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Person, Community, *Tian*: The Emergence of Order and Harmony in Chinese Philosophy

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PhD Thesis Submission

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I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted for another degree, at University College Cork, or elsewhere.

Signed: _____

Lan Yu

Introduction: Person, Community, *Tian*: The Way of Order

As China plays an increasingly important role in both international economics and politics, contemporary Chinese scholars are becoming more interested in promoting Chinese thought. The Chinese government wants characteristic Chinese thinking to serve as a form of soft power to compete with other cultures. This raises the question of how specifically Chinese thought can adjust to a modern pluralistic world, and how it can contribute to contemporary socio-political structure and philosophy while re-appropriating traditional Chinese thought. This requires an examination of what the most original and important features of Chinese thought are, and how they affect the particularities of Chinese thinking. One also needs to trace what the source for Chinese thought is, in order to understand how to interpret the values of Chinese thought for the modern world.

When I approach the questions of Chinese terminology, I avoid using words such as "heaven," "ritual" or "transcendence" which can be easily misunderstood by Western readers. I therefore choose to use the original Chinese terms, such as *tian*, *li* and interpret them in detail. As the main concept I analyse, *tian* refers not only to the sky, but also nature, the whole world, and a supreme power. If *tian* is translated as "heaven", it can be mistakenly understood as a transcendent source. Zhang Xionglong, a contemporary scholar who approaches Chinese philosophy through Heidegger's philosophy, holds that *tian* is the transcendent and original source of all Chinese thought. He believes their similarity lies in their mutual commitment to non-dualism. Approaching Chinese thought according to Heidegger's philosophy leads him to a different interpretation of *tian*. In translating his work, I use "heaven", while using *tian* when referring to classical Chinese thought. The conclusion I propose is that *tian* is anything but a transcendent source. The second important term in my thesis is *li*. As a process of self-cultivation in Confucianism, *li* cannot be translated straightforwardly as what is understood in the West as religious "ritual". I will expand on the question of what *li* really is in chapter 3 and 4.

To clarify the traits of Chinese thought, one must also answer the question raised by Western thoughts, and reveal the differences between the two. First I must clarify whether Chinese thought is more primitive, if ancient Greek and other ancient civilisation also share the idea of a correlative cosmos. To clarify this point, it is important to state that Chinese thought is a specific form of thought, and different from Western culture, so we cannot use a universalistic approach. Hence, I try to use sources from Chinese thought's own tradition to analyse the question of the person, community and *tian*.

From the reception of a dualistic world view, some Chinese scholars also build Chinese thought on the basis of dualistic worlds. For instance, Feng Youlan points out that Chinese scholars cannot create a modern Chinese philosophy without considering continuity with traditional thought, with it being necessary to use the modern analytical method to clarify different concepts in Chinese thought. It is not enough only to clarify the different concepts or ideas in Chinese thought, but we must also consider the connection between them and why such a connection is important.

Tiandao, as the most important idea in Zhang Xianglong's work, is considered as the ultimate reality, but actually, there is no reality behind all other events which are appearances: the relationship between *tiandao* and other events are effectively the process itself and the products of this process.

The concept of "person" is significant in my thesis not only because it is the beginning of the order of analysis, but also because it is significantly different from the idea of the "self" in the West. The ideal ethic for Chinese thought is embodied in self-cultivation, that is to say, the cultivation of one's life world: it is a process of shaping the world and also a result of the world itself. "Person," "subject" or "oneself" are the beginning of all ethical events, while their final aim is to resonate with *tian*. This resonation means that personhood can expand and develop beyond the narrow self, which only focuses on self-interest. Because of the continuity between humans and *tian*, this approach solves the conflict between self-interest and public interest. The process of self-cultivation proceeds from self to others, to

toleration and openness to others, but this does not thereby mean that selflessness is promoted. Rather, it expands the territory of the person from private to public.

The person is a part of *tian*, and through the process of *tian*'s creation of awe, the position of the person is clarified and enhanced. Even though *tian* can be interpreted as having divine aspects, the underlying motivation of this assumption is to endorse the political order or the order of the human world: hence it does not ultimately matter whether *tian* is nature or not. *Tian* is always in context, and it is based on what kind of order the human world wants to have. The macro-order is the order of the cosmos, which is the harmony between human and *tian*; the micro-order is the ideal political order in the human world. Under the interpretation of Chinese scholars, the macro-order aims at endorsing the micro-order: it can then dismiss the problem that claims there is a conflict between a divine *tian* or a natural *tian*, that *tian* is nature or divinity. In short, *tian* functions as an endorsement for order in the human world, once this is properly understood and appreciated it becomes unimportant to ask what *tian* itself really is.

Unlike Western thinkers who analyse self through the relationship between mind and body, Chinese thinkers instead analyse personhood from the characteristic notions of analysing will, heart-mind, natural tendency, disposition and *ming* 命 (fate, limit, mandates, order). It is seen that some elements of determinism persist in these notions, nevertheless, because personhood is always in context, and the concrete person can always make their own decisions in different situations for the aim of order based on its own judgement: this is also called the function of *shi* (timing, appropriateness, and opportunity 時).

In the bigger picture, there is a holistic order in the continuity between humans and *tian*, which is called "harmony between human and *tian*," and this is a reflection of *shi*. The human world can share in this harmony once there is order. The ideas concerning the cosmos and human life are not separate for Chinese thinkers, from the inward heart to the outside cosmos, there is a coherent value: respect and care for the living.

The order is based on our positive dispositions: one's disposition can be drawn on too much and lead to negative outcomes, which reflects poorly on Confucianism, but

it can also, once properly appreciated, always be appropriate and shape the structure of order in society. It must be clarified that this 'order' in a broad sense should be a natural one, which means it is achieved in a natural way or from our natural dispositions rather than from a normative legal system.

