimacy to the occasional “revolution” (flaying off the Mandate, geming) or change of dynasty. The emperors had command over the human realm, and so “human beings” come next in the order of Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories categories. Besides the three juan on human physiology, figures and bearing, there are also eighteen juan on human morality, ethics, behavior, character, feelings and various styles of human social life. The importance attached to these regulations of human life in society together with discussions of the system of rituals and music and the administrative control system in relation to the human social order all reveal seventh-century conceptions of human society. For example, social order took priority over individual freedom, social values were of higher importance than individual accomplishments, the evaluations of other people took priority over one’s own feelings. This had not only been the case for a long time in ancient Chinese society, but it is also very clear from the order of arrangement of categories in the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories.

That the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories placed Buddhist and Daoist knowledge relatively near the end and only allotted two juan each for these categories would seem to show that in seventh-century world of knowledge, thought and belief these two religions could not be ignored, but that they were nevertheless devalued in the mainstream ideology. At the very end the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories records books on different kinds of concrete knowledge of the natural world. Although ancient Chinese tradition had the idea of “acquiring of a wide knowledge of the names of birds and beasts, plants and trees” and a good deal of understanding and tolerance of this form of

knowledge, in the seventh-century leishu, however, we can see that this knowledge was increasingly considered inessential and vulgar. That the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories placed this knowledge last shows us that its importance had declined in the minds of scholar officials. In terms of later Chinese history, this disdain for and abandonment of concrete knowledge and techniques dealing with the natural world must have influenced the advance of technical knowledge in ancient China.

Right around the turn of the seventh century various forms of knowledge and thought seem to have been undergoing a process of summarization, harmonization, coordination and integration. There was, as we have discussed, the one-hundred juan official Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories. Before that, at the end of the sixth century during the reign of Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou, followers of the Daoist religion had already compiled their own comprehensive one-hundred juan encyclopedia entitled Esoteric Essentials of the Most High (Wushang biyao). Somewhat later than the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories, in 666 during the Tang dynasty, the Buddhists also compiled quite a large encyclopedia entitled the Dharma Park and Jewel Orchard (Fayuan zhulin) also in one hundred juan. If we compare these two religious encyclopedias, we can see that the thought trends in the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories did not reflect only the official ideology. The Buddhist and Daoist encyclopedias also come very close to or even rely on the same ways of thought. For example, both the Esoteric Essentials of the Most High and the Dharma Park and Jewel Orchard employ religious terminology to place Heaven before everything in the universe and give prominence to Heaven and Earth as the ultimate foundation of all rationality. After Heaven the Esoteric Essentials lists “human beings” and “emperors and kings,” demonstrating that the order of values in this autochthonous Chinese religion was basically identical to that of the state ideology. After giving strong prominence to its religious ideas, such as “reverential worship” (zhibai 致拜) and “fields of blessedness” (futian 福田, any

sphere of kindness, charity, or virtue) and so on, the Dharma Park and Jewel Orchard also turns very quickly from the Cakravartī-rāja (sovereign ruler or king) of Buddhist legends to the “rulers and ministers” who hold power in the secular world. From this we can detect that Buddhism in the Chinese context had also adopted a value system and classificatory thinking that was quite similar to those of the official ideology.

After experiencing a changing and turbulent era, the people of the seventh century suddenly discovered that the world was continually expanding before their eyes; unfamiliar knowledge was growing rapidly and the connections between diverse forms of knowledge was increasingly confused. When the Tang dynasty reunited north and south, then, people were particularly desirous of a clear-cut and definite order of knowledge and thought. The compilation of leishu encyclopedias was simply an attempt to tidy up and clarify this changing world of knowledge. Their compilers divided the diverse and confused world of knowledge, according to their own value systems, into various categories that gave all knowledge a clear and well-defined sequential order. They also attempted to piece together all the available writings into a number of categories, weaving them together into a vast textual network that they could easily consult whenever necessary. On the one hand these “encyclopedic” leishu represent this intellectual climate, and on the other hand they exhibit the order, scope and boundaries of the world of knowledge and thought of that age. To discuss the boundaries of knowledge and thought at that time, I need to further examine the commentaries to the classics.

As we noted above, from the Han Dynasty on the Confucian classics had become authoritative texts. These texts together with their many annotations and explanatory and interpretive commentaries were believed to encompass almost all human knowledge and thought. They not only dealt with the human spirit and character but were also concerned with the cosmos, politics, government, nature and society. The status of the classics

remained the same even in ages when Neo-Daoism and Indian Buddhism were very popular. For cultured people, studies and explanatory commentaries on the classic texts were not only their intellectual baptism but constituted their study of knowledge, especially knowledge related to political power and economic interests. This gave the classics a monopoly position in the world of knowledge and the status of works of practical use. The classics were not only ranked high above all other texts, but even their annotations and commentaries became primary sources of knowledge and thought in China.

Several hundred years of north-south disunity along with the vast number of commentaries to the classics left the knowledge and thought of the people of the seventh century rather chaotic and confused. The different choices of annotated texts of the classics and the differences in intellectual styles in north and south left people at a loss as to which one to follow. In a unified empire they felt they needed a unified system of explanations of the classics. This would be beneficial for the clarification of knowledge and thought, for correct education and for the selection and appointment of the best officials. Education, especially early education, was after all the foundation for establishing the intellectual orientation of every educated person. Selection, especially the selection of officials that carried practical benefits, was the most forceful incentive to encourage the orientation of knowledge and ideas.

The work of comprehensive summing up and reconciling the intellectual tendencies of north and south had already begun at the end of the sixth century. The History of the Sui Dynasty “Biographies of Confucian Scholars” (Rulin zhuan) records that after the Sui dynasty pacified all under Heaven, the rulers greatly encouraged the study of Confucianism. They recruited many Confucian scholars to come to the capital at Chang-an, discuss the classics and submit their results to the court. Such study and lecturing on the classics also took place among private individuals outside the court. The most famous scholar of his time, Liu Zhuo (544–610), is said to have compiled the Commentaries on the Five Classics (Wujing shuyi) while Liu Xuan (ca. 546–ca. 613) also compiled

comprehensive summaries of various classics and their commentaries.

At that time the two Liu had already started to include and reconcile northern and southern scholarship. By the early Tang this kind of fusion and harmonization became the orientation of the official ideology. According to the “Biography of Chu Liang (560–674) in the Old Tang History (Jiu Tangshu), after Emperor Taizong (r. 626–649) pacified all under Heaven he became “mindful of Confucianism.” He called many celebrated scholars, such as Du Ruhui (585–630), Fang Xuanling (579–648), Yu Zhining (588–665), Lu Deming (ca. 550–ca. 630) and Kong Yingda (574–648), to court to discuss Confucianism, the foundation of the state ideology. The New Tang History (Xin Tangshu) “Preface to Biographies of Confucian Scholars” (Ruxue zhuan xu), also records that in 646 Emperor Taizong established twenty-one historical figures as the transmitters of Confucianism and decreed that people could “use their texts, practice their Way,” and should “praise and elevate them, and from this day on they shall have the honor of being worshipped in the Confucian Temple.” From this list we can see that the opposition of ancient and new text classical studies that had existed since the Han had now been eliminated. What southerners like Wang Bi for the Book of Changes, Kong Anguo (ca. 156–ca. 74 BCE) for the Book of Documents and Du Yu (222–285) for the Zuo Commentary (to the Spring and Autumn Annals) advocated together with what northerners like Zheng Xuan for both the Book of Changes and the Book of Documents and Fu Qian (fl. 2nd century) for the Zuo Commentary promoted were all equally chosen as worthy to be placed in the imperial Confucian temple. Emperor Taizong used his political power to demand an interpretative system for the classics that was richly inclusive, and Kong Yingda’s *The Exact Meaning of the Five Classics* fully embodied his wishes.

Kong Yingda’s work integrated the interpretations of various schools from the Han dynasty on in an extremely comprehensive work. Various divergent interpretations faded after the appearance of this official work. In the intellectual atmosphere of the time, however, the southern academic tradition seems to have become more prominent than the northern tradition and emerged as the mainstream

in the amalgamation of the two traditions. Lu Deming, whose interpretations were incorporated into the *Exact Meaning of the Five Classics*, was a southerner and his *Textual Explanations of Classics and Canons* (Jingdian shiwen) reflected southern scholarship. Although the chief editorial compiler of the *Exact Meaning of the Five Classics*, Kong Yingda, was a northerner and his early classical training was more in the northern tradition, *The Exact Meaning of the Five Classics* was completely inclined toward southern scholarship.

Zuo Commentary (to the Spring and Autumn Annals) commentaries basically followed those of Du Yu and the Book of Documents commentaries were primarily those of Kong Anguo that were popular in the south. All of this demonstrates that the compilers of *The Exact Meaning of the Five Classics* represented not the individual compiler’s views, but more importantly, the will of the state. Collective interpretations had already replaced individual understandings, and individual academic approaches had already given way to the political orientations of the state. In this way, these works were actually transmitting the official state ideology. Of particular interest for intellectual history is that the preface to the *Exact Meaning of the Five Classics* not only eliminated the new text-ancient text controversy, but also, and most importantly, transmitted the official message of the court, that is, the court’s criticism of Six Dynasties interpretations of the classics that tended to be individualistic and strove to go beyond traditional textual interpretations.

We are all familiar with a phrase commonly used in the history of interpretations of the classics: “comments should not violate annotations” (shu bu po zhu 疏不破注). It means that later interpretive comments should not overstep the scope and boundaries of the original textual annotations; even less should they violate or refute the interpretations of the earlier scholars. These comments on the meanings by Kong Yingda and his criticisms of commentators from the Jin and Liu Song on repeatedly remind scholars of this point. Styles of scholarship diverged during the North-South Dynasties, and northern and southern forms of knowledge and thought appeared. The differences

between traditional knowledge and new thought left people without a definite standard while it was difficult to establish a basic framework for education. It was, then, necessary to employ this syncretic form of north-south annotation on the classic texts to ameliorate disputes between academic styles and eliminate scholarly divergences in different regions. It was also necessary to employ the rule that “comments should not violate annotations” to provide a general boundary for knowledge and thought. The seventh-century *The Exact Meaning of the Five Classics* employed selected annotated texts to expand the scope of classical knowledge and maintained a protective stand to defend the purity of thought of the classic texts. Its symbolic implication was to confirm and maintain the traditional authority of the classics since the Han and Wei as well as the widened scope of knowledge they had already developed. Within the body of this accepted world of knowledge, individuals had the freedom to comprehend and explicate thought, but the core of classical knowledge and thought were fixed and the boundaries were prescribed.

The *Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories* was completed in 624, the final draft of *The Exact Meaning of the Five Classics* was ready in 642 and the *History of the Sui dynasty* was finished in 656, but these were only a few of the works representing the large-scale integration of knowledge and thought at the time. My use of these texts for analysis should not imply that they were the only texts of this kind available. Indeed there was a great deal of large-scale official compilation going on in the middle of the seventh century. Not only were there compilations of bibliographical works, leishu encyclopedias and commentaries on the classics, there were also many histories such as the various official histories of the North-South Dynasties, private works like the *History of the North and South (Nanbei shi)* and theoretical works like Liu Zhiji’s *Generalities of Historiography (Shitong)*. The important legal work, *The Tang Code with Commentary (Tanglü shuyi)* was also completed in 652. These extremely large compilations present an extensive outline of the

knowledge and thought of the syncretic and normative seventh century.

I have always had a nagging question, though, about the formation of this world of knowledge and thought in the seventh century. After they had produced so much accepted knowledge and thought, would they feel any need for new knowledge and thought? Would they still need such new knowledge and thought to disturb their serenity and sense of satisfaction? These are questions to be answered in volume two of this study. <>

[An Intellectual History of China, Volume Two: Knowledge, Thought, and Belief from the Seventh through the Nineteenth Century](#) by Ge Zhaoguang [[Brill's Humanities in China Library](#), Brill, 9789004367890]

A history of traditional Chinese knowledge, thought and belief from the seventh through the nineteenth centuries with a new approach that offers a new perspective. It appropriates a wide range of source materials and emphasizes the necessity of understanding ideas and thought in their proper historical contexts. Its analytical narrative focuses on the dialectical interaction between historical background and intellectual thought. While discussing the complex dynamics of interaction among the intellectual thought of elite Chinese scholars, their historical conditions, their canonical texts and the “worlds of general knowledge, thought and belief,” it also illuminates the significance of key issues such as the formation of the Chinese world order and its underlying value system, the origins of Chinese cultural identity, foreign influences, and the collapse of the Chinese world order in the 19th century leading toward the revolutionary events of the 20th century.

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Excerpt: China in 1895: The Symbolic Significance of Intellectual History

By April 6, 1895, rumors were already rife about whether or not Taiwan would be ceded to Japan, and this made some scholars extremely agitated. On the 17th when the Treaty of Shimonoseki was finally signed, the feelings of all educated Chinese suddenly changed; they felt as though Heaven had collapsed and the Earth had caved in. At that time, not just a few people but everyone concerned about the fate of China seemed to be overcome by feelings of anger and humiliation. Such feelings of anger and humiliation were something that the Chinese had probably never before felt in several thousand years. Before that time, there were very few among the upper class educated people of China who had given any particular thought to Japan. Their impressions and imagination of that island nation of Emishi (or Ebisu), left them with

feelings of arrogance, haughtiness and disdain. (Emishi or Ebisu was an ethnic group of ancient Japan, related to the Jōmon people and perhaps to the Ainu also; the Chinese name xiayi A literally means "shrimp barbarians.") In the minds of the recent generation of Chinese, it was impossible to mention the "Eastern Ocean" (Dongyang, old name for Japan) in the same breath, or on the same level, with the "Western Ocean" (Xiyang, the old name for the West).

If we say that the Chinese government's attitude toward the West had changed from arrogance to deference, the Chinese people's feelings of arrogance based on a sense of superiority toward Japan had not changed. Calling Japan "Eastern Ocean" and juxtaposing it on the conceptual level in comparison to the "Western Ocean" was probably something that happened much later. At that time, however, Japan was developing feelings of superiority and arrogance toward China, while at the same time maintaining a crisis awareness in a difficult situation being surrounded by Great Powers. Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901)'s essay "Escape from Asia" (Datsu-A ron) would seem to have symbolized a very important shift in the trend of events; it symbolized that Japan's position was moving from uniting with Asia to resist the Western Great Powers to proclaiming itself a hegemon in the East and competing for victory with the West. As a result, in Japan's preparedness and China's unpreparedness the position of strength and weakness between China and Japan was reversed. In the end "their positions on preserving power versus seizing power changed completely."

At that time, the Great Qing Empire that had always considered itself as a Celestial Empire and Great Nation as well as an exporter of culture was really defeated in war by the "Emishi" or "shrimp barbarians" and forced to cede territory and pay reparations to Japan. That their large country was forced to sign a humiliating treaty under the cannon barrels of a small country was very painful to all Chinese. This goes without saying for those who had been continuously calling passionately for reforms, but it even applied to those officials and scholars who are now regarded as "conservatives." Under those circumstances, the change in their feelings is hard for us to imagine today. "Feelings" is only a

term used to describe emotional states, but if "feelings" turn into a mood or state of mind that universally pervades a whole society, they can become a catalyst for rational reflection. Intellectual history has to pay attention to this transformation of feelings into a general mood. It was precisely in such a general mood of anger and pain that even the most conservative of people also hoped for the nation to become strong; only their thinking about self-strengthening was different from that of the radicals.

Shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Lin Shu (1829-1898), the Qing imperial clansman and the leading Academician in the Hanlin Academy, presented Feng Xu (1842-1927)'s essay "Four Beginnings of Self-Strengthening" (Ziqiang siduan) to the emperor. Feng asserted that the emperor should carry out realistic policies, search for talented people, manage state budget expenses, and support the people's livelihood. Although he criticized the radical reformers, his ideas were really not anti-reform, but he said "to resist foreign aggression we must first make ourselves secure; and to manage change we must first stand firm with our basic principles." He hoped first to make the country internally strong and orderly. On June 6, 1895, the Inspector-General of Guangdong, Ma Piyao (?-1895), also memorialized the emperor and put forth ten recommendations. Although he still listed China's own thought and ideology as the first self-strengthening priority, his ideas were already quite enlightened; such as opening up channels of communication, setting up newspapers, and criticizing Qing envoys for not understanding Western learning.' With these general feelings, "self-strengthening" became a consensus among the Chinese people. Even though people had been repeatedly calling for "self-strengthening" for a long time, it was not until 1895 that it became a universal idea and a central term for the court and the general society at every level, regardless of whether it was radical or conservative "self-strengthening."

Interesting enough, the Western Great Powers that were intruding on China also continually offered advice to the Chinese, hoping that China would quickly strengthen itself according to the Western

model. In January 20, 1895, before the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, the missionary Gilbert Reid (1857-1927) called upon the imperial tutor Weng Tonghe (1830-1904), and on February 5, the Baptist missionary Timothy Richard (1845-1919) visited Zhang Zhidong; on February 28, Richard also visited Zhang Yinhuan (1837-1900) to discuss again China's general situation and strategies for reform. After the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, on April 30, 1895 a Western lawyer promoted self-strengthening to the Chinese intellectual class. At the end of October, a British diplomatic envoy, Sir Nicholas Robert O'Conor, candidly pointed out to Prince Gong himself (Grand Prince Yixin, 1833-1898): "Today China is already in extreme peril, and while the various nations of the world are plotting together, China is still sound asleep without waking. Why is this the case?" What was his reason for promoting China's reform and self-strengthening? According to him, it was because British businessmen who had come to China hoped that China would become rich, strong, and free from danger, and those who had not yet come to China also had the same hopes. On October 26, Timothy Richard again talked to Weng Tonghe telling him that the five Great Powers (Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, and the United States) were planning to take Chinese matters into their own hands, and so "Chinese policies to nourish the people must be urgently discussed." The most important of these policies, according to Richard, were educating the people, nourishing the people, pacifying the people and making the people new. What was meant by "make the people new?" Weng Tonghe recorded that Richard said, "making the people new is to reform."

It would seem that both Chinese and foreigners all supported reform for China. What was different, though, was that when the Chinese discussed reform, uppermost in their minds was national self-strengthening in order to resist foreign countries. When Western people advocated the Western way as a form of universalism, they were hoping that after China entered the arena of global politics and economics it would play the game by Western rules. Thus they hoped that the first priority of Chinese reforms would be the

development of railroads, and military training would be secondary. "China should employ Western employees along with the Chinese, and also establish Western academic disciplines."

Just as mentioned above, between 1894 and 1895 (the Sino-Japanese War) very many scholars who were concerned about China's future were beset by the complicated emotional turmoil of dejection and indignation. Compared to the humiliation of the Opium Wars, we can see that this change of feelings was more obvious and extreme. At that time, He Qi (1859-1914) and Hu Liyuan (1874-1916) wrote in their Foundations of New Policies (Xinzheng shiji), that the 1894 Sino-Japanese War forfeited China's sovereignty and humiliated the country, made the twenty-three provinces look like so much meat being cut up on the table, and caused China's four hundred million people to be like prisoners 6 *Ibid.*, 2844 (October 26, 1895). Just as Guo Tingyi pointed out, after 1895 "the reform movement reached its high tide." First came Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong and other intellectuals and their Self-strengthening Society (Qiangxue hui) and their publication Current Affairs (Shiwu bao) that symbolized the intellectual bloc's search for change. Next came the Chinese and foreigners in the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge (Guangxue hui) like Timothy Richard, Young John Allen (1836-1907) and others who also used the Review of the Times (Wanguo gongbao) and translations of Western books to influence society while urging court officials to move toward reform. Finally, there were government officials like Chen Baozhen (1831-1900), Huang Zunxian, Zhang Zhidong and others who also participated in various activities to reform and renew the political system; even important central government officials like Weng Tonghe also supported such political activities. All of this meant that "the court and the society at all levels was moving forward on the same new road." bound up underneath the stairs. Even the feelings of Emperor Guangxu were complex and burdensome. After the humiliating peace settlement and facing a society full of emotional turbulence with popular grievances boiling over, the helpless emperor sent an imperial edict to the Grand Academicians, the

six Ministries (Personnel, Rites, Revenues, Military Affairs, Justice, and Construction), and the nine major high ministers in the six Ministries and the Censorate, the Court of Judicial Review, and the Office of Transmission, as well as to the Hanlin Academy, the Household Administration of the Heir Apparent, and the Supervising Secretaries and Investigation Censors. In it, he complained that the severe reprimands of the people stemmed from their loyal indignation, but, he said, they do not understand "the sadness of this last resort of mine to remedy the situation." He frankly stated that he has already been in this difficult situation, and "day and night I pace up and down, and weep bitter tears before holding court, ... my extremely difficult feelings are something that those who submit memorials do not fully understand, and my officials and subjects throughout the nation should all understand and forgive me."

In the history of Chinese imperial edicts, this was probably a most unusual one. The Son of Heaven, in the Imperial Palace in the Forbidden City with all of his subjects looking hopefully up to him, being able to reveal so frankly his grievances and feelings of being wronged was also a very rare event. That their emperor actually had such feelings of humiliation probably left his Chinese subjects quite astonished or even shocked. The imperial edict's expression of complete helplessness and inability to do anything about the situation unexpectedly stimulated a radical mood among the populace. In this passionate state of mind, common at all levels of society, many people arrived at a kind of consensus. It was just what Emperor Guangxu had written in his edict: "We should all resolutely unite together to completely eradicate those age-old malpractices (problems)."

What, though, really were those "age-old malpractices or problems" that had to be swept away? This question led to the question of how to carry out "self-strengthening." What the emperor saw was a weak military and a declining economy, but he was now only ready to take action at the last minute. Policies like training the military and collecting money represented nothing more than the old "enrich the nation and strengthen the military" (fuguo qiangbing) train of thought. Chinese scholars and bureaucrats had long ago

exhibited such foresight. From 1861 on, since Feng Guifen published his *Protests from Jiaobin Cottage*, many people had repeatedly advocated such tactics. In 1880 (the sixth year of Guangxu's reign) the year after Japan occupied the Ryūkyū Islands, Zheng Guanying (1842-1922) continued the *Important Things to Save the Situation* (Jiushi jiejiao) that he composed in the 1870s and published his *Essays on Change* (Yiyan), an earlier version of *Words of Warning for a Flourishing Era* (Shengshi weiyan); in the same year, Xue Fucheng completed his *Proposals for Reform and National Defense* (Chouyang chuyi). By that time, many people had made such recommendations as clear as they possibly could be made. The problem was that although at the time people had a profound understanding of the crisis they faced, they still had high hopes for China's destiny. On the one hand, they greatly admired the Western ways of becoming rich and powerful, but on the other hand they still had faith in China's moral principles and literary tradition. So they hoped to remedy the situation by means of a form of thinking that was later on called "Chinese knowledge for substance and Western knowledge for function" (zhongxue wei ti xixue wei yong).

In February 1887 Zeng Jize wrote "On China Sleeping First and Awakening Later" (Zhongguo xian shui hou xing lun). Although he used the word "sleeping" in this article, he listed the things that China was doing—purchasing battleships, building artillery batteries, defending its vassal states, resisting foreign enemies, and so on—indicating that he believed China had already awakened. This essay was emblematic of the feelings of intellectuals like Zeng Jize. They believed that with the stimulation from the West, China would very quickly wake up and become a strong and major nation in the world once more.

In less than a decade, by 1895 when the nation was still not rich and the military was still not strong, and Japan had really risen, these feelings of calm and self-confidence had collapsed. People realized that China had actually not woken up. When China genuinely awakened was in the year 1895, a year that caused the Chinese people the most profound feelings of anguish. Just as Liang Qichao wrote in his *Record of the Wuxi (1898) Coup* (Wuxi

zhengbian ji): "Our country began to awaken from its big dreams of four thousand years due to the Sino-Japanese War (jiawu yiyi 1894-95). "10 This kind of waking up seemed more like being startled into wakefulness. Emperor Guangxu's awakening to the truth of the situation symbolized the response of all the Chinese; it was a form of nervous anxiety accompanying the distress of being at a loss as to what to do. This response of nervous anxiety led later on to the appearance of a whole series of radical reform ideas and even of revolutionary thinking.

Thorough reform suddenly became the "consensus" just as radical emotions suddenly became a universal "mood." As mentioned above, under the stimulation of events of 1895, officials who before were obstinately conservative, Westerners who had been pressuring China, common people who did not very well understand China's increasing weakness but who had an intimate personal experience of it, as well as those intellectuals who had always consciously felt they had a mission toward the country ... all of these groups seem to have become "reformers." Furthermore, the trend of this reform was unexpectedly almost unanimously moving toward the West. At that time, many daring ways of thinking began to appear, and doubts about Chinese tradition and criticisms of Chinese history also began to be increasingly intense.

Two concepts in the background of this transformation of thought had become the unquestionable foundations of people's reflections. One was the widespread concept of universalism. Supported by the realistic situation that the weak are prey to the strong, and stimulated by the traditional idea that "the victor becomes a king and the loser becomes a bandit," people believed that the world had to develop in a direction similar to that of the various Western nations, and China was no exception. The other was the concept of distinctive nationalism. People believed that only with nationalism and a powerful state would a nation be able to exist together with the various other nations within the modern world order; and again China was no exception.

As we know, Chinese scholars originally continued to have hope for their tradition, at least as long as they could maintain their national pride. They also hoped to employ the old ways of the former kings to develop new policies for later generations. The idea that "Western learning originated in China"

as well as the slogan "Chinese knowledge for substance and Western knowledge for function" had always supported this hope for Chinese tradition. As the very radical Song Yuren (1857-1931) wrote in his preface to Chen Chi's Book on Common Activities (Yongshu), many people at the time all saw that China needed to change the laws and decrees, control the civil service system, establish schools, and set up a legislative assembly. These were all practical strategies because they saw the crisis right in front of them. But he also said that there are usually two types of political resources, either those that come from the old ways of the former kings or those that derive from foreign countries. That is to say, either those that are found by searching in Chinese history or those that are borrowed from the outside world.

Although he admitted the necessity of studying the West, he also emphasized that "if the governance of foreign domains is superior to the old ways of the former kings, then there is no harm in learning from foreign domains. However, when the old ways of the former kings include the [ways of governing] foreign domains, then [learning from them] would be like forgetting one's ancestors and ancestral traditions, and what is the point of doing that? If learning from foreign domains does not injure the governance of former kings, then there is no harm in it. Hindering the teachings of the sages and forgetting our Chinese roots, how can we do such a thing?"

From 1895 on, though, people started tending to admit, at least in the areas of practical knowledge and technology, that the West was superior to China, and even that Japan was superior to China. China had to reform, and the direction of that reform was to learn from the West, and even to imitate Japan. Li Hongzhang, the man who signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki on behalf of the Qing court, recorded that at the beginning of the negotiations when he saw Itô Hirobumi (1841-1909), he felt quite inferior or uneasy. He

remembered what Hirobumi had told him several years earlier about why China should gradually change and he felt ashamed. He admitted that "our nation should indeed gradually change; only then can it be independent."

If we look back at Chinese history, we can see a profound change of direction. In their reaction to Western civilization from the late Ming to the early Qing most Chinese scholars generally insisted on what Edward A. Kracke called "change within tradition." This was the case from historical discussions by Chinese scholars on how "Western learning originated in China" to Ruan Yuan's *Biographies of Astronomers and Mathematicians* in which he expressed his belief in the great practical importance of astronomy and mathematics and his contempt for Western learning, as well as the attempts of Li Rui (1769-1817), Li Shanlan (1811-1882) and others to surpass Western scholarship in the field of mathematics. It was also true from when Feng Guifen wrote in his *Discussion on Selectively Using Western Learning* (Cai xixue yi) that they should "take China's own teaching about proper human relations and the Confucian ritual code of behavior as our original foundation, and supplement it with the various nations' methods of gaining wealth and power" down to the slogan of "Chinese learning as substance, Western learning for practical application" put forward by Zhang Zhidong and others. After 1895, however, in Chinese feelings about seeking wealth and power, everything seemed to change in the direction of a Western-style "modern" or "modernity" that is toward "change beyond tradition."