Through self-cultivation, *li* (as the outward tool that can be practiced) actually establishes a hierarchy for the human world, and this is the concrete way to produce order in society. *Li* not only consists of rites, but also disposition, and this is why people are willing to follow it: *li* is correlative with humaneness and appropriateness, and without these two, the idea of *li* is meaningless. *Li* is involved not only in inward humaneness and appropriateness but also outward instruments. Consequently, for Xunzi, after establishing differences between different categories, we will automatically have order: *li* is the concrete way to begin order in society.

Li is not only about dealing with relationships between humans, it is also involved in how humans should cope with other things, for example, mountains, rivers and *tian*. Apart from the supernatural elements, *li* is a holistic order in the whole universe: after establishing these differences in categories, each part should follow its own tendency, and the whole universe will have harmony.

Because the person is not fixed, but is rather a process, in the final stage personhood mingles with *tian* and *dao*. Based on this order, there is a possible political order called 'great union' which demonstrates that this cosmos order endorses a holistic order: one cannot ultimately separate the political part from the part of heart-mind and *tian*, because these parts are logically connected with each other.

What can be done in the future of the relevant research is to produce a more detailed analysis concerning the relationship between personhood and community in the specific context of East-West comparison to enhance the argument. Also, since Confucianism is held to always be practical and have the ambition to build a better world, it is important to further consider how to apply traditional values in the contemporary world.

The contemporary Chinese scholar Zhang Xianglong takes the *dao* of *tian* as the origin of Chinese thought, reinterpreting *tiandao* in the context of both Heidegger

and Chinese traditional ideas, while maintaining that *tian* as a whole has the perspective of divinity (but not an anthropomorphic divinity).[1] Because his work is a valuable and relevant approach from comparative philosophy, I have translated two chapters of his book in the appendix. Unlike Zhang, who approaches *tian* from the context of comparison and cross culture, I engage in *tian* from the perspective of the philosophical question of which is order among personhood, community and *tian*.

Inwardly, we can examine the connection between humans and *tian* through natural tendency. It is not easy to analyse the concept of *tian* without humans, because both humans and *tian* are connected through the heart-mind and natural tendency, suggesting immanent connections between *tian* and humans. Through analysing the relationship between humans and *tian*, *tian* appears not to be purely secular or sacred because of the remarkable continuity between *tian* and humans. The classical Chinese philosophers Mencius and Confucius appear to support this continuity in apparent contrast to Xunzi. However, even though it seems that Xunzi promotes the separation between humans and *tian*, his ideas are still framed according to the continuity between humans and *tian*.

Chinese thought about *tian* can heavily embody and affect the affairs of human lives within the idea of 'the time of *tian*', and through the interaction with *tian*, social and political order is one outcome of this continuity. Many cultures build their society and politics on the original idea of *tian*, and their social and political structures are the embodiment of their *tian*. With the idea of continuity between *tian* and humans, the Chinese have a correlative socio-political structure which manages to include *tian*, and a highly integrated society based on the highlighting of spontaneous goodness and *li*, which is derived from *tian* and is also the embodiment of this goodness.

This project analyses the historical relationship between *tian* and humans, and specifically addresses the tension between them, and how Confucians explain this question. This tension embodies the continuity between humans and *tian*, and this continuity became more inward for humans with Mencius's philosophical

[1] Zhang Xianglong, *Haidegeer yu zhongguo tiandao* [Heidegger and Chinese *Dao* of Heaven] (Beijing: Sanlian shudianshe, 1996), 237.

development. This research adopts the stance that if humans have a capacity for humaneness it is because our natural tendency is from *tian*. From this point, a number of problematic issues arise that must be dealt with. Why does an indifferent *tian* generate good for humans? Similarly, human societies desire to have order and peace, but such desires do not always coincide with *tian*'s pattern. How, then, should humans cooperate with the pattern of *tian*? In the process of addressing these issues, I argue that humans need to be observant of the *shi* of *tian* by following the way of *li*, as a process of adapting to the changing circumstances and following the proper *dao*.

The process of self-cultivation of human affairs is a process of inward connection with *tian*, but in a less sacred manner, and also specifically a process of self-critique under the image of the ideal sage, as most people cannot always adopt good behaviour. This inward connection is based on humaneness (*ren*) and sincerity (*cheng*), which refers to the ability to be creative. *Cheng* begins from the coherence between one's mind and body, talking and behaviour, to the continuity of *tian* and human beings. *Cheng* is not only a moral principle, but also aligns with the principle of the relationship between humans and *tian*.

Tian as the source for Chinese thought is especially embodied in the way of *li*: humans have to follow *tian* or the timing of *tian*, and the way of *li* is modesty and observance of appropriateness. The way of *li* and appropriateness has a significant emphasis on timing: following this timing is to follow the way of *li*. Following the way of *li* not only improves the realm of social life, but also brings order and harmony to the socio-political context. From these, it can be seen that Confucians try to knit together all elements, not only inside but also outside, into the same narrative, and their final aim is order and harmony.

Even though Roger Ames and Michael Puett hold quite different interpretations of Chinese thought, both maintain that they cannot see a trend of rationalisation in early China. To maintain the idea of continuity between *tian* and humans, Michael Puett would say that Chinese thought became more focused on human affairs

because humans had self-divination.[2] For Ames, however, there is no process from superstition to rationalism, because Chinese thought does not have a notion of strict transcendence.[3] That Chinese thought does not have the idea of transcendence does not mean that there is no value in Chinese culture, rather, Chinese people place their values in their limited life span and every day's self-cultivation, and the idea of humaneness and appropriateness continues through different generations. *Li,* like *tian,* are both secular and sacred, some dealing with relationships between humans, others dealing with the affairs of politics, and also of nature—through worshipping *tian,* earth and mountains. These rites give a practical way to intertwine humans and *tian* in the same holistic narrative.

Inwardly, the continuity between humans and *tian* is embodied in the process of self-cultivation. Outwardly, it is embodied in the socio-political structure which is the 'great union' (*datong*) and 'small tranquillity' (*xiaokang*). In the small tranquillity stage, people still rely on *li* to regulate the socio-political. However, *li* is based on one's spontaneous goodness rather than filial piety, so the final aim of great union would not conflict with small tranquillity, which is still focused on order and harmony, because humans do not need rites to restrain their behaviour, rather, they behave in a certain good way without knowing that is appropriate.