Many people began to abandon the old traditional learning and move toward the search for Western learning. Take for example Song Yuren. He was always on guard against Westerners "talking about Heaven," "practicing medicine," and "discussing the principles of things [that is, physics]." He said that they "want to use their teachings to turn ours upside down." Although he angrily criticized his fellow Chinese for "thinking highly of Westerners," in his *On Adopting the Customs of Western Nations* (Caifeng ji), he wrote a great deal about Great Britain's education, methods of selecting talents (i.e., choosing officials), parliament, government, prisons, currency system, and military,

and he recommended adopting the Western political system. Another example is Tang Caichang (1867-1900). After the Sino-Japanese War, he turned even more sincerely toward the West. Ten out of eleven essays in the *Record of Selected Essays on General Arts from the Civil Examinations in Hunan* (Yuan Xiang tongyi lu, edited by Jiang Biao), completely employ Western standards to discuss Chinese issues. Even though he did not know Western languages and had not been to the West, he still did his best to absorb various sorts of Western knowledge from translated books and works recommended to him, such as the *Historical Record of the Myriad Nations* (Wanguo shiji), *Survey of the Recent History of the West* (Taixi xinshi lanyao), *National Gazette of Great Britain* (Da Yingguo zhi), *Review of the Times* (Wanguo gongbao), and the *Chinese Scientific Magazine* (Gezhi huibian). This seems to have become a common practice at that time.

Of course the "New Policies" (xinzheng) were most influential at this time. In May of 1895, Kang Youwei sent his third memorial up to Emperor Guangxu to be followed soon by memorials sent up by over a thousand scholars urging Guangxu not to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki. In August, the Self-strengthening Society (Qiangxue hui) was established, and in December twelve imperial edicts concerning "New Policies" were drafted and sent out. The roots of the later Hundred Days Reform (wuxu bianfa) of 1898 were put down that year, and Chinese thinking unconsciously moved toward the West. As an example, even the democratic forms such as the Western promotion of assemblies and the importance placed on public opinion were also regarded as key principles to be respectfully introduced into China. We know that from ancient times, from the village schools in the Spring and Autumn era to the Imperial University in the Song dynasty, there were places in China for scholar-officials to discuss and criticize politics or policies. However, these did not actually become a tradition of democracy; whether in the village schools or the Imperial University, the scholar-officials only hoped to "send up information for the Son of Heaven to hear." The final key to resolving social problems still remained with the emperor, and so discussing policies at court was really the

only effective thing to do. In 1895, however, people were already beginning to realize that "to bring the people together, we must hold assemblies," and these assemblies had to be held in the capital in order to have the effect of "shouting out from high places." This already amounted to transforming the goals and ideals of "collective striving" into establishing common practices and initiating knowledge; the common practices established, however, were Western practices and the knowledge initiated was Western knowledge.

Researchers have all taken note of the fact that after 1895 with the emergence of new media, new-style schools (xuetang), new scholarly associations, and new newspapers and periodicals, "in this age of transformation, Western culture experienced unprecedented proliferation" and Western knowledge and thought, with the support of these new mediums, was also disseminated with unprecedented rapidity. If we say that before 1895 Chinese scholars, especially major Confucians and even scholar-officials on the eastern seacoast still had "a kind of general contempt" toward Western learning, and "ordinary scholar-officials were still extremely closed-minded, after 1895, however, this situation underwent an enormous change." We can take Hi Qi and Hu Liyuan's "Suggestions for New Policies" (Xinzheng lunyi) as evidence of this change. In this essay, written between 1894 and 1895, they said that "we must exert ourselves to reform, and government decrees should follow the new [policies]." According to them, these reforms should not only include building railroads, increasing shipping, reordering the census, and setting up daily newspapers; they should also include political reforms like schools, elections, legislative assemblies, and so on. They even suggested a kind of compromise system of monarchical democracy (junzhuzhi de minzhu zhidu).

In passing we can mention here that in order to introduce new knowledge faster, people at that time thought of a shortcut. That was to introduce Western learning by means of Japanese translations. Since Japan had already rapidly advanced and China could not match Japan, this method of gaining Western knowledge was adopted by most Chinese who were impatient for success. That the Chinese who still harbored deep

feelings of humiliation about being defeated in war by Japan could actually very quickly accept Japan as their teacher was quite an unusual phenomenon; it was also an expression of the tension and anxiety that Chinese people felt at the time. Under attack then by both Japan and the West, the Chinese intellectual world began more and more urgently to travel along a road from which there would be no return.

Zhang Hao once pointed out that very many forms of thought produced since 1895 "had an intensely strong collective consciousness and hoped to liberate China from its present crisis. They looked forward to a future China and sought a road toward their goal." This consciousness was expressed in a tripartite structure—an awareness of crisis, looking forward toward a goal, and channels to accomplish their goal. With a crisis awareness of facing national and ethnic destruction and subjugation, they focused the goal they were looking forward to on learning from the West and made radical political reform their channel for accomplishing their goal. This fundamental change began from 1895, and was already obviously expressed by Kang Youwei and others like him. In the mood of that time, everything was changing and everyone was searching for the new. By 1898, the year of the Hundred Days Reform, Fan Zhui (1872-1906) published an essay entitled "On Sincerity" (Kaicheng pian) in the Hunan Daily (Xiangbao) and for the first time put forth the theory of total Westernization. In the same year, Yi Nai (1874-1925) also published "China Should Regard Its Weakness As Strength" (Zhongguo yi yi ruo wei qiang shuo) in the same paper. He hoped that China could stand up resolutely and independently in the world, and if we want to be treated equally in international meetings, we must change the dynasty (dynastic system), change the color of our clothes, in all cases follow the Western system, join international society, and respect the laws of the all the myriad nations.

We should take note of the fact that behind this major tendency to turn toward the West and subsequent internationalism there was also concealed a deep undercurrent of nationalism.

When a people with a very long history faces a crisis involving internal troubles and external aggression, some people will often ponder the question of how to preserve their "traditions" under the conditions of so-called "modernity." That is because what is meant here by traditions are not merely some historical remains, popular customs or national (ethnic, minzu) ideas, but traditions also refer to the foundations for the survival of this historically long-lived people. To preserve or to abandon these traditions is extremely important for this people.

Generally speaking, whether or not a tradition, or traditions, are able to be continued ultimately depends on the following four factors. First is the possession of a territory for collective living; a people that loses its homeland will often find it difficult to preserve its tradition. In order for a people condemned to "wander" to survive, their tradition will often be engulfed by an alien civilization. Second is a common belief system. A people that loses their common belief system will have lost a strong force for maintaining their cohesion. Despite the fact that freedom is something that everyone needs, as soon as the common orientation of their value system is lost, an individual in a society will come to feel exceptionally lonely and isolated. Third is a common language. Using a common language is an important foundation of mutual identity. No matter where people are, their language is like an identity badge and the local accent of their native place is like a safe conduct pass; it is often an important factor in making people who use the same language obtain a sense of security and closeness. A group of people who has lost its common language is no longer a nation (people, minzu), and so "loss of language" often signifies the collapse of a tradition. Fourth is a collective historical memory. Historical memory is stored up deep in each individual's mind; different historical memories define different historical roots; when people bring them to light from deep in their minds it is called "seeking for one's roots" (xungen). This is probably the meaning of Cao Zhi (192-232)'s well-known line "we were originally born from the same roots" (Ben shi tong gen sheng), and thus "seeking for

one's roots" is an extremely important way to reestablish one's identity.

At the end of the nineteenth century, especially after 1895, after China had received such an extreme shock, the Chinese suddenly lost faith in their tradition. Although they still lived in a common territory and still had a common language, their common beliefs began to be shaken and undermined by the new Western knowledge while their common collective historical memory also seemed to be gradually disappearing. All of this caused people to worry about whether or not the confidence of the people (minzu) and the nation (guojia) had been lost. Before the Treaty of Shimonoseki had been signed, Zhang Peilun (1848-1903) wrote in sorrow to a friend that "if we bow down to the Japs at this time, and the Westerners swarm in, China will have nowhere to stand." After the treaty was signed, Tang Caichang said even more painfully that "this treaty that we have agreed to does not make peace with the Japs, it simply surrenders to them. Treasonous officials have sold out the nation, something that has never happened before in ancient or modern times." The self-evident context behind all of these doleful expressions was the people (nation, minzu) and the country (state, guojia). Behind the often used slogan of "protect the state, protect the race, protect the faith" (baoguo, baozhong, baojiao) was a profound feeling of suffering and sorrow. Later on, this sorrow, apprehension, despondency, and stress seem to have increased day by day.

The memorials sent up to Emperor Guangxu by Kang Youwei and over a thousand scholars (the "Public Vehicle Petition" gongche shangshu) were the most concentrated expression of the anxiety and nervous tension that accompanied their feelings of helplessness. Their demands that the emperor encourage "All under Heaven," hand down an imperial edict taking the blame on himself, expunge the national humiliation, support the sacred teachings of the sages, and eradicate heresies would seem to have been promoting internationalism and making China enter a universal modernity. The identification of the people or nation (guozu rentong) and the revitalization of tradition embodied in their memorials, however, with the support of the most radical emotions,

simply stimulated the most radically nationalist sense of crisis awareness. Some people had already seen these most deep-seated latent concerns. In his *On Adopting the Customs of Western Nations*, Song Yuren expressed the view that if the influence of Western learning and Western faiths expanded, they would certainly shake the foundations of Chinese tradition and undermine the Chinese cosmology and system of values.

It should be pointed out that modern Chinese nationalism is an extremely complex phenomenon. Usually in dealing with an alien civilization, a nation that has a traditional civilization with a very long history will have two different kinds of response. One is to adopt an attitude of universalism and to welcome the other civilization's seemingly unquestionable knowledge, thought and technology in order to merge into the world. The other one is to adopt an attitude of exceptionalism and to reject the alien things that might undermine and weaken the native knowledge, thought and beliefs while stirring up radical nationalism and conservatism. In the minds of Chinese intellectuals, however, it was not a simple case of either nationalism or internationalism.

Even though the challenges of the West stirred up nationalistic passions and anxiety about the survival of the nation or people (*minzu*), yet in the background of modern Chinese nationalism, surprisingly enough, we can see an extremely unusual form of internationalism. There were, of course, historical reasons for this internationalism because in the traditional Chinese imagination of the world, there always existed a consciousness that "All under Heaven is one family" (*tianxia yi jia*) and a concept of universal truth in which everywhere everyone had the "same mind and [the] same principle" (*xintong litong*). After the nineteenth century, of course, the "tribute system" with China as suzerain, and traditional ideas about "All under Heaven" were undermined and gradually disappeared. Not only did the Western powers begin to enter China after the Opium Wars, but even the various peripheral states that seemed to revolve around China also began to

move away; the geopolitical picture of the world had been transformed. The unusual thing was, however, that no matter how much "All under Heaven" had already become the "myriad nations," for the Chinese intellectual world, the consciousness of "All under Heaven is one family" and the concept of "same mind and same principle" still brought about a very complicated orientation when the Chinese faced the world. The Chinese adopted an internationalist interpretation of truth and value, but this gave rise to mixed feelings of love and hate toward "the West" while at the same time bringing about a form of antitraditional nationalism.

Lin Yusheng raised the concept of "iconoclastic nationalism" (*fanchuantong de minzu zhuyi*) in a dialogue with Benjamin Schwartz. This kind of thinking would seem to be in contrast to protecting the classic texts and fundamentalist nationalism. It looks like it is radically renouncing (*tianze*) further increased the nervous anxiety of those late nineteenth-century Chinese who were living in such a hard to discuss state of mind. The sentence near the end of the book stating that "the study of evolution will in the future become an unshakable model for everyone who talks about ruling or governance" seems to have been a prophetic omen of twentieth-century Chinese intellectual history. <>

[Here in 'china' I Dwell: Reconstructing Historical Discourses of China for Our Time](#) by Ge Zhaoguang, translated by Jesse Field, Qin Fang [[Brill's Humanities in China Library](#), Brill, 9789004279971]

[Here in 'China' I Dwell](#) is a historiographical account of the formation of Chinese historical narratives in light of outside pressures on China--the view from China's borders. There is a special discussion of the influence of Japanese historians on the concept of China and its borders, including the nature of their sources, cultural and religious and more. In Ge's comparative account, a new portrait of Chinese historical narratives, along with the views and assumptions implicit in these narratives, emerges in the context of East Asia, a similarly constructed concept with its own multitudes of frontiers and peoples.

"[Here in 'China' I Dwell](#) should be very useful to experts in Chinese history as well as all college levels of students and the leisure reader, who is interested in studying Chinese academic history." Augustine Adu-Frimpong, Southern University and A&M College, African and Asian Studies, 16.2 (2017)

"In [Here in "China" I Dwell](#), Ge Zhaoguang [offers] a historiographical account of the formation of Chinese historical narratives in light of China's interaction with the outside world. [...] the translators have made intelligible an astonishing array of texts from Chinese history, while conveying Ge's self-reflexive engagement with Chinese, Japanese, European, and North American scholarship on China and Asian history." Lin Hang, Hangzhou Normal University (*Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studies*, 66:1)

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Excerpt: *Between Nation and History: Starting from the Japanese: Debates on the Relationship between Chinese Daoism, Japanese Shintō and the Tennō System: Small Questions Lead to Bigger Questions*

Was Japanese Shintōism ever influenced by Daoism from ancient China? Was the ancient Japanese term “Tennō” ever influenced by the culture of ancient Chinese Daoism? What are the similarities and differences between Chinese Daoism and Japanese Shintōism? This ought to be a question for the field of cultural interaction, and an easily articulated one at that. The discussion ought to seek out evidence beginning from classical documents and archaeological materials, and then become more detailed from there. There is a complexity to simple historical questions in that they often bring up important views and positions that have been hard to resolve, because all historical evidence is interpreted by human beings from divergent positions. Thus, simple historical questions can raise complex questions of position, and the interpretation of historical evidence may differ depending on the person and time. This chapter is no exception, for the questions it addresses are: First, does the fact that this question about the history of cultural interaction with China could inspire such intense debate in Japanese academia—a debate that lasted over 80 years—show that there are very real and present political elements behind a question which is historical and academic in nature? Second, when historians from different countries have such vastly different evaluations of the same historical phenomena, clearly underlying these are different positions, feelings, and mindsets at work. In that case, should “China studies” in Japan be considered first and foremost “Japan studies”? Third, in facing these questions of cultural interaction, can Chinese academia ever understand and sympathize with Japanese academia, and reconsider its own academic history, for a deeper understanding of the national and international dimensions of academic research?

A Debate between Two Japanese Scholars

To address the topic of Chinese Daoism, Japanese Shintōism and the Tennō system, it makes sense to begin with the events of the 1980s known as the “Debates of the two Fus,” referring here to Fukunaga Mitsuji and Fukui Fumimasa. In March, 1982, Tokyo University Daoism scholar Professor Fukunaga Mitsuji published *Daoism and Japanese Culture*, a small book containing 17 research articles, the first of which was “Ancient Japanese History and Chinese Daoism.” However, it was the subtitle that was provocative: “Focusing on the thought and beliefs of Tennō.” The second article’s title was similarly dead-pan: “Ancient Japanese Shintō and Chinese religious thought.” In this piece, he criticizes Japanese scholars for consistently denying the influence of Chinese Daoism and always claiming Shintōism as a native Japanese product. At the same time, he follows up on work by the great Japanese scholar Tsuda Sōkichi in suggesting that the extremely sensitive term “Tennō” is in fact a term from Chinese Daoism. This is a stark challenge to traditional statements from the Japanese classics *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* with their myths of Tennō “going back ten thousand generations.” This was, just like it said on the cover of his other work, *Daoism and Ancient Japan*, to be seen as “changing the face of ancient Japanese history.”

What does it mean to change the face of ancient Japanese history? We all know that ever since the Japanese scholar Nishijima Sadao suggested that China’s influence on Japan fell into four major fields (Chinese characters, Confucianism, politics and law, and Buddhism), Japanese academia for the most part acknowledged that these “Chinese elements” existed in Japan. But, traditional Japanese academia still held two unshakeable views regarding the main body of Japanese culture in ancient history. One was that Japanese culture was an independent culture, with what Maruyama Masao has called an eternally unchanging “ancient layer.” This was the root of the main body of the culture of the Japanese nation. Another was the mythical history of the Tennō. Despite the discoveries of the golden seal of the “Han Japanese king” and the wall paintings of the Era of

Great Tombs on Kyushu Island, the world of traditional Japanese views still generally held that the Tennō was unchanging. The Tennō was a purely Japanese product: including the system itself, associated terms, and the genealogy of the sacred royal family. These points were nearly unshakeable in the field of ancient Japanese history, because any hint of skepticism would always lead to such results—had Japan been under the thrall of Chinese culture before Ono no Imoko went as envoy to the Sui empire and with status equal to the Chinese emperor (“Son of the Heaven where the sun rises, to the Son of Heaven where the sun sets”). In other words, before Japan had established its own sacred and independent country and its own culture, was it always imitating Chinese culture?

Here, it seems, are the beginnings of a complex entangling of academic research, and national sentiment, historical questions and the position of the nation, and the objective and the subjective. So it was that the year Fukunaga Mitsuji published his book, it was the subject of intense skepticism for Fukui Fumimasa, a professor and well-known scholar of Daoism at Waseda University. He reviewed the book in Issue 60 of Japan’s most important journal for Daoism studies, *Tōhō shūkyō* (The journal of oriental religions), where he indirectly criticized Fukunaga Mitsuji for having an unclear definition of “Daoism,” while pointing out that Fukunaga Mitsuji had not used any of the studies by Tsuda Sōkichi or other Japanese scholars and their findings on the Tennō question. The following year (1983) Fukunaga Mitsuji replied to Fukui Fumimasa’s criticism in issue 61 of The Journal of Oriental Religions with an article entitled “Doctor Tsuda Sōkichi and Daoism,” where he directly brought up the research of Tsuda Sōkichi. In this way, the Daoism and Shintō question implicated the terms and systems of Tennō.

Tsuda Sōkichi and His Evaluations Regarding Chinese Daoism

Who was this person Tsuda Sōkichi that Fukunaga and Fukui both mention? To answer this question, we must go back 80 years.

Tsuda Sōkichi (1873 –1961) is famous in Japan, where he was once called “the greatest

Orientalist.” His research fields cut a wide swath across Japanese and Chinese history, culture and religion. From 1913 to 1938, his major works in order of publication were *The Verification of the Tennō*, *A Study of the Jindai Era*, *A Study of the Kojiki and the Nihon Shoki*, *Daoist Thought and Its Unfolding*, and *A Study of Japan’s Joudai Era*. As the protégé of Shiratori Kurakichi, he and Shiratori alike evince the condescension towards China typical in Japanese cultural circles following the success of the Meiji restoration, which is expressive of a fervent desire for Japan to escape from the thrall of Chinese history and culture. His works are both deeply influenced by European historical studies in their pursuit of objectivity and scientific method, and exhibit intense passion for a Japan-centered ideological position, with a historiography inseparable from Great Japanism. Among his many views, an important one is that Japanese history and culture developed independently, and not under the influence of Chinese culture. In his book *Chinese Thought and Japan*, he says more than once, “Japan and China have their separate histories, different cultures and different worlds,” and “Japanese culture is independently formed as the history of the Japanese nation independently develops. It is thus completely different from Chinese culture.”

Tsuda believed that although Japanese intellectuals of the past looked up and studied the Chinese classics, and even established their own beliefs using these, the real world that had originated in Japan was utterly at odds with classical writings from China. So, although the Japanese had drawn on Daoism so deeply that even terms like “Shintō” came from Daoism, this constituted no more than a simple appropriation of a term—it would never be able to exert influence on or become a belief in the context of the Japanese life worlds. In other words, even if they had transmitted some knowledge, the religious tradition constituting Daoism was not transmuted, so Japanese Shintō and Chinese Daoism did not have any substantial commonality. Similarly, regarding the ancient Japanese term “Tennō,” despite its former use in such places as an idiom from the texts like “The Pillow Book,” the term is bereft of any real Chinese content. It was no more significant, Tsuda argued, than the outsized

emphasis both cultures put on the “north star” constellation. And so, he argued, there is no concern about the use of the term “Tennō.” As for the story of the origin of the world in the *Nihon Shoki*, despite its use of the Chinese-style terms of “dividing the earth from the heavens,” it merely reflected the borrowing of Chinese characters, and although the terms were similar, there was no context of Chinese religious significance behind such terms. As he emphasized over and over again, from the sixth to the eighth centuries, educated and literate Japanese were influenced by Chinese documents, and often ‘Sinicized’

Japanese history, legends and stories. Gradually, Japanese documents began to exhibit an intellectual stance influenced by China, quite distinct from the deeper layers of Japanese popular thought. Moreover, “Chinese thought” inherent in these documents acquired new, native Japanese meanings and exhibited “Japanification,” which meant they could not be considered “Chinese made.” In sum, Tsuda Sōkichi emphasized that Japanese culture had its own subjectivity (*zhutixing*), and Chinese culture, including Daoism, had indeed reached Japan, leaving deep impressions on Japan, but these were only the “borrowing” of the writing system and documents, and not an “influence” of a basic nature.

According to Fukunaga, Tsuda was an Orientalist who had come of age in the Meiji era. As self-aggrandizing as he was since the success of the restoration, he gave a very low evaluation of Chinese culture, including Daoism. For example, Tsuda’s book, *Chinese thought and Japan* is filled with condescension and insult. He often says, “Chinese people do not like to think, or else are not good at thinking;” “They lack the mindset to investigate things fully, their sentiments slow and dull;” “a major feature of Chinese thought is that it is illogical;” “with an undeveloped culture of science, spiritual excellence is all the more impossible.” As for Daoism, he said, “In essence, it is a set of popular beliefs in China, mostly prayers and incantations seeking longevity and wealth, as well as faith in doctrines delivered by possibly immortal fairies and spirits—a shallow body of thought not worth considering.” This unfair verdict on Daoist studies would influence later Japanese

studies of Kwantung Leased Territory and even all Japanese scholars of ancient history. But to a scholar like Fukunaga, who had come of age after the World War II and possessed all the memory and experience of a native of Sapporo, Tsuda Sōkichi’s conclusions were not necessarily correct, because the people of Sapporo believed in kitchen gods, and also prayed to spirits to end drought, and scooped up water with bamboo in front of altars to pray for rain, and also written prayers for calling on the god of Heaven on the Double Seven Festival. Clearly, Chinese customs, including Chinese religion, had long been present in Japan. He suspected that Tsuda only spurned China as he did because it was the early times of the Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa, during which Japan took dimmer and dimmer views of China, and Tsuda wanted to emphasize the excellence and independence of Japanese people and Japanese culture. He said that his discussion of the cultural differences between Japan and China drew as much as possible on the unity of Asia’s position found in Okakura Tenshin’s *The Ideals of the East*. He criticized Tsuda for misleading in two ways: First, falsely reifying Chinese society, culture, and thought; and second, overlooking Daoist documents and thought from after the fourth century. Therefore, Tsuda dismissed all too lightly Daoism and its influence on Japanese culture, reaching instead a mistaken conclusion.

However, Fukunaga’s explanation was attacked by Fukui again. In a review published in issue 62 of the *Journal of Oriental Religions*, Fukui said that Fukunaga did not understand Tsuda Sōkichi in the least. He felt it was incorrect of Fukunaga to say that Tsuda looked down on Chinese people and culture. Recalling Tsuda writing that “The study of China requires the understanding of sympathy, without which one will be unable to fully explore the true thought and lives,” Fukui held that Tsuda only meant to criticize those who worshipped the whole of Chinese culture, such as those Confucians who worshipped and followed the Confucian classics. He also believed that Tsuda did not spurn Daoism as Fukunaga said, or else he would not have composed works like *Daoist Thought and Its Unfolding* and *A Study of the Thought Regarding Immortals*. He was especially skeptical of

Fukanaga's estimation of Tsuda's mindset, believing that when it came to a scholar's past work on foreign cultures, one must not focus on criticizing their sentiments as respectful or condescending, but instead evaluate whether their research findings were accurate or not. A critique of their attitudes was a job for amateurs, not professional scholars. He mocked Fukanaga for shifting the question from whether Tsuda's research was accurate to whether Tsuda's positions were accurate, creating a kind of "fallacy."

On the question of the relationship between Daoism and Japanese culture, whether it be a matter of substantial "influence" on Japan or rather merely a matter of "borrowing" knowledge of writing and documents, Fukui held that Fukanaga's work had only bolstered Tsuda's findings, and not refuted them. Fukanaga's valuable experiences as a Sapporo native notwithstanding, no individual phenomena could be seen as the general "real life of the Japanese people."

Tsuda Sōkichi's Dilemma: Influence or Borrowing?

So, do we find Tsuda Sōkichi's verdict on Chinese culture and Japanese culture a reasonable one or not? Let us return to Tsuda's time and take a look at the academic context of that time. The issue of whether Chinese culture and especially Chinese Daoism exerted "influence" or was only a source for "borrowing" for Japanese Shintō and the term Tennō is inseparable from the academic context of the day. Instead we should put them back to Japanese political history and cultural history for this era.

We know that the history of Japan in its mythological age relies on the texts *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. Specialists in Japanese national studies have long taken this history to have important points: First, the gods' granting of the Tennō, second, the eternal continuity of the imperial throne, third, the sacred nature of the imperial throne and its relationship with the sacredness of Japanese Shintōism; indeed, legitimacy, reason and sacredness all come from this history. This view of history was consistently strengthened in post-Meiji Japan, with nationalism and national consciousness both being on the rise.

The "Tennō" was made sacred and "Shintō" became the object of worship as part of the effort to establish a unified, independent and strong nation-state. Meiji Japan's return to the Tennō system, with its separation between Shintō and Buddhism, are products of these currents. The first and second articles of the *Dai Nippon Teikoku Kenpō* (Constitution of the Great Japanese Empire), first drafted in 1882 and formally promulgated in 1889, affirm the eternal Tennō as the head of the great Japanese empire, and the emperor was said to possess inviolable sacredness.²⁷⁹ In the "National history textbook," popular at the time and used until the World War II, the first chapter on the earliest ancient history is on the "Origins of the empire and the royal family imperial chambers," covering from the Amaterasu to Tenson Kōrin; the second chapter involves Jimmu Tennō; and the third chapter tells of Sujin Tennō and Suinin Tennō. The histories of Shintō and the Tennō form here a sacred genealogy that supports the sentiments behind "Great Japanism."

However, although Tsuda Sōkichi held nationalist sentiments, he was still a historian whose work was based on reason. When he was researching the Japanese past, he faced an embarrassing problem. He was unwilling to admit that Japanese culture had been influenced by Chinese culture. As stated above, he criticized Chinese culture and religion, and carefully cut away any sense of substantial relation between Chinese culture, including Daoism, and Japanese culture. But he could not ignore the evidence of history and of written documents to speak of ancient Japanese history as a self-formed mythological genealogy with a system all its own. Thus, even though he kept Japan and China separate, raised the independence of Japanese culture, denied the influence of Chinese culture, and sought to completely remove the "stink" of China from Japan, he still had no recourse but to seek objectivity in historical research, pointing out how Ōjin Tennō and Nintoku Tennō had been "created" via gradual accumulation, layer by layer, leaving unreliable evidence for many eras. Some of the emperors, for example, had lived an unbelievably long life. *Kojiki* entries from Nintoku Tennō to Yūryaku Tennō are quite similar to entries in the "Wo guo zhuan" (History of Japan)

chapter of the Song shu (History of the Song dynasty), meaning they were possibly a case of Chinese stories heresay (chuanshuo), transmitted in reverse to become Japanese history. And, he agreed with research by Matsumoto Nobuhiro holding that the more recent history of the eastern expedition of Jimmu Tennō was a later construction. Most importantly, he suggested that the history of the Jindai Era was elaborately forged during a time of nation-building for proving and explaining the legitimacy of the nation in history and in thought. It was a historical narrative that legitimized power.