Self-cultivation is the beginning of order, the small community is the development of it, the cosmos is the pattern that humans' mimic, and order and harmony are the productions of continuity between humans and *tian*, which are the final aim and completeness of personhood in Confucianism.

The first chapter of this thesis contributes to the historical analysis and interpretation of the early development of *tian* in ancient Chinese philosophy. Based on the *Guoyu* [*Discourses of States*] and mythology, humans were said to be able to communicate with *tian,* with the meaning of *tian* initially being determined by shamans, and then by the ruler. In her analysis of Confucius and Daoism, Julia

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[2] Michael J. Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 27.

[3] David L Hall and Roger T Ames, *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 13.

Ching indicates the continuity of humans and *tian* that originates from shamanistic experience.[4] Later, in the development of the interpretation of *tian*, we can discern that its divination-related aspects were weakening, with its human-related aspects gaining precedence. I also recognise that, despite this continuity, humans are nonetheless required to focus on human affairs, rather than simply blaming or awaiting the process of *tian*, and are encouraged take responsibility for themselves and respect natural laws. In clarifying the historical analysis and interpretation of *tian* as it develops and is re-interpreted through ancient Chinese thought, this thesis establishes a firmer basis on which coherent thought about the origins of correlative cosmology in Chinese thought may proceed.

Tian always follows the 'middle way' as a means of keeping order and harmony. It is seen that there is not enough evidence available to prove that there is a direct progression from the irrational to rational; nor that there is an idea of a totally material *tian*. I hold the view that Chinese thought focuses on a holistic picture of the world, and through this, it always develops towards order and harmony between humans and *tian*.

Another contribution to existing research is the analysis of the problem of whether Confucius maintained certain religious elements in his thinking, by examining the historical relationship between humans and *tian*. Because Confucius himself does not discuss divinity at length, it seems that Confucianism sometimes takes *tian* as a natural sky. However, dignity and awe towards *tian* always persists, and Confucianism often discusses ideas of fate or mission, and opportunities borne from *tian*. I conclude that order is always the key word to be promoted, rather than the concept of *tian* itself. The meaning of *tian* can change based on whatever promotes the idea of order and harmony.

Chapter two further investigates outstanding interpretive problems relating to *tian* concerning timing. I examine how humans can be said to connect with *tian* through self-cultivation or practice, and the possibility of doing so by analysing the heart-mind, natural tendency, 'appropriate time' and 'opportunity, appropriateness, limits

[4] Julia Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China: The Heart of Chinese Wisdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 194.

or fate' (*ming* 命) in the specific context of *tian*, the correlative cosmology. I argue that a Confucian correlative cosmology is discernible in the practice of cultivating one's heart-mind and nourishing one's refined *qi* (vital energy 氣), wherein one can complete oneself and reach the level of *tian*. This practice demonstrates how the heart-mind of *tian* is connected to the heart-mind of humans immanently, highlighting the evidence of a continuity between *tian* and humans in Confucian thought.

Likewise, there is a continuity between *tian* and humans in this cosmology, but both *tian* and human beings have different positions. Because of this difference, another problem relating to this cosmology arises, in which one has to find an appropriate way of acting in order to better understand the opportunities and limits that are given by *tian*. In order to do so, we must clarify our understanding of time in this relation so we can better understand how to recognise the opportunities given by *tian*, and to better understand fate by being aware of the limits that humans have received from *tian*. While there is sufficient literature addressing *yin-yang* and the five phases, few commentators discuss the important limits for humans derived from *tian*. In this system, everything changes according to 'the appropriate time, opportunity' and 'limits, fate, opportunity'. *Ming* in Chinese philosophy has different meanings, and humans therefore have different ways of cooperating with it. There is a tension between fate and the willpower of humans, because humans can act against their fate. The continuity between humans and *tian* can tolerate this tension, and so this tension would not be a counter-argument against this continuity.

Timing is one embodiment of this kind of interaction between *tian* and humans; as such, humans have some degree of freedom. In the *Tangyu zhidao* [*The Dao of Tang and Yu*] and *Xunzi*, it is understood that *tian* and humans have different positions or jobs: good opportunity is thus up to *tian* while virtue is up to humans, but these two parts are not necessarily co-aligned. Since *tian* decides whether humans are presented with good opportunities or not, humans should instead focus on self-cultivation. This is because humans can take full responsibility for their virtue and humaneness, but *tian* ultimately determines whether one succeeds in

encountering a prosperous time or not. In these cases, the separation of humans and *tian* exists because humans must take responsibility for their actions rather than blaming *tian*. Part of this thesis consists in showing that this is a pivotal issue that any proper discussion of the continuity of humans and *tian* must address. In sum, a clarified understanding of timing and fate through these analyses will enhance our understanding of *tian*, and therefore a greater understanding of the functioning of correlative cosmology in Chinese thought. Timing as both individual fate and the time of *tian* not only embodies the continuity between humans and *tian* but also shows that there is no strict transcendence in Chinese thought.

I will analyse how timing is essential for the idea of *li*. The final aim of *li* is order and harmony in all-under-*tian*, it is a process in which humans not only need to follow the proper timing to act, but all forms of *li* can also change with the development of society.

Chapter three addresses later issues relating to correlative cosmology in ancient Chinese philosophy, conducting an analysis of holistic correlative cosmology and politics in an ideal politics which consists in 'small tranquillity' and 'great union'. Further developing this point, I examine the importance of *li* in both ideal patterns. All forms of *li* guarantee order in the socio-political structures, and humans are willing to adhere to the way of *li* because it is derived from and based on their natural dispositions. *Li*, as the way humans follow, is on a higher level than rough dispositions, because humans still need to shape them and make them follow appropriate timing. I examine the two ideal socio-political structures, 'small tranquillity' and 'great union', how these two structures function in socio-politics, and why people are willing to follow these principles.

Humaneness and *li* are the essences that bridge the gap between humans and *tian*. Herbert Fingarette maintains that humaneness is one kind of outside behaviour that is embodied in the forms of rites, and it is irrelevant to our heart-mind.[5] This interpretation promotes the contribution of Xunzi and has influenced Western academia's interpretation of the relationship between humaneness and *li*, and formed

[5] Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular As Sacred* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 9-10.

a different attitude compared with the dominant position of inward humanness in Chinese academia. However, this interpretation mistakes etiquettes (*liyi* 礼仪) as *li*. The concept of *li*, however, refers to more than just outside rites.

Chapter four describes the context of great union; even though general order and harmony is promoted, this does not mean that Confucianism ignores the value of an individual self. Rather, the person plays an important role in the socio-political pattern: the self is the beginning of all ethics, but I nonetheless would not take self as the central or final aim for Confucianism. The value of the person is also embodied in the way that intellectuals (*shi* 士) as selves have the ability to criticise the socio-political structure. Due to its concern with *dao*, Confucianism is not a direct supporter of the monarchy in traditional China, and so should not be held responsible for the failure of traditional China. Instead, it is necessary to return to original Confucianism and discover what the true, essential idea in Confucianism is.

These intellectuals can not only criticise existing socio-politics that go against *dao*, but they can also follow the *dao*, which can share the order and harmony of all under *tian*. The final aim of Chinese thought is not human-centred civilisation, rather, it is a shared harmony between humans and *tian*, once humans can follow the instructions (for instance, all forms of rites), and attune their dispositions to these rites. Hence, humans cannot share the harmony of *tian* if they have lost order in the human world, whereas on the other hand, the harmony of *tian* would not be significantly influenced by humans' world.

The final chapter discusses the contemporary value of Confucianism, which is the spirit of critique and timing in the narrative of order. Even in his own time, Confucius criticised the existing politics, given that he thought the idealised society of Zhou could fit his own time better and bring order.

The contemporary Chinese scholar Jiang Qing goes further, maintaining that Confucianism can contribute to contemporary Chinese politics without needing to connect with democracy. Likewise, the modern Chinese scholar Jiang Qing has continued the 'great union' and Dong's methodology, claiming that we need to build a governing system which is based on the holistic socio-politics of Confucianism

and taking the ‘great unity’ to mean ‘origin’, as transcendent evidence for a holistic society. Zhao Dingyang also maintains that the Chinese idea of ‘all under *tian*’ can contribute to modern international politics, as it is a bigger perspective that can reach beyond different territories. These two philosophers believe it is important to maintain the continuity of Chinese tradition and also to hold a critical attitude in order to adapt to the modern world. Even though they are all contemporary Chinese scholars, their thinking remains focused on a holistic order.

It is remarkable how the continuity and stability of Chinese society has lasted, and why it has lasted so long can be explained in many ways. Because of the pre-assumption of continuity and the requirement of order and harmony in Chinese culture, when Confucianism designs the ideal political and social model, it is always a unified and ordered socio-politics.

Chapter 1: The Continuity of *Tian* and Humans as the Fundamental Idea of Chinese Thought

Before proceeding, we must clarify the meaning of *tianren heyi* (the continuity between *tian* and humans). *Heyi* is the continuity between two parts, such as knowing (*zhi* 知) and practice (*xing* 行). The continuity between knowing and practice means that knowing is only knowing when it is being practiced by people. Knowing and practice can mutually enhance the understanding of 'learning' (*xue* 學) in Confucianism, in the process of learning, one's knowing and practice can mutually affect each other: knowing can improve practice, and practice can improve knowing. Like the relationship between knowing and practice, the relationship between humans and *tian* is a reciprocal relation. Understanding humans is actually a way to know *tian*, while knowing *tian* is also a way to know humans.

To begin with, there are a number of differing interpretations of *tian* worth considering. In Feng Youlan's interpretation, *tian* has five different meanings: materiality, sovereignty, fate, nature and reason.[6] These different meanings dramatically affect our understanding of the relationship between *tian* and human beings. In Graham Parkes's interpretation, *tian* as nature can contribute as a new resource for environmental philosophy.[7]

While some Chinese scholars like Mou Zongsan take *tian* as a transcendent source, Roger Ames does not agree with using this expression of a unified whole, arguing that there is no Being behind many beings, no reality behind appearances.[8] Chinese thinkers instead understand *tian* as cosmos or the 'ten thousand things', and not one ordered, unified universe, Ames is prudent in choosing not to use notions

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[6] Feng Youlan, *Zhonguo zhexue shi shang* [*The History of Chinese Philosophy Volume one*] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2008), 46.

[7] Parkes, Graham, "Zhuangzi and Nietzsche on the Human and Nature" *Environmental Philosophy* 10 (1), 1-24.

[8] David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), 247.

like the ‘unity’ of *tian* and human. He instead draws on the phrase ‘the continuity between *tian* and humans’. I adopt this expression as well, because the continuity of *tian* and humans does not imply that humans are equal to or the same thing as *tian*, or that there is a supreme one behind things. With this methodological approach established, my main concern in this chapter is with the historical, linear interpretation of *tian* in pre-Qin texts, and what kind of narrative we can obtain through these interpretations.

Robert Eno analyses the meaning of *tian* in classical Chinese texts, how the meanings of *tian* change and cannot have theoretical coherence.

> The extreme instability of the term "t'ien" in early Confucian texts, and the willingness to allow so rhetorically prominent a term to be employed without theoretical coherence, must reflect the force of a coherent set of core interests that governed formulations of doctrine and whose free expression could only be impeded by the friction of a fixed concept of T'ien.[9]

Here, *tian* works as a function to cater to different contexts, since the term can have many meanings, it is difficult to have a fixed concept of *tian*. It is then inappropriate to translate *tian* as “heaven” which is a fixed concept.

Confronting the challenge of Western systematic philosophy, most Chinese scholars try to build a systematic terminology to respond to it. For instance, Zhang Xianglong and Mou Zongsan tried to consider *tian* in a transcendent sense similar to a Western God, but this method is inappropriate from the very beginning. An essential thing is determine to what is the most significant trait of Chinese thought.