What is of interest here is that when Tsuda published this work in the 1920s and 1930s, he ran into trouble in Japan in the 1930s. In those days, Japan had gradually fallen into a rapacious mood with a fantasy vision of a war in greater East Asia. The Marco Polo Bridge Incident took place on July 7, 1937, bringing war to north China, and on August 2, Shintō, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Catholicism in Japan were brought together into an “Alliance for Spiritually Repaying the Country.” On August 17, the director of the Japanese Bureau of Religious Affairs called on all of the religions to rise up for advancing the spirit of the nation, spurring each religion to hold “Repay the Country meetings,” and organizing ‘comfort support’ for the Japanese imperial army. On March 30, 1938, representatives from the Ministry of Culture and the three religions of Shintō, Confucianism, and Buddhism along with the Central Association for National Spiritual Mobilization signed an agreement to propagate their teachings in China. On March 15, 1939, all of Japan’s Shōkonsha shrines were made into Gokoku Shrine (protect-the-nation shrines) with the exception of Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. In this atmosphere of uniting nation (minzu), country (guojia), the Tennō, and Shintōism, and the fantasy of putting Japan at the center of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, the Japanese rightists struck back against Tsuda’s research. People like Minoda Muneki said that Tsuda had shown great insubordination (dani budao) to the Tennō and to Shintō, charging Tsuda with “the crime of disrespect.” Under massive political pressure, in January 1940, Tsuda resigned from Waseda University. In February of that year,

his works, including A Study of the Kojiki and the Nihon Shoki were banned, and even Iwanami Shigeo, the publisher and the owner of Iwanami Book Store, were together charged, and in 1942, the Tokyo District Court judged him guilty.

Every nation writes its history for self-affirmation and self-respect: “to prove the nation is great, it is often necessary to prove a long history.” This is a matter of course. But does the narration of the past rely only on legends and heresay? Must we believe myths to have memories of the past? Is history no more than a tool? Historians always declare that history is like science, and when scientific history faces the past, it must remove imperfections the way a surgeon wields a laser, but without creating stories whole-cloth out of emotions of love or hatred. Between building identification affirmation and pursuit of the truth, between the needs of the nation and the facts of history, where do historians begin and where are they headed? In those days, they had no choice, and as the fate of Tsuda illustrates, academia is often bound up with politics, and sometimes historical narrative is like evidence planted on the scene after the fact.

Ancient Layer after Ancient Layer: Regarding Shintō and the Tennō

So how should we actually understand the relationship between Shintō, the imperial system and Chinese Daoism?

Japanese scholar Fumihiko Sueki suggests in the opening of his book, The History of Japanese Religions, that Maruyama Masao’s theory of “ancient layers” begs the question: Where do the “ancient layers” come from? He points out that Maruyama Masao’s Ancient Layers of Historical Consciousness opens chapters with narrations from the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki, isolating three words: naru (to become), tsuki (to continue, to extend), and ikihohi (great power). He also makes use of elements of Japanese geographical space, ethnic groups (zuqun), languages, and rice-planting culture (dao zuo) to serve as “sustained whispers” and “ancient layers since the Era of Great Tombs.” But, asks Fumihiko Sueki, is it not inappropriate to see these “ancient layers” as “unchanging,” since the “ancient layers” are built up gradually? I think this is correct. Japan often extols the long history of

the Emperor and of Shintōism, but they actually formed gradually in history: beneath one “ancient layer” lies yet another.

First, consider Shintōism. Historian Kume Kunitake, influenced by western scientific views of ancient history, had suggested as early as 1891, during the Meiji era, that “Shintōism” had evolved from ancient customs involving sacrifices to the heavens. It was not a religion, and it did not contain the thought of “seducing the benevolence and benefiting the living.” It was only a sacrifice to Heaven, an act for warding off disaster and seeking good fortune. This made it compatible with Buddhism, forming the basis for the dynastic dictum to “respect the spirits and worship the Buddha.” There is a basis for this. If we trace back historical documents, we find that the Nippon Shoki passages on “records made before the enthronement of Yōmei Tennō ” or “records made before the enthronement of Kotoku Tennō” bring up the “law/order/way of the Buddha” (Fofa) as corresponding to “Shintō” (the way of the spirits), as in the line “the Heavenly Emperor (Tennō) believes in the law of the Buddha and respects the Shintō” and “respect the law of the Buddha and place a light emphasis on the Shintō.” But Tsuda Sō kichi believed that the word “Shintō” did come from China, even if it was not an organized religion like Buddhism. “Shintō” had also meant more than one thing in Japan.

Kuroda Toshio, a slightly later scholar, averred that “Shintō” in the Nippon Shoki, referred to “[a state] of deism, of the sacred” in popular practice, but it was certainly not unique to Japan, but rather a conventional belief common to all three countries of East Asia. The final establishment of the Shintō religion took place during the Edo period or even as late as the Meiji period.

This statement was shocking, but it received widespread support from scholars, including from Europe and the us. Some scholars suggested that Shintō was a mixture of shamanism, mythology, ritualistic ceremony, and a system of taboos, maturing with the addition of official systematization. Not until the Middle Ages of Japanese history, following the need for legitimization of the imperial system, do we see the

appearance of the 14th century text Watarai Ieyuki’s (1256–1341) Ruijū jingi hongon (Classified traditions concerning the genesis of Shintō deities) as well as Jihen’s “Shintō taii” (Profound significance of Shintō) found in his magnum opus on Shinto, the Toyoashihara shinpū waki. The appearance of “Yuiitsu shintō myō hō yōshū ” (The teachings of the one and the only Shintō) by Yoshida Kanetomo at the end of the 15th century brought forth new distinctions between Shintō and Buddhism. Only after establishing a sense of itself as an organization with followers did the doctrines and rules of Shintōism begin to systematize. At the same time, it grew richer and more diverse, prominently featuring shrines and authoritative rituals, orthodox genealogies of official gods, and the sacredness of Nature and the Tennō. And, thus did systematic Shintōism gradually take form. But this was the end of the Japanese Middle Ages.

Next, consider the “Tennō.” Long investigations had led Japanese scholars to the discovery that the title of “Tennō” established in the Nihon Shoki in 720 did occur in other, earlier, texts, including several temple inscriptions, such as the two at Gangō -ji pagoda and one at Hōryū -ji. In the imperial document brought by Ono no Imoko in his 608 trip to the Sui court, scholars believed there was already a formal “eastern Heavenly Emperor paying respects to the White Western Emperor” (Though in the “Biography of the Eastern Barbarians” found in the Sui Shu (History of the Sui), it was recorded as “the Son of Heaven where the sun rises to the Son of Heaven where the sun sets”). Since Chinese culture had entered Japan long before the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries, it is difficult to claim that the term “Heavenly emperor” bears no trace of China. Thus it was that Tsuda, in his 1920 article “Investigation of the term ‘Tennō’,” also said that this term came from Chinese Daoism and the Chinese classics,²⁹³ though he believed it was no more than a “borrowing” from Chinese vocabulary.

But, just as Kuroda Toshio said—whether we speak of Shintō or Tennō , the former a religion forming the foundation of Japanese culture, the latter a symbol of the Japanese government—protecting the self-mastery and independence of the historical

origins of these terms was “for the Japanese, unavoidable, not optional, requiring acceptance of latent, deeply-layered forces and values.”

Chinese Influence: New Views in Japanese Academia

In historical or documentary terms, then, do the Tennō and the Shintō religion after all exhibit elements, or even influence, from China?

Although many Japanese scholars do not wish to acknowledge Chinese influence out of nationalist self-regard, others who favor a more objective approach to historical research have examined documents from China and Japan and found ample proof illustrating that Chinese Daoism had a profound influence on Japanese culture (and this was not a matter of mere ‘borrowing’).

The scholars of an earlier generation who have dealt with this topic include: Kuroita Katsumi, best known for his *Daoist Thought and Daoism in Ancient Japanese History*, which discusses traces of Daoism found in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki*, and in archaeological remains; Tsumaki Chokuryō who wrote *Daoist Thought in Japan*, which discusses the transmission of Daoist classics like the *Laozi huahu jing* (*Book of Laozi’s Conversion of Barbarians*) to Japan; and, Oyanagi Shigeta, author of *The Essence of Daoism and Its Influence on Our Country*. To these scholars, especially China scholars whose focus was to study China, it became clear that ancient Chinese Daoism had deep value and significance for the formation of Japanese cultural identity; and, therefore, they made a special effort to unearth a variety of historical material to establish the traces of Daoism in Japan. Naba Toshisada’s long article from 1952, “Regarding the Transmission of Daoism to Japan,” for example, suggests that Daoist thought was probably transmitted to Japan by Chinese emigrants. Later, by the late Nara period, Daoism arrived and began to combine with Buddhism. During this period Daoist rituals began appearing in Japan. Based on the findings of surveys in the villages of Nara county, Daoism scholar Kubo Noritada suggests that the tradition of “assemblies to observe gengshen” (*shougengshen*) came from the Chinese Daoist belief in *Sanshi* (three corpses). As Ennin noted, during the Tang dynasty, in his *Record of*

Pilgrimage to the Tang in Search of the Sutras, Japanese customs in this regard were very similar to those in China.

Besides, many had already noticed the hidden connection with Daoism, namely the similarity in worship of the mirror, the sword and the seal (*yin*), known in Daoism as the “three sacred treasures of the Son of Heaven”: namely, the mirror *Yata no Kagami*, the sword *Kusanagi Tiancong yunjian*, and the Jewel *Yasakani no Magatama*.²⁹ Fukunaga Mitsuji had long emphasized such proof. In recent years, Sakade Yoshinobu has more comprehensively demonstrated the influence of Daoism on Japan by drawing attention to such elements of Japanese culture as the *Yasaka shrine*, the cult of *Taizanfukun* (a deity thought to be on *Mount Tai* in China) and the *Great Japanese Daoist Temple at Fushimi inari taisha* (the head shrine of *Inari*). From the beginning, they all felt that Japanese *Shintōism* resembled, though it remained distinct from, Chinese Daoism in terms of worship, ritual, methods, and vocabulary. But there was a definite influence of both Chinese Daoism and ancient Japanese customs, meaning that beneath one “ancient layer” was another “ancient layer.” Even ancient religions, it turned out, have histories.

And, what of the title *Tennō*, meaning *Heavenly Emperor*? After Tsuda Sōkichi, and especially in the free academic environment after World War II, there were many more studies dealing with this question, including Shimode Sekiyo’s *Deities and Daoism in Ancient Japan* and Yamao Yukihisa’s *The Establishment of the Ancient Tennō System*. The most important scholar of the time was again Fukunaga Mitsuji. After his 1982 work *Daoism and Japanese Culture*, in 1987, he came out with *Daoism and Ancient Japan*. The latter’s opening essay, “Six Themes on the Verification of *Tennō*” presents specific evidence on six aspects including the many similarities between *Jingū* rites and Daoist rites; and, that the very title of “*Tennō*” (used by Chinese emperors like *Tang Gaozu*), was influenced by Chinese thought.

In the next essay, he investigates diachronically and synchronically how Japan bears many traces of Daoism. For instance, the “flag” and “mirror” of the altars, which symbolize faith in the gods and spirits

(shenren), bear shades of Daoism, and Tenmu Tennō (Tenmu Prince) and Jito Tennō reveal a deep connection to Daoism. In 1988, together with Ueda Masāki, Ueyama Shunpei, Fukunaga Mitsuji came out with Daoism and the Ancient Tennō System, which suggested that ancient Japanese thought and views bore a distinct connection to currents affirming the “gods and spirits” and the native Chinese “Way of Gods and Spirits” that went back further in time. He criticized Japanese studies of Chinese Daoism for lacking proper awareness of these questions. Fukunaga Mitsuji’s own studies on jing “mirror” and jian “sword” in Chinese Daoism are clear examples of the consciousness of its influence on Japan.

Such output makes me believe more and more that, at times, Japanese inquiry into ‘China studies’ is in a ‘Japanese context’.

And on to Goguryeo? A Roadmap of the Dissemination of Daoism in East Asia

If we no longer restrict ourselves to the two particularly sensitive terms “Shintōism” and “Tennō,” we can see that Chinese Daoism has exerted a broad influence over Japan. The Nihon Shoki records how Yūryaku Tennō encountered the immortals of Penglai at the Mount Yamato-Kasuragi in the fourth

year of his reign. Another story tells of how Urashimako was invited to travel to Penglai. “Penglai” is clearly a legend from China, and a Daoist story. Also, the rites of succession from the demise of one Tennō to the coronation of the next, perhaps, derive from ancient rites in China, with some connection to Confucianism and Daoism. This begs a further question: How was Chinese Daoism transmitted to Japan?

Owing to lack of documentary and material evidence, at present, investigations of this question remain preliminary conjecture.

Fukunaga Mitsuji himself emphasized the connection between ancient Japan and Daoism. He thought that there had been communication between Japan and the ancient lower Yangtze kingdom of Wu. The term “wo ren” has been interpreted to refer to the descendants of the Wu Taibo, and Daoism has been strong and important in this part of China,

especially the Daoism of Mount Mao. Fukunaga Mitsuji thus suspected that both Daoism and the wushu (occult practices) of the Jiangnan had deeply influenced Japan. The like-minded Ueda Masāki speculated that Daoism might have come to Japan along with the “Kikajin,” who wrote the Engishiki of 702, with its record of the rites and spells of a palace that had “the imperial Heaven god-emperor and the three Great Rulers” and typically Daoist names like the Queen Mother of the West and the King Duke of the East. Refuting Fukunaga Mitsuji’s idea of a connection between the title of the emperor (Tennō) and Daoism, Nakamura Shōhachi believed that even though the Daoist associations did not come to Japan to establish temples and to preach, around the time of the fifth century (the Ōjin Tennō and the Nintoku Tennō eras), Daoism existed legally in the lower Yangtze, and its various elements may well have been brought in to Japan by kikajin (immigrants from China and Korea) from the Korean peninsula as well as the lower Yangtze river delta. The kikajin of the Yamato period occupied an important position centrally and locally. Although by no means Daoists, they were capable of transmitting knowledge of Daoist beliefs.