When thinking about Chinese culture, most have taken the notion of the continuity of *tian* and humans as central to Chinese philosophy. Firstly, then, we need to understand what *tian* is. I approach the notion of *tian* by analysing it in terms of a relationship between *tian* and humans. Secondly, by analysing the nature of humans, we can see how *tian* can be interpreted in this context.

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[9] Robert Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and the Defense of Ritual Mastery* (SUNY Press, 1990), 6.

1.1 The Historical Relationship of *Tian* and Human

To understand the significance of *tian* in Chinese culture, one needs to analyse the historical development of Chinese thought and how Chinese philosophers have interpreted the idea. It is still debatable whether the interpretation of *tian* proceeded from irrationalism to rationalism: Xiong Shili and other Chinese scholars maintain that early Chinese thought progresses from superstition towards rationalism until the Han dynasty, taking Dong Zhongshu as representing a regression (because Dong interweaves supernatural power within the correlative cosmos).[10] Xiong argues that Dong connects punishment and rewards for humans to the will of *tian*, and then turns *tian* into an anthropocentric figure; this is considered a regression compared with the more natural interpretation of *tian* from Confucius. This opinion dominates in the Chinese academic field. Actually, this is the wrong direction to proceed in, because rational thinking and reasons are Western terms which are used in the Western context, which means that it is not an appropriate estimation of Dong, who actually contributes a new, systematic way to describe the reaction between *tian* and humans in detail. I would rather say that it clearly explains the necessary requirement of Confucianism for order and harmony between humans and *tian*. The process of *yin* and *yang*, and the five phases, combines with the values of humans to form a holistic picture of the universe giving us an outward or macro-perspective.

I choose one typical ancient myth in *The Guoyu* (*Discourses of the States*) to analyse the relationship between humans and *tian*, as this myth clearly delineates three stages in ancient times. The first stage is during primitive times, when shamans dictated communication with *tian*; the second stage occurs when the capacities of a shaman are delimited: everyone is now said to be able to communicate with *tian*. There are many conflicts between these different beliefs, and many economic and social problems thereby emerge. The third stage is a unified political and sacrificial system in which the ruler gains authority and is now the only figure with the capacity to communicate with *tian*.

[10] Xiong Shili, *Yuanru* [*The Original Meaning of Ru*] (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2009), 57.

> Anciently, men and spirits did not intermingle. At that time there were certain persons who were so perspicacious, single-minded, and reverential that their understanding enabled them to make meaningful collation of what lies above and below, and their insight to illumine what is distant and profound. Therefore the spirit would descend into them. The possessors of such powers were, if men, called *xi* (shamans), and, if women, *wu* (shamanesses). It is they who supervised the positions of the spirits at the ceremonies, sacrificed to them, and otherwise handled religious matters. As a consequence, the spheres of the divine and the profane were kept distinct. The spirits sent down blessings on the people, and accepted from them their offerings. There were no natural calamities.
>
> In the degenerate time of Shao-hao [traditionally put at the twenty-sixth century B.C.] however, the Nine Li threw virtue into disorder. Men and spirits became intermingled, with each household indiscriminately performing for itself the religious observances which had hitherto been conducted by the shamans. As a consequence, men lost their reverence for the spirits, the spirits violated the rules of men, and natural calamities arose. Hence the successor of Shao-hao, Chuan-hsu, charged Ch'ung, Governor of the South, to handle the affairs of heaven in order to determine the proper place of the spirits, and Li, Governor of Fire, to handle the affairs of Earth in order to determine the proper places of men. And such is what is meant by cutting the communication between Heaven and Earth.[11]

According to this famous quotation from *the Guoyu*, we can see the reason why it is necessary to cut the communication between *tian* and human. In this context, earth refers to our living world while *tian* refers to the spiritual world, which also includes our dead ancestors. The relationship between *tian* and humans changed from a unity to two separated parts: in the first stage we cannot say it is the continuity between

[11] From Derk Bodde, "Myths of Ancient China "in Samuel Noah Kramer, *Mythologies of the Ancient World* (New York: Anchor, 1961), 44.

humans and *tian*, rather it is an undivided cosmos, where humans can communicate with *tian*. Humans are the ones who can accept things from a supernatural *tian*, but there is no reciprocal effect between these two. The point in this quotation is to emphasise that humans should focus on human affairs rather than wasting their energy on sacrifice, as *tian* may not be influenced by our sacrifice.

Xu Xusheng maintains that at the end of primitive society, shamans were generally farmers or herdsmen. There were no professional religious practitioners: it was instead common to have a family shaman. At the end of clan society and the beginning of tribal union, these shamans turned into more concrete religious figures, and it was only these priests who could engage *tian* as a professional religious practice. In this way, the religious became a trade for few people.[12]

After this development, people could no longer freely communicate with *tian* through the same form of practice. Zhang Guangzhi maintains that in this early period shamans served the people, and their communication between *tian* and humans could then be controlled by rulers.[13] In early myths, the meaning of our world was controlled and dominated by shamans, and commoners could not communicate with *tian* directly: they had to rely on these shamans to interpret *tian*. In the effort to properly worship divinity and thereby have good fortune, communities drew on large quantities of their food stocks for sacrifice. The produce of farmers was diverted to this end, which led to further social chaos. In this dangerous context, the central authorities acted to control the interpretation of *tian*, setting up *li* to give rules to commoners. From this myth, we might infer that, compared with *tian*, the ruler has more acting power and must take responsibility for human affairs: this mythical-historical example highlights the view that humans should not rely on appeasing *tian*, because *tian* usually does not take part in the affairs of humans after this separation. Actually, we can see that the aim of the author in this myth is to keep order in the human world. The author is worried that

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[12] Xu Xusheng, *Zhongguo gushi de chuanshuo shidai* [*The Period of Myths in Chinese Ancient History*] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), 76-85.

[13] Zhang Guangzhi, *Zhongguo kaoguxue lunwenji* [*the Anelect of Chinese Archaeology*] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1999), 393.

humans spend too much energy on sacrifice and thereby invite chaos into our world, taking this as a good reason for the necessity of a ruler's governing: humans need a ruler to guide them and keep good order.

K.C. Chang's understanding of this myth is that *tian* is where all the wisdom of human affairs lies.[14] The shaman, as the authoritative intermediary between the human world and *tian*, played an important role in ancient politics. Chang goes further, saying that these shamans are rulers, and not only rulers, but that they also have other religious roles, and in three dynasties, these rulers' deeds were considered supernatural and magical to some degree.[15] I would say that according to this myth, even the ancient Chinese noticed the necessity for separating *tian* and humans, and the need for a greater awareness that humans should take responsibility for themselves. At this stage, however, many elements of the supernatural and magic were still present.

> What is said here shows in a general way the forms of superstition of the early Chinese. From the fact that sorcerers and witches were considered necessary to regulate the dwelling places, positions at the sacrifices, and order of precedence of spirits, we may see how numerous these spirits were. The fact that the spirits were supposed to be able to bestow happiness, receive sacrifices, and to enter into human beings shows that they were regarded as anthropomorphic beings. And the statements that 'people and spirits were confusedly mingled,' 'people and spirits had the same position,' and 'the spirits followed the custom of the people'; shows us that the actions of the spirits were looked upon as being quite indistinguishable from those of human beings. The Chinese of that time were superstitious and ignorant; they had religious ideas but no philosophy; so that the religious ideas and spirits which they believed in were exactly like those of the Greeks.[16]

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[14] K. C. Chang, *Art, Myth and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983), 45.

[15] Ibid., 45–47.

[16] Youlan Feng and Derk Bodde, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1983), 24.

This is the origin of the idea of continuity between human and *tian*, but it is still very primitive and more or less remains supernaturally motivated. There are spirits, which are mainly dead people in *tian*, and then there is a concrete personal ruler (*di*) who controls and gives over to cosmos, and he severs the possible way for people to directly connect with *tian*. But *tian* is still dominant: Humans cannot effect *tian* to the same extent that *tian* effects humans.

> Those who were oppressed and terrified and facing execution announced their innocence to the powers above. The high Di surveyed the people. But there was no fragrant virtue, and the punishments sent out a smell that was rank. The august Di pitied and felt compassion for those among the multitudes who, though innocent, were facing execution. He requited the oppressors with terror and put an end to the Miao people so that they had no descendants. He thereupon ordered Chong and Li to break the communication between Heaven and Earth so that there would be no more descending and reaching up.
>
> *Shangshu Zhengyi luxing* 19 [*The Correct Meaning of Book of Documents*][17]

From this, we can tell that the anthropomorphic *tian* (including spirits) is prudently mingled with humans, that this *tian* is placed in a higher rank than humans, and that it is more difficult to have a unity with *tian* for commoners, as this communication between humans and *tian* was not encouraged. In this way, the cosmos is in an order. In the *Shangshu kongshizhuang*, Di orders Yi, He and Shi control different parts, and separates people and divinity. This difference of jobs or positions is called *Juedi tiantong*. In this way, with order established, the people know how to behave in an appropriate way. But this does not directly imply a naturalism. As Feng Youlan maintained, the focus is rather that *tian* and humans should have different works to complete. [18]

Compared with ancient Chinese who did not have the ability to distinguish *tian* and human being, this *Juedi tiantong* means that the ancient Chinese began to

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[17] Michael J. Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Harvard Univ Asia Center, 2002), 106.

[18] Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zhexue shi diyibu*, [*The History of Chinese Philosophy Volume one*] (Shanghai: China East Normal University press), 23-24.

distinguish *tian* from humans, and also humans and spirits. This is a reconstruction of the Chinese culture of continuity of *tian* and human beings. People thus maintain the continuity with *tian*, but not through supernatural power, but rather because *tian* can affect humans in many ways and there is mutual interaction between these two. This interaction is mainly in the inward nature of humans, which can be interpreted according to the perspective of *tian*.

The role of *tian* thus changed in human affairs: although *tian* still carried the meaning of supreme power, the influence of *tian* on the everyday social context weakened. On the one hand Confucius affirmed that he could not offend against *tian* (*Analects* 3.13), but he also advised reverence towards the spirits and deities, while keeping them at a distance (*Analects* 6.22). What further contributed to this stance was the view of the ancient politician named Zichan, who claimed that 'the *dao* of heaven is far, but the *dao* of human is near' (*Zuozhuan.zhaogongshibanian* [*Commentary of Zuo*]). Both Zichan and Confucius had a practical attitude towards *tian*: they did not go against the divinity of *tian*, but they nonetheless became more focused on the affairs of humans.

As such, *tian* not only became a notion of authority legitimation for rulers, it also served to provide instructions to individual humans' behaviour. But as the ruler gradually came to control the right to have continuity with *tian*, commoners could also have continuity with *tian*. D. C. Lau maintains that the mandate of *tian* is not only an endorsement of the ruler, but that everyone is also restrained by the mandate of *tian*, which is the reason why people should be moral.[19] For Confucius himself, his mandate of *tian* was to be a teacher for the people. Confucius could communicate with *tian* by himself, rather than having to rely on shamans (*Analects* 14.35). Furthermore, in the *Zhuangzi*, everybody can be the son of *tian* (*Zhuangzi* 1.1), the son of *tian* thereby not only endorses the authority of the rulers then, but before Zhuangzi the son of *tian* could be only used to describe the ruler. In the *Analects*, Confucius did not make it clear how commoners could have continuity with *tian*, even though he noticed that individuals could have this continuity as well.

[19] D.C. Lau trans., *The Analects* (London: Penguin UK, 1979), iv.

Mencius, however, made it clearer that humans can actually have this continuity, because this connection is possible through the inward heart-mind and natural tendency (I will explain this notion further, in the latter part of this chapter). It can be concluded that *tian* as a notion turned towards individual life. The continuity between *tian* and humans turned inward, and in this way it could balance *tian*'s political role as well, because the individual human could now communicate with and be endorsed by *tian* through cultivating his/her own heart-mind rather than relying on the ruler or shamans. Onozawa Seiichi notes the transition of the mandate of *tian*: that it began with the order of shamans and developed into the heart-mind of the people (referring to *de*).[20]

Following this, since individual humans can communicate with *tian*, it follows that humans should return their focus to their heart-mind and from this to reach the level of *tian*, in order to have the continuity of humans and *tian*.