Korea was, we hasten to stress here, a major avenue for the transmission of Daoism, and Japan paid increasing attention to this pathway. In his abovementioned work, Ueda Masaaki says that “The Daoist traditions of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla have been underestimated and neglected. The reason we address them now is because they are related to new research establishing the connection between Korean, Japanese, and Chinese Daoist beliefs.” In fact, the existence of Daoism in Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla had been noted by scholars much earlier. In the History of Daoism in Korea, author Nūng-hwa Yi describes how the court of the Goguryeo, whose lands abutted territories controlled by China, once believed in the Five-litre Grain Sect, and later studied the Laozi, thereby gradually coming under the influence of Daoism. This view was elaborated even further in Korean Daoism by Chu-hwan Ch’a. Ch’a drew on records of Korea in Sanguo shiji (The history of the three kingdoms) that suggest Chinese Daoism reached Goguryeo, which had sovereign territory

penetrating deep into the mainland. In 197, the second year of the Jian'an reign of Emperor Xian of the Han dynasty, "China was in chaos, and many Han people were on the run." Such refugees may well have brought with them the Five-litre Grain Sect popular at the time. As for documentary evidence, records in the *Samgungnyusa* (Memorabilia of the three kingdoms) clearly state that during the Wude and Zhenguan eras of the Tang dynasty (618–649), Koreans were fervent followers of Five-litre Grain Sect. Daoism of the Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions traveled north along the Yangtze during the Wei Jin and succeeding periods, and changed little in the course of this journey. By the early 7th century, Goguryeo had many adherents, so that when Tang Gaozu heard of the situation, in 624, he presented the Goguryeo Daoists a Tianzun (Celestial Venerable) image and allowed them to preach of the *Daode jing*. Other records in the *Sanguo Shiji* show material related to Daoism. One record has it that Gai Suwen reported to the king, "China was in great chaos. Many Han Chinese came [to Goguryeo] to run away from the chaos." [...] "the three religions are like the feet of the tripod. Not a single one can go missing. Now both Confucianism and Buddhism are rising, but this is not happening with Daoism. We have to embrace those who have mastered the Dao of the world. Therefore, I am begging [you the emperor] to send envoys to Tang for Daoism in order to instruct our people." Then, with the king's support, Tang Taizong "sent eight Daoists including Shuda, and also granted a copy of *Daode jing*." The records indicate that the Goguryeo king was extremely pleased, and housed the Daoists in a Buddhist temple.

By the time of the early Tang dynasty, at least, Daoism as a systematic religion had struck roots in Goguryeo, scattered elements of Daoist beliefs having entered Goguryeo and Baekje much earlier. We know that Japan was deeply influenced by Baekje culture. Not only Confucian classics—but also Daoism, possibly—passed through Baekje and across the sea to Japan. The *Nihon shoki* records that in the winter of 602, the Baekje monk Gwalleuk arrived in Japan, bringing with him "Liben (history texts) and books on astronomy and

geography, as well as books on xunjia and fangshu."

Might there have been Daoist elements in these books on astronomy, geography, and various divinatory and occult arts?

Scholars of China Studies Joining the Debate: Miyazaki Ichisada's Theories Chinese researchers generally prefer to say that Chinese Daoism influenced Japanese culture and that the title of *Tennō* comes from China. In his *History of China Studies in Japan*, Yan Shaodang argues that the term "*Tennō*" (*tianhuang*) is Daoist in origin and thus constitutes traces of Daoist culture entering Japan during an earlier period. Citing Fukanaga, he also holds that the traditions related to the *Tennō* involve beliefs regarding the mirror, the sword, and the jade, and so serve as evidence of Daoism. He commented in passing that the earliest term for the head of government in Japan was likely *Ōkimi* (Great King), with the term "*Tennō*" coming into use gradually from the early 7th century onward.

Any discussion of the term "*Ōkimi*" must turn to the research of Miyazaki Ichisada. An outstanding scholar of Asian history, Miyazaki's vision often goes beyond China to cover the entirety of "the East" (*dong yang*)—in other words, Asia, though once again the questions and assumptions he brings to the study of China often begin on sovereign Japanese soil. Still, he respects historical material and is reluctant to deny that Japanese culture was influenced by elements of Chinese culture. What he does tend to deny is that there was much direct influence from Chinese Daoism, instead preferring to see the indirect influence of Buddhism from India. In 1978, skeptical of the view in Japanese academia that "*Da wang*" was the term used in ancient times prior to "*Tennō*," he meticulously researched this question—one so fraught in the histories of both China and Japan—and published his results in the April 1978 issue of the famous journal *Shisō* (Thought) an essay entitled "On the origins of the title '*Tennō*'." He affirms that there is material in Japan that uses the term *daiō*, as for example, inscriptions on swords excavated in Eda Funayama Kofun in Kumamoto Prefecture, painted mirrors from the Sumida Hachiman Shrine in

Wakayama Prefecture, and the reverse of Buddhist images found in the Hōryū ji Temple. However, the age of Ōkimi must have been during the 5th and 6th centuries. At the time, China was still adhering to an ancient code which held daiō to be merely a term of respect, and not a term of formal address. Japan must also have been doing no more than following the Chinese custom in this.

He did, however, speculate that the term tenō had once been popular in all the East Asian states, especially between the 4th and 5th centuries. Rulers of north China like Shi Le had taken this title. They had taken this the term from Buddhism in an effort to revive an ancient system, elevating ō (king) to tenō (heavenly king). During the age when Tianwang was most popular in China, Japan might have been influenced by China through Baekje and Goguryeo, to take for their ruler the title Wang and later Tian wang, and finally elevating it still further into Tennō. He discovered from an old imperial edition of the Nihon Shoki that two places reading Tennō had been altered from the earlier tenō. He conjectured that the ancient Japanese had used tenō in their system around the time of Emperor Yūryaku, during the age of so -called 'Five kings of Wo', switching over to "Tennō" when the tradition-bound Prince Shōtoku seized power.

To establish this hypothesis, Miyazaki studied the "seven swords" of Japan, the Vaiśravaṇa of Indian Buddhism, and the title tenō and its popularity during China's northern dynasties period. He concluded that based on such historical evidence, Tsuda Sōkichi's conclusions were incorrect. Tsuda once again denied any history of the use of the term tenō, as he expected to discover the source of the Japanese term Tennō in Daoist mythology. Miyazaki thought otherwise and pointed out that the term as used among the Wuhu shiliu guo (Sixteen kingdoms of the five ethnic peoples) of China might have influenced Japan, because from the time of Prince Shōtoku onward, Japan began having direct relations with China. The problem of titles would have presented itself to the Japanese, spurring them to select something appropriate. It is just possible that the term Tennō might have been borrowed from Indian Buddhism. He also rejected Tsuda's argument on Daoist influence and asked:

The premise of this theory is that Japan was under the deep influence of Daoism and Daoist practices. But is this true? It is a national issue to determine the title of the ruler. Later on, when the ruler decided to take up the Buddhist names, this caused chaos and tore the country apart. Then why did no one oppose it when the country decided to use Daoist deity names?

The Differences between Chinese Daoism and Japanese Shintōism

We must admit, it's always the case that "oranges of the south turn out different in the north." Cultural dissemination often fails to preserve the exact sense of the original. One must consider both the pathways of dissemination and the choice of reception. The method of essentialism is even less useful for historical investigations of the origins of cultural phenomena. Japanese Shintō is complex, with multiple sources. As Sueki Fumihiko has suggested, even defining "Shintō" "is a frustrating affair." Stating precisely what influenced the formation of Shintō is also difficult.

The biggest difference between Chinese Daoism and Japanese Shintō may well be that though Chinese Daoism absorbed elements of Confucianism and Buddhism, these preserve their independence as religions in terms of beliefs, worship, rituals, or sects. Japanese Shintō, on the contrary, exhibits origins that cut across religions, as well as vague boundaries. The teachings are complex and comprehensive. Generally speaking, the absoluteness and uniqueness of a religion mean that there are differences between it and other religions in terms of object of worship, theological principles, rites and ceremonies, and the organization of followers. There are always boundaries difficult to cross. In China, Buddhism and Daoism may have begun to develop together against the backdrop of imperial authority being higher than the rest of the political system, but Buddhism remained Buddhism, and Daoism remained Daoism. The temples of the two religions were never unified. Monks and Daoists each had their own rules and regulations. The followers of Shakyamuni and the followers of the Three Purities remained as separate as oil and water. Japan, on the other hand, exhibited a certain religious

phenomenon known as shinbutsu shūgō (alignment of the practices of the spirits and Buddha). According to some researchers, shinbutsu shūgō was the most outstanding characteristic of ancient Japanese religion. Spirits native to Japanese Shintō were appropriated into the “Heaven” pathway of the Six Paths of Rebirth. As protector spirits, they were placed beneath the Buddha (it was said that though the spirits could not escape the cycles of reincarnation, they had reached the highest of the Six Paths). Altars built for offerings to the spirits were re-appropriated for offerings to Buddha images or the reading of sutras, which were roles aligned with the Buddhist temple Jingūji built alongside these altars. Ancient Japanese Shintō held that Shintō simply was Buddhism, and that the Buddha’s Dharma body could speak Dharma at any time, in response to the moment, while the spirits of Shintō were manifestations of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. The “Shan wang” of Mount Hiei in Tendai Shintō, for example, was taken to be a manifestation of Shakyamuni. Ryobu Shintō, or Amaterasu of Ise Grand Shrine, was a manifestation of Mahavairocana. Some even believed that “Shintō was by no means a specific religion, but rather [a set of] traditional practices.”

For this reason, when Japan found it necessary to emphasize the autonomy of its nation, the length and breadth of its own Japanese history and culture, and establish the wanshi yixi (ten-thousand-year unbroken) tradition of the sacredness of Tennō, Shintō gradually began to distance itself from Buddhism as part of nationalist tides, each wave of which was higher than the last. Between the 14th and 16th centuries, works on Shintō history and theory began to appear by writers like Watarai Iyūki, Jihen, and Yoshida Kenkō, and during the 17th and 18th centuries there were scholars of Shintō who combined Japanese culture with Confucianism to examine Shintō in a political light; these included Yoshikawa Koretaru (1616–1694), Yamazaki Ansai (1618–1682), Kamono Mabuchi (1697–1769) and Motōri Norinaga (1730–1801). By the 19th century, thinkers like Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843) advocated Shintō as part of their conservative advocacy for restoration. Thus, by the early Meiji period, urgent

calls for Saise ittchi (ritual practice to be aligned with government) instigated the well-known movement for Shinbutsu hanzen (separating the spirits from Buddha). To demonstrate the independence of Japanese culture and to affirm the sacredness of the Tennō system, Shintōism must own and assert its own long history and be an independent religion, distinct from Buddhism.

This history and religion simply did not come to pass for Chinese Daoism. Even if Shintōism and the Tennō system were influenced by Chinese Daoism, we must admit that developing as they did on Japanese soil, there are more sources to them in Japanese culture, and they met their own fate, which was completely different from Daoism.

Behind the Debates about Daoism, Shintōism, and the Tennō System

There are still many Japanese scholars who do not accept the proposition that Shintō and the Tennō system were influenced by Daoism. Fukui Fumimasa criticized Fukunaga Mitsuji’s findings all along, strongly refuting the thesis on Daoism’s influence in his work, *The History of Daoist Studies in Japan, and Related Questions*. He believed that Fukunaga had not understood the documents compiled in the *Koji Ruien* (Encyclopedia of ancient matters) and *Gunsho Kaidai* (Bibliography of classified collection of books). He also averred that according to Mifune Ōmi, author of *Tō Daiwajō tō sei den* (Ganjin’s Voyage to the East), the Japanese government of the 8th century refused to allow any transmission of Daoism into Japan, with the result that Daoism was never transmitted into Japan in any organized way as Buddhism was. He believed that the Daoist elements found in Japanese culture were popular beliefs brought over from China to Japan in a much earlier period, and not attributable to the Daoism of the 5th century. He was particularly scornful of French scholars who accepted Fukunaga’s findings and even struck out against Europe in his writings. In September 1985, he held a discussion on “Daoism and Japanese Culture” at the “Japan and France Multi-Disciplinary Conference.” Presenting his paper “On the term ‘Tennō,’” he expressed his dissatisfaction with French scholars who accepted Fukunaga’s proposition that the title of “Tennō” was influenced

by Chinese Buddhism and first used in the period of Suiko Tennō. He also found problematic Kristofer M. Schipper's argument that since the title "Tennō" had been used by the Chinese emperor Tang Gaozu, it could possibly have been extended for use in Japan during the reign of Jitō Tennō (686–697), with supposed earlier instances simply being changed to reflect the adoption.

Fukui emphasized that when it came to the problem of when the title of Tennō had "been established":

The Sinologists of the West (except for a few American scholars) often believe that Japanese culture is the product of imitating Chinese culture and thus is under its influence. They therefore tend to accept the viewpoint that Chinese Daoism had influence on ancient Japanese history. If so, I am worried that this tendency will continue. I thus hope to distinguish 'real living religious Daoism' from 'Daoism that exists only as a form of knowledge'.

He continued to maintain that Daoist knowledge had been "borrowed" by Japan, Daoism as a religion had not influenced Japan. Daoism was different from Confucianism and Buddhism: "it had never been systematically promulgated and thus there had never been associations that worshipped Daoist deities," and also "the title 'Tennō' could not be said to have come from Chinese Daoism."

It is, perhaps, the case that more solid conclusions on the questions of Daoism, Shintō and the Tennō system require further discoveries in archival material, and will continue to be debated. But, as I said at the beginning of this chapter, from the perspective of academic history and intellectual history, the current academic debate shows three features:

First, this debate on the history of cultural interaction between China and Japan demonstrates that there is always a pragmatic political context lurking behind academic topics in history. The scholar embedded in the environment of an age can hardly avoid entanglement in the political, cultural and social environment of the time, with the result that to approach research with a questioning consciousness is often to bring with one a trace of practical concerns, and between "Dao" and

"history," the scholar will often encounter difficulties which are hard to resolve. Second, scholars of different countries working on the same history will have different positions, feelings and intellectual currents, and this is normal. Today we face the "Chinese studies" of Japan and find that we must see it as "Japanese studies." We can understand where their questioning consciousness, their considered position, and their research methods all come from if we understand the main currents of their political and academic histories. Only in this way can we get a true understanding of "China studies outside China."

Third, in the history of cultural interaction, what is required is a "sympathetic understanding" of the cultures and histories of other countries. Paying attention to historical events that seem similar, we will notice small and subtle differences, which we must investigate more deeply. We should not simply make far-fetched comparisons. <>

[Slender Man Is Coming: Creepypasta and Contemporary Legends on the Internet](#) edited by Trevor J. Blank & Lynne S. McNeill [Utah State University Press, 9781607327806]

The essays in [Slender Man Is Coming](#) explore the menacing figure of Slender Man – the blank-faced, long-limbed bogeyman born of a 2009 Photoshop contest who has appeared in countless horror stories circulated on and offline among children and young people. Slender Man is arguably the best-known example in circulation of 'creepypasta,' a genre derived from 'coppypasta,' which in turn derived from the phrase 'copy/paste.'

As narrative texts are copied across online forums, they undergo modification, annotation, and reinterpretation by new posters in a folkloric process of repetition and variation. Though by definition legends deal largely with belief and possibility, the crowdsourced mythos behind creepypasta and Slender Man suggests a distinct awareness of fabrication. Slender Man is therefore a new kind of creation: one intentionally created as a fiction but with the look and feel of legend. Editors are Trevor J. Blank and Lynne S. McNeill. Blank is associate professor of communication at the

State University of New York at Potsdam. He is the editor of *Folklore and the Internet* and *Folk Culture in the Digital Age*, coeditor of *Tradition in the Twenty-First Century*, and author of several books. McNeill is assistant professor of English in the Folklore Program at Utah State University, cofounder of the Digital Folklore Project. Contributors include: Timothy H. Evans, Andrea Kitta, Mikel J. Koven, Paul Manning, Andrew Peck, Jeffrey A. Tolbert, and Elizabeth Tucker.

According to Blank and McNeill in the introduction, the digital tradition surrounding the Slender Man is enough to engage any inquisitive legend scholar, but Slender Man has slipped the confines of the digital context, emerging also as a figure of oral legendry and belief, despite his easily determined fictional origins. Several of the chapters in [Slender Man Is Coming](#) explore the complicated relationship that has grown between online fiction and offline belief.

Considering how folklore proliferates in the fibers of everyday life as a vibrant component of vernacular expression, it is unsurprising to find that a diverse body of people are at least familiar with Slender Man, and often with the legend's accompanying Mythos as well.

Several folklorists have published on the Slender Man phenomenon, and it is clear that folklore studies should spearhead academic work in this area, an effort this book hopes to support. The hybridity of the digital context sets folklorists in a prime position to explore the nuances of the Slender Man's emergence and function in contemporary society.

The opening chapter of [Slender Man Is Coming](#), "The Sort of Story That Has You Covering Your Mirrors: The Case of Slender Man," is a reprint of one of the earliest scholarly articles to address Slender Man from a folklorist's perspective. In the essay, Jeffrey A. Tolbert importantly proposes the idea of 'reverse ostension' to describe the process by which a narrative is formed through collective action. In the second chapter, "The Cowl of Cthulhu: Ostensive Practice in the Digital Age," Andrew Peck

extends the concept of ostensive action into the more expansive idea of ostensive practice, a model better suited to the collaborative potential of the digital setting, where individual actions aggregate into a communally understood body of practice. Peck emphasizes that most instances of Slender Man ostension are 'fundamentally playful' in nature, in contrast to the depictions in the popular press.

Following Peck, Andrea Kitta's "What Happens When the Pictures Are No Longer Photoshops? Slender Man, Belief, and the Unacknowledged Common Experience," explores the reasons Slender Man is so often reported to 'feel real,' despite his widely acknowledged fictional roots. Kitta parses the distinct concepts of experience and 'an experience,' arguing that Slender Man provides an articulable, more tangible way to express what would otherwise be a more abstract, generalized experience.

Jeffrey A. Tolbert's second contribution, "Dark and Wicked Things: Slender Man, the Folkloresque, and the Implications of Belief," takes on the question of belief in the Slender Man, looking at precursors to this phenomenon in which fiction and reality were similarly muddled. Citing precedents from the 1938 radio drama *War of the Worlds* to the 1999 found-footage & horror film *The Blair Witch Project*, Tolbert uses the concept of the 'folkloresque' to talk about the thinning barrier between fiction and reality.

Mikel J. Koven's chapter, "The Emperor's New Lore; or, Who Believes in the Big Bad Slender Man?" continues the theme of belief but takes an opposing stance. Koven argues that Slender Man and the narratives about him cannot rightly be classified as contemporary legends, due mainly to the lack of actual belief at their core. They are, he agrees, appropriate for folklorists' study anyway, even if the real fear isn't of the creature himself, but of the susceptibility of our children. Timothy H. Evans, in his "Slender Man, H. P. Lovecraft, and the Dynamics of Horror Cultures," similarly questions the generic placement of the Slender Man Mythos, suggesting that a hybrid of folk and popular culture,

specifically 'horror culture,' is best. He uses the figure of Cthulhu – Lovecraft's popular invention that similarly broke the boundaries of fiction – as a comparison.

Next, Elizabeth Tucker's "Slender Man Is Coming to Get Your Little Brother or Sister: Teenagers' Pranks Posted on YouTube" considers the Slender Man phenomenon through the lens of children's folklore scholarship, looking at teenagers' prank videos as a type of subversive play. Play frames are common in children's folklore, and Tucker provides a comforting message that most children are quite capable of distinguishing the difference between play and reality. In the final chapter, "Monstrous Media and Media Monsters: From Cottingley to Waukesha," Paul Manning picks up the ongoing theme of ostension, seeing it as a sort of semiotic indexicality, a kind of sign that relies on the contiguity of photography. By emerging within the media of verisimilitude, Slender Man has become a perfect media monster.

Blank and McNeill see [Slender Man Is Coming](#) as the first coordinated offering of a concentrated folkloristic response to the Slender Man phenomenon. As such, they welcome dialogue among readers and colleagues alike, and they call upon folklorists to tune their attention toward the murky confines of Internet forums, whispered discussions in hallways, discussions of belief and reality in and outside the classroom, and to lend a voice to the unfolding conversation.

[A] timely volume of essays on an important topic – the contributors are doing groundbreaking folkloric work. By illuminating a contemporary phenomenon, these essays make us rethink our understandings of folkloric processes throughout history. The volume is perhaps one of the first dedicated to the Slender Man phenomenon (certainly the first by folklorists)...
[T]he authors make significant contributions to theories of ostension, play, questions of real/fake, semiotics, community and individual creation, digital communication, cosplay, and transmedia studies. – Michael Dylan Foster, University of California, Davis

[Slender Man Is Coming](#) offers an unprecedented folkloristic take on Slender Man, analyzing him within the framework of contemporary legend studies, 'creepypastas,' folk belief, and children's culture. This first folkloric examination of the phenomenon of Slender Man is a must-read for anyone interested in folklore, horror, urban legends, new media, or digital cultures. <>

[The Reincarnated Giant: An Anthology of Twenty-First-Century Chinese Science Fiction](#) by Mingwei Song and Theodore Huters [Weatherhead Books on Asia, Columbia University Press, 9780231180221]

A new wave of Chinese science fiction is here. This golden age has not only resurrected the genre but also subverted its own conventions. Going beyond political utopianism and technological optimism, contemporary Chinese writers conjure glittering visions and subversive experiments—ranging from space opera to cyberpunk, utopianism to the posthuman, and parodies of China's rise to deconstructions of the myth of national development.

This anthology showcases the best of contemporary science fiction from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the People's Republic of China. In fifteen short stories and novel excerpts, [The Reincarnated Giant](#) opens a doorway into imaginary realms alongside our own world and the history of the future. Authors such as Lo Yi-chin, Dung Kai-cheung, Han Song, Chen Qiufan, and the Hugo winner Liu Cixin—some alive during the Cultural Revolution, others born in the 1980s—blur the boundaries between realism and surrealism, between politics and technology. They tell tales of intergalactic war; decoding the last message sent from an extinct human race; the use of dreams as tools to differentiate cyborgs and humans; poets' strange afterlife inside a supercomputer; cannibalism aboard an airplane; and unchecked development that leads to uncontrollable catastrophe. At a time when the Chinese government promotes the "Chinese dream," the dark side of the new wave shows a nightmarish unconscious. [The Reincarnated Giant](#) is an essential read for anyone interested in the future of the genre.

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Excerpt: Does Science Fiction Dream of a Chinese New Wave?

Until 2013, the only essay on Chinese science fiction published in the academic journal *Science Fiction*

Studies characterized the genre's history in China as a hesitant journey to the West and found science fiction "a fairly marginal phenomenon" in the Middle Kingdom.' Or, in the words of the Chinese author Fei Dao, whose short story is included in this volume, Chinese science fiction was like a "hidden lonely army ... laid low in the wilderness where nobody really cared to look at it." The situation has changed drastically in the past five or six years. Chinese science fiction has suddenly gained worldwide recognition, thanks mainly to the success of Liu Cixin's *The Three-Body Problem* (translated into English by Ken Liu), a novel that created an international sensation. It became a bestseller in the United States, causing the *Wall Street Journal* to report that "China launches a sci-fi invasion of the U.S.," and it won the first Hugo Award for a novel written originally in a language other than English. Today Chinese science fiction is no longer a hidden lonely army, and the genre's journey to the West is no longer hesitant; it has become a fresh new force that is helping shape the outlook of global science fiction.

It should be noted, however, that even before *The Three-Body Problem* "touched down" in the United States, the novel and its two sequels had already become landmarks in the Chinese sf world, and before the trilogy was published in China between 2006 and 2010, a new wave of Chinese science fiction had already emerged at the turn of the twenty-first century. The success of the trilogy in the American book market is a small echo of its record-breaking popularity among Chinese readers. In addition, Liu Cixin's success should also be contextualized as one of the many facets demonstrating the revival of the genre in China during the past fifteen years, something conditioned by the genre's long, complicated history in China.

At the very beginning of the twentieth century, Anglo-American and French science fiction novels were introduced to Chinese readers, primarily through translations based on secondhand Japanese translations. Jules Verne was one of the most translated Western authors between 1900 and 1912. The late Qing reformer Liang Qichao (1873-1929) borrowed a concept from his Japanese mentors, Yukio Ozaki (1858-1954) and

Katō Hiroyuki (1836-1916), in coining the Chinese term *kexue xiaoshuo* (science fiction). The first "golden age" of Chinese science fiction lasted ten years, from 1902 to 1911, giving birth to numerous novels and short stories that combined science fantasy, political utopianism, and technological optimism. About ten years later, the rise of a truth-claiming literary realism employing the image of cannibalism to make visible the hidden "evils" of the Confucian tradition, a new literary trend pioneered by Lu Xun (1881-1936), also a translator of Jules Verne during his youth, eventually pushed science fiction to the margins of Chinese literary modernity. However, the realism "invented" by Lu Xun, which differed from the mainstream realism epitomized in Mao Dun's (1896-1981) later epic novels, aspired to reveal the deeper truth beneath the surface reality, and the truth-claiming discourse of Lu Xun's realism may have its roots in his earlier belief in scientific discourse and science fiction. Nonetheless, what is often referred to as May Fourth realism, Mao Dun's naturalistic realism, and, later, the socialist realism under Mao's regime made science fiction an obscure genre that was not taken seriously for most of the twentieth century. It enjoyed short revivals in Hong Kong during the Cold War, in Taiwan during the 1970s and 1980s, and in the People's Republic of China (PRC) during the early reform era (1978-1983), but none of the revivals gained enough momentum to sustain the genre. The history of Chinese science fiction has, in other words, never been continuous.

The New Wave

The recent revival, particularly what I call the new wave, began almost exactly one hundred years after the late Qing golden age of Chinese science fiction. Some factors related to its recent revival appear similar to the circumstances of its boom in late Qing, such as a rapidly changing media-sphere and anxious expectations concerning change in China. In particular, the free platform for new authors to publish on the Internet, the failure of a collective idealism for Chinese intellectuals in 1989, and the "perfect vacuum" for fantasy resulting when mainstream realism more or less lost touch with reality and thus could not avoid being marginalized in the field of literary production—all these could be the essential cultural and social

conditions for the rise of the new wave. I first used the term "new wave" to refer to this recent trend of Chinese science fiction in 2013 when writing an article in Chinese for the academic journal *Wenxue*. Subsequently, I elaborated on the definition and aesthetics of the new wave in several articles written in English. My argument is that on its most radical side, the new wave of Chinese sf has been thriving on an avant-garde cultural spirit that encourages readers to think beyond the conventional ways of perceiving reality and to challenge the commonly accepted ideas about what constitutes the existence and self-identity of a person surrounded by technologies of self, society, and governance. However, the term "new wave" is a controversial concept for critics in China; its emphasis on the subversive, darker side of science fiction is questioned by those who have more faith in a utopia and China's contemporary pursuit of wealth and power. Many scholars and writers in the mainland prefer the prosperous "golden age" to the subversive, cutting-edge new wave that sheds light on the darker side.

It's quite possible that, in a peculiar way, Chinese science fiction may have simultaneously arrived at its new golden age and generated a new wave subversion of the genre itself. The poetics and politics of the new wave are both meaningful at a time when the Chinese government is engineering a "Chinese dream." The new wave has unleashed a nightmarish unconscious of a dream that does not necessarily belong to an individual but rather to a collective entity. In its aesthetic aspect, the new wave speaks either to the invisible dimensions of reality or simply to the impossibility of representing a certain reality dictated by the discourse of the national dream.