Tian has less sense of being a super power for Xunzi, and cannot always guarantee order and peace in human affairs. Instead, Xunzi explained ceremony in such a way that it is used to inspire awe in *tian* through prayer in a very natural way.

> If you pray for rain and there is rain, what of that? I say there is no special relationship—as when you do not pray for rain and there is rain. When the sun and moon are eclipsed, we attempt to save them; when heaven sends drought, we pray for rain; and before we decide any important undertaking, we divine with bone and milfoil. We do those things not because we believe that such ceremonies will produce the results we seek, but because we want to embellish such occasions with ceremony. Thus, the gentleman considers such ceremonies as embellishments, but the commoners consider them supernatural. To consider them embellishments is fortunate; to consider them supernatural is unfortunate. (*Xunzi* 17.11)

From this piece, we can infer the sentiment that there is no relation of causality between praying and what *tian* gives us, what can also be seen is that the continuity does not refer to a super powered connection between prayers and *tian*. *Tian* was

[20] Onozawa Seiichi 小野泽精一, *Qide sixiang* [*The Thinking of Qi*] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renming chubanshe, 1990), 60.

transformed from a purposeful deity interacting with humans into an inscrutable one, but humans still have to accept what *tian* provides, in the sense that humans must follow tian because tian implies natural effects, such as weather and catastrophes. Even though Xunzi distinguished the human from *tian*, and greatly weakened the divinity-related aspects of *tian*, he nonetheless maintained the continuity of humans and *tian*: this continuity refers to the consistent relationship between *tian* and humans. On one hand, *tian* and humans share goodness, on the other hand, because of this consistency, humans must also follow the way of *tian*. But, when humans have a strong enough will *tian* should not impede it.

All this evidence indicates that the idea of Jaspers's Axial age may be correct, since Chinese culture's supernatural elements seemed to weaken. This does not mean, however, that Chinese thought developed from the irrational to the rational, and this process cannot be held to be a breakthrough in this rational sense. Yu Yingshi holds that the breakthrough for Chinese culture came with the idea of immanent transcendence, which is a response to shamanistic culture. Because the shaman's order is derived from anthropomorphic divinity, it is outside the human realm. This breakthrough weakened the role of the shaman.[21] Yu is correct that the role of the shaman got weaker, but is it also true that Chinese culture is thereby one of immanent transcendence? Yu inherited the idea of immanent transcendence from Mou Zongsan. In contrast to Yu, Mou dismissed the importance of *tian*. Instead, he focused on the heart-mind of humans, even though he still accepted the continuity of humans and *tian*. Mou insisted on a difference between a Western God (which is outside this world and transcendent) and the *dao* of *tian* (which is immanent transcendent for him). Because the *dao* of *tian* can descend into humans as their heart-mind, *tian* and humans have an inter-related consistency ~~consistence through this~~. The continuity of *tian* and humans is inwardly directed~~goes to inward~~, the Chinese *tian* thus cannot be equivalent to a transcendent God like the West. In spite of this non-equivalence, and because of the challenge from the West after the May

[21] Yu Yingshi, *Lun tianren zhiji*: *Zhonguo gudai sixiang qiyuan shitan* [*Discuss the Relationship between Tian and Human: The Origin of Chinese Thoughts*] (Taibei: Taiwan lianjing chubanshe, 2014), 36.

Fourth movement, Chinese scholars nonetheless have to engage and co-operate with democracy and rationality. In order to reach a methodological compromise in the face of this non-equivalence, they therefore need to stipulate that the *dao* of *tian* is altogether beyond irrationality.

Considering the problem of whether Chinese thought is theist or atheist, James Legge maintains that *tian* and *shangdi* endorse the idea that Chinese thought is a theism.[22] Julia Ching believes that god is the source of things.[23] Ames maintains that Confucianism is neither theist or mainly secular, rather it is at once atheistic and profoundly religious. It is a religion without a God, a religion that affirms the cumulative human experience itself.[24] Ames also does not agree that Chinese thought is rational in a Western sense.

Having read Mou's work, however, Ames and Hall instead say that it is doubtful to claim that transcendence is significant in china.[25] They do not, however, think that the absence of transcendence is a limit for Chinese culture. *Tian* is not transcendent, and yet it also does not totally lose its divinity. In this regard, even Xunzi had a more natural way of interpreting *tian*. Xunzi is particularly significant in his own distinguishing of the human from *tian*: he is one of the very few thinkers in ancient china who expresses a great deal of confidence about humans' power. Does this mean that Xunzi spoke specifically about the separation of humans and *tian*? Is the human independent of *tian*, and can the human be in violation of it? Similarly, does this entail that Xunzi challenged the tradition of the continuity of *tian* and humans? It is rather the case that Xunzi discussed the separation of *tian* and humans in the context of responding to Mozi. Mozi argued that the Ru school was fatalistic, while Xunzi countered that *tian* and humans should take responsibility for

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[22] James Legge, *The Religions of China: Confucianism and Tâoism Described and Compared with Christianity* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1880), 11.

[23] Julia Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study*, (Tokyo; New York: Kodansha Amer Inc, 1977), 118.

[24] Ames, Roger, "Li and the A-theistic religiousness of classical Confucianism". In *Confucian spirituality I*, ed. Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker, (New York: Crossroad, 2003), 165.

[25] David L Hall and Roger T Ames, *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), xiii.

their own domains: humans should take responsibility for human affairs rather than blaming *tian*.