This new wave has been marked by a dystopian vision of China's future, ambiguous moral dilemmas, and sophisticated representations of the power of technology or the technology of power. The poetics of the new wave point to the darker, more invisible sides of reality, as mentioned, and in this connection several new-wave writers, with Han Song, Fei Dao, Chen Qiufan, and even Liu Cixin as prominent examples, often refer to Lu Xun in their stories. The irony in the history of Chinese science fiction lies in the seemingly improbable marriage of a truth-

claiming realism and science fiction. The new wave achieves a high-intensity realism that surpasses the conventional realistic depictions of everyday life. It speaks to the deeper truth beneath the surface reality, as Lu Xun did in "A Madman's Diary." Han Song's 2011 novel, *Ditie (Subway)*, takes readers into the nightmarish, absurd, irrational, cannibalistic, and abysmal underground world beneath a prosperous Chinese metropolis. Han Song has stated, "China's reality is more science fictional than science fiction," pointing to a reality that people may fear to see, as so evident in the title of his short story "Kan de kongju" (Fear of seeing, 2002), but science fiction, through metaphorical, figurative, or poetic means, represents that incredible reality. To call again to mind Lu Xun, Han Song's characters discover the dark secret of the social system. Like the madman's discovery of the cannibalism in Confucian society, the secrets Han Song reveals are horrifying, unsettling, and challenge the fundamentals of contemporary Chinese society.

Does science fiction dream of a Chinese new wave? The invisible darkness that the Chinese new wave illuminates is the very magnetic force that makes the genre alive, attractive, and provocative in a worldwide context.

Translating Chinese Science Fiction

In 1970 William A. Lyell translated into English Lao She's *Cat Country* (1932), a dystopian novel about China's prevailing corruption and total lack of individual integrity. It was the first Chinese novel of the genre made available to English-language readers. The *Martian Cat Country's* uncanny resemblance to China in 1932 and its complete hopelessness can be read as an antidote to the didactic "realism" and patriotic propaganda on the eve of the Japanese invasion. A new edition of this translation was recently published by Penguin (2013). The first English-language anthology of Chinese science fiction, *Science Fiction from China*, edited by Dingbo Wu and Patrick Murphy (Praeger, 1989), focuses on the early reform era (1978-1983), including major stories by authors like Zheng Wenguang, Tong Enzheng, Wei Yahua, and Ye Yonglie.

More recently, three important science fiction novels by Hong Kong and Taiwan authors reached

English-language readers. S. K. Chang's *The City Trilogy* (Columbia University Press, 2003) is an epic that incorporates other genre elements such as martial arts romance and also has a strong political undertone concerning Taiwan's history and identity. Dung Kaicheung's *Atlas: The Archaeology of an Imaginary City* (Columbia University Press, 2012) is a collection of short Borgesian essays and stories that fabricate the past, the present, and the future of Victoria, a city that may or may not be Hong Kong, or at least a heterotopic mirror of Hong Kong. It should be noted that Dung's *Atlas* won the Science Fiction and Fantasy Translation Award in 2013. Chan Koonchung's *The Fat Years* (2009) was translated into English by Michael S. Duke and released by Doubleday in 2011. *The Fat Years* is China's equivalent of *Brave New World* (if not a darker 1984), presenting a dystopian image of present-day China, its system, its intellectual culture, and its amnesia of its recent history.

The single most important change in recent years in the English-language translations of Chinese science fiction has been the unrivaled devotion and efforts of Ken Liu. He has translated not only several fulllength novels, including *The Three-Body Problem* (Tor, 2014) and, third in the trilogy, *Death's End* (Tor, 2016), as well as Chen Qiufan's novel *The Waste Tide* (Tor, forthcoming), but also dozens of novellas and stories from a variety of authors, including Chen Qiufan, Xia Jia, Ma Boyong, Hao Jingfang, and Tang Fei. His first collection of translated stories, [Invisible Planet](#), was released in 2016 (Tor) to critical acclaim.

All such efforts are important milestones in making Chinese science fiction's journey to the West an epic event. *The Reincarnated Giant* is the latest effort, and it is a collection featuring a comprehensive list of science fiction writers, with their most important works translated into English for the first time. What is also notable is that most of the contributions are from academics and translators whose work is not usually limited to science fiction.

The Reincarnated Giant: Renditions and the Current Anthology

In 2012, upon the invitation of Theodore Huters, I edited a special issue of *Renditions* (77/78). The issue showcases representative works of Chinese

science fiction from its first and latest booms, focusing on the late Qing and the contemporary. Paralleling the science fiction writings from these two beginnings of successive centuries proved to be an intriguing project. Both epochs are characterized by heightened aspirations for change as well as by deep anxieties about China's future. A comparative reading of the stories from the late Qing and the contemporary sheds light on their common themes. Yet the recapitulations of the earlier age's literary motifs also lead to self-reflective variations that point to the latter age's singularity. It is hoped that the fruitful conversations between scholars of the late Qing and observers of contemporary China triggered by the special issue continue with the present volume.

The 2012 Renditions special issue was the first English-language collection of Chinese science fiction to appear since the publication of Wu and Murphy's anthology in 1989. The thirteen pieces included in the special issue are divided into two groups. The first four pieces are novel excerpts and short stories from the first decade of Chinese science fiction's development. The other nine selections are recent short stories by contemporary authors.

The present volume, a substantially enlarged collection following that special issue, focuses on contemporary science fiction from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the PRC. Although no late Qing pieces appear in this collection, there is a large number of authors of the twenty-first century: Liu Cixin, Han Song, Wang Jinkang, Zhao Haihong, La La, Chi Hui, Fei Dao, and Xia Jia, as well as two other PRC writers, Chen Qiufan and Bao Shu, and three writers from Hong Kong and Taiwan, Lo Yi-chin, Dung Kai-cheung, and Egoyan Zheng.

For Chinese fans, Liu Cixin, Han Song, and Wang Jinkang, the three most senior authors (born in 1963, 1965, and 1948, respectively), are called the Big Three. They have shaped the field in significant ways. Liu Cixin, a so-called hard science fiction writer, revived the great tradition of space opera for Chinese readers. Han Song reenergized Lu Xun's legacy in blurring the boundary between realism and surrealism and between politics and technology. Wang Jinkang, a humanist, has worked

to keep alive the utopian impulse for a hopeful future—with the possible exception of the collection's title story, "The Reincarnated Giant." This unusual story, with its dark humor, was, it's worth noting, originally published under a pseudonym.

In this anthology are two contributions by Liu Cixin, in fact two of his most important stories, "The Village Schoolteacher" (2001) and "The Poetry Cloud" (2003). In both, Liu creates sublime, awe-inspiring imagery of the universe while also presenting an ambiguous negotiation between poetry and technology, morality and survival, humanity and the universe. "The Village Schoolteacher" combines realistic depictions of the struggle of a teacher to help underprivileged children in rural China with a wondrously imaginative telling of an intergalactic war extending over the entire Milky Way. Whereas the former aspect appears to be but a nuanced detail in the unfolding of the latter divine drama, it nonetheless proves crucial in the story for human survival. "The Poetry Cloud" presents a seemingly utopian description of the happy life of two Chinese poets (one of them a hyperdimensional alien disguised as Li Bai) after the total extinction of the solar system, but the poetry cloud, a supercomputer, can best be viewed as a simulacrum, an instance of a virtual reality fabricated by the technologized mimesis of the poetic vision after its creators have been wiped out. Liu Cixin contrasts scientific certainty with the contingency of the human vision, thus turning a utopia of science and technology into an uncertain dystopia for humanity.

Compared with that of Liu Cixin, Han Song's style is more provocative both artistically and politically. He is often compared to Kafka, but a more relevant comparison is no doubt with Lu Xun. His sf writings are full of uncanny, gloomy, and sometimes inexplicable images that aim to unconceal reality's dark underbelly. Han Song's images also resonate with some of Lu Xun's famous devices, such as the "iron house" metaphor and cannibalism, which are reappropriated to address the problems of contemporary China. "The Passengers and the Creator" (2006) depicts a group of Chinese people stuck in a new type of iron house: the main cabin of

an airplane where they are fed the flesh of those who have died on the plane. The passengers have to go through the process of being enlightened to see the truth of their reality before making a revolution that ends in a plane crash, which forms an ambiguous national allegory. In "Regenerated Bricks" (2011), Han Song depicts how artists and developers create humanized intelligent bricks by recycling the earthquake remains in which are embedded human flesh. The miracle of the regenerated bricks eventually enables the Chinese to conquer the universe, but what they build with these bricks is forever haunted by the whispers and weeping of the dead.

Wang Jinkang's "The Reincarnated Giant" (2006) can be read as an allegory about the greedy Chinese nouveaux riches' craving for unlimited development, wealth, and power, and even longevity, that ends in irreversible catastrophe. It foregrounds an unsatisfied desire for zengzhang (growth), a ubiquitous keyword in current news coverage of China's economic leap, marked by a continuously escalating GDP. The outcome in Wang Jinkang's story comes as little surprise: the insatiable desire for development leads to uncontrollable results that eventually ruin the developers themselves. The grotesque image of the reincarnated giant epitomizes China's myth of economic development.

A number of the other stories in this volume come from younger writers, and they point to new directions for the genre's future development. La La's "The Radio Waves That Never Die" (2007) and Zhao Haihong's "1923: A Fantasy" (2007) both reuse themes of revolutionary literature in postrevolutionary narratives. La La's story, through a puzzle-solving process, shows how a posthuman descendant decodes, reconstructs, and understands a radio message, similar to what happens in the communist legend of a special agent alluded to in the title, but what is eventually received by the semicyborg is the last message sent from an extinct humanity. Thus a revolutionary theme takes a posthuman turn. Zhao Haihong's story weaves the revolutionary story into a dreamy romance that turns history into a nostalgic dream; the story intentionally misuses historical information to highlight the fantastic nature of the memory of

revolution, not unlike the bubbles produced by the machine in the story.

Chi Hui's "The Rain Forest" (2007) points to themes of environmentalism as well as interspecies transformation, or, metaphorically, transgender or transracial identity. Fei Dao's "The Demon's Head" (2007) presents an allegorical image of the evil undead—clearly referring to dictatorship—that is made possible through inventive technology. Xia Jia's "The Demon-Enslaving Flask" (2004) represents a playful experiment with the uncertainty principle that is nevertheless shown as being contained within human intelligence.

Bao Shu's "Songs of Ancient Earth" (2012) plays on the "red songs" of the communist era, which are infinitely reproduced and broadcast by A.I. nanorobotics; the concert of revolutionary songs begins to rock the entire universe: "The Internationale / Unites the human race" (or perhaps more accurately here, "... unites the posthuman"). A new class-consciousness, or a simulacrum of a class-consciousness, appears in the work of these younger writers. Compared with Bao Shu's seriocomic parody, Chen Qiufan's "Balin" (2015) reminds us obviously of the left-wing tradition in modern Chinese literature. This story, first published in *Renmin wenxue* (July 2015), situates the problems of identity, compassion, and humannonhuman interaction (or, more metaphorically, interactions across classes, ethnic groups, and different minds) in the contemporary combination of budding capitalism and institutional corruption. Unlike Bao Shu, who presents a sweeping triumphant vision of A.I. successfully carrying out the revolutionary tradition, Chen Qiufan depicts the bleak reality of contemporary China, where class difference matters and creates the foundation for prejudice, violence, and hatred—a menacing situation that makes compassion and dignity difficult.

Chi Hui, Fei Dao, Xia Jia, Bao Shu, and Chen Qiufan all write about virtual reality, A.I., and future worlds built upon a posthuman vision. At the same time, they all bring science fiction closer to China's reality. These five authors are the youngest of the group, all born in the 1980s, and their future

writing may decide whether the new wave of Chinese science fiction will continue to flourish.

This anthology includes excerpts from Lo Yi-chin's experimental novel *Daughter* (2014) and Egoyan Zheng's posthuman saga *The Dream Devourer* (2010), both published in Taiwan. Lo's labyrinthine narrative presents an imaginary realm of memories, speculations, metaphors, reconstructions, and dismemberments of the "other" space in terms of identity, sexual transgression, diasporic experience, literary reference, and historical consciousness. The chapter we selected is "Science Fiction," which can be read as a meta-science fictional text. Lo's efforts, like Han Song's allusions to Lu Xun, also attempt to put science fiction back into the context of modern Chinese literature.

Egoyan Zheng's story unfolds in the year 2219, from which the protagonist reflects on the complex history of the long espionage war between humans and cyborgs. The confusion of identity, which speaks to Taiwan's present-day political situation, is complicated by multilayered explorations of dreams and the political technology that turns dreams into tools differentiating cyborgs from humans. The heterotopia that emerges from the disorienting dreamscape inspires the protagonists to recognize that there is an ethical and epistemological gray zone between self and other, or between the human race and posthuman beings.

Dung Kai-cheung, the most important contemporary writer of twenty-first-century Hong Kong, has also experimented with science fiction in unique ways that not only characterize Hong Kong's cultural dynamism but also render Hong Kong into a metaphor reflecting the postmodern or posthuman conditions of the post-1997 new century. Victoria, the V city that Dung creates in his oeuvres, may allude to Hong Kong's colonial past, its problematic present, and its postapocalyptic future. Dung's most ambitious work to date, the voluminous *Natural History Trilogy* has many remarkable references to sf genre elements. The present collection includes selected chapters from *Histories of Time* (2007), in which Dung achieves a poetic reimagining of science fiction as a fanciful realm that opens to endless self-reflections and self-reconstructions. The novel presents a panoramic vision of the city's imaginary

history of its past, present, and future, all combined in the uncanny image of time—time lost, retrieved, reimagined, and represented.

The book is divided into three parts: "Other Realities," "Other Us," "Other Futures." Reality, humanity, and future are closely connected notions when talking about science fiction. They overlap, interact, and create intertextual relations defining what is real, what is human, and what is (future) history, while the guiding theme navigating all these stories is otherness itself. Science fiction is ultimately a literature of "cognitive estrangement," as Darko Suvin has defined it; in a more contemporary context, science fiction is a literature of revelation that demonstrates difference—difference in religion, race, gender, class, ethnic identity; or simply difference in thought, emotional expression, or life choice. Difference also marks science fiction as a truly global genre encompassing all times and spaces of different ages, locations, and peoples. If there were an extraterrestrial intelligence reading our anthology, what would it (or he or she) think of the differences we have envisioned among us? If there were a superintelligence learning about human behaviors, what would it do about the identities or differences among us? In this sense, science fiction asks, in the end, an ethical question: how do we deal with the other? That also decides how we see ourselves. <>

<>

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