If we want to know whether Xunzi really meant to separate *tian* and humans, encouraging humans to challenge and conquer *tian*, we need to go to the original text to analyse the meaning of '*fen*'. "If you understand the division (*fen* 分) between *tian* and mankind, then you can properly be called a 'perfect man'" (*Xunzi* 17.1). What is the meaning of *fen*? Does *fen* mean 'separation' or a different position? Feng Youlan claims that it has both meanings in different paragraphs.[26] It is interesting to note, however, that according to Chao Fulin, *fen* means 'position' here, and that, taken as a whole, the sentence means that *tian* and humans should have different positions or functions in the cosmos.[27] I adopt Chao Fulin's interpretation that *fen* means different positions. Following clearly enough from this interpretation, Xunzi does not really mean to separate the continuity of humans and *tian*, since Xunzi respects the power of *tian* in most passages and he never intends to conquer or go against that power of *tian*, he still maintains the consistency between *tian* and humans.

Furthermore, Xunzi merely claimed that if *tian* has its own pattern, and humans have their own social and political structure, then one who knows one's limits (*ming* 命) should not blame *tian*: 'Those who know themselves do not resent others; those who know fate do not resent heaven' (*Xunzi* 4.6). Their *ming* is also from *tian*, the consistency that embodies humanity does not go against *tian*. Even with this consistency, Xunzi makes it clear that *tian* and humans are not one. This explains why it was necessary for Xunzi to make clear that *tian* and humans have a different pattern and structure. When Xunzi accounts for *tian* as a moral term, this *tian* is the source of other things (such as when one's good natural tendency comes from *tian*, even though Xunzi mainly focused on the negative outcomes of one's tendency). Because of this understanding of *tian*, Xunzi maintained that the acting ruler should

[26] Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zhexueshi xinbian* [*Chinese History of Philosophy: Volume Two*] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1984), 369.

[27] Chao Fulin, "Lun xunzi de tianren zhifen shuo" ["A Discussion of Xunzi's Division of Heaven and Human"] *Guanzi xuekan* [*The Study of Guanzi*], 2(2001), 13-18.

behave like heaven as well. The ruler should be 'like one of the great spirits and one of the heavenly ancestors' (*Xunzi* 18.5).

When he interprets *tian* as a natural principle, *tian* is nature, and humans can be bad, which is one way of being natural or uncivilised: *tian* and humans still have the natural consistency of been uncivilised. Xunzi highlights the importance of learning, because learning is a process of evolving from natural humanity towards being a civilised person.

Xunzi certainly advanced the idea of utilising *tian* (which is not the same as conquering it): 'how can obeying heaven and praising it be better than regulating (*zh*i 制) what heaven has mandated and using it? How can anxiously waiting for the correct time, be as good as responding to the time and exploiting it?' (*Xunzi* 17.13). When Xunzi highlights the idea of *zhitian*, it is a process of cultivating the natural *tian* towards a civilised *tian,* which is more involved in the interaction with humans, and that is how humans can affect *tian*. Based on this quotation, there are many Chinese scholars (including even Mao Zedong), who claimed that Xunzi advocated the idea that humans can overcome *tian*. Does this suggestion really mean that Xunzi approved of the notion that humans can win over *tian*? Such scholars have ignored the importance of interpreting the second part of this sentence, which focuses on the idea that we have to act according to the proper time.

Another intuitive criticism is that Xunzi maintained that our desires are from *tian* as well: 'We do not need to wait to have desires, these desires are from heaven' (*Xunzi* 22.11). If so, then how could humans overcome and conquer *tian* if even our basic desires are from *tian*?

> When the work of heaven has been established and its achievements perfected, the physical form becomes whole and the spirit is born. Love and hate, delight and anger, sorrow and joy are stored within—these are described as the emotions given to us by nature. The eye, ear, nose, mouth, and body each have the capacity to provide sense contact, but their capacities are not interchangeable—these are termed the faculties given us by heaven. The heart-mind that dwells within the central cavity is used to control the five faculties—

> it is called the ruler provided by heaven…then one knows what one should and what they should not … that is called knowing heaven (*Xunzi* 17.4).

Xunzi clearly discerns human affairs and knows that people have to find an appropriate way to utilise the mandate of *tian*. On the one hand, humans can effect *tian*, on the other hand, humans need to follow the time of *tian*, for instance, in adhering to the *tian*-derived capacities of what they can and cannot do. In simpler terms, utilising the mandate of *tian* is more akin to 'knowing *tian'* (*zhitian* 知天). In the category of following *tian*, one should try one's best and respond to *tian* in a timely way.

> *Tian* is able to beget the myriad things, but it cannot differentiate them … the myriad things under the canopy of heaven and all those who belong among living people depend upon the appearance of the sage, for only then is each assigned in proper position. (*Xunzi* 19.15)

From this perspective, Xunzi is similar to Dong Zhongshu. Both of them believe that the human is created by *tian* and restrained by *tian*, and though the human is the most exceptional figure derived from *tian*, the human has to follow the time of *tian*: this is the interaction between humans and *tian.*

If one wants to understand the inward continuity of *tian* and human, one has to consider the relationship between humaneness and sincerity, because whereas sincerity is the *dao* of *tian*, humaneness is the *dao* of humans. To explain the meaning of the continuity of humans and *tian*, based on the *taiyi shenghui,* Michael Puett writes that all gods, divinity and humans are from one ancestor, and *tian* becomes the father of the ruler. But for Roger Ames, there is no singular 'one' (one shared ancestor) behind Chinese thought, and he rejects the notion of a shared ancestral purpose. Puett takes this idea of a shared ancestor as a sign that it is not a process of the weakening the divinization of nature, but rather that it is a process of human self-divination.[28]I would rather say that in Dong Zhonshu's text *tian* is the human's shared ancestor, but Dong still takes *tian* as a whole. Likewise, *tian* has a divine part, but it also has a natural part. More specifically, Dong approaches the

[28] Michael J. Puett, *To Become a God*, 198-199.

issue of a continuity between humans and *tian* through the form of an analogy between humans and *tian*. When he discusses how one can have continuity with *tian*, he endorses the idea that rulers have the ability to embody the continuity with *tian*.

Feng Youlan approaches such issues in a historical manner, claiming that *yin* and *yang* are primitivism, but, compared with Shamanism, is a legitimate means towards rational and natural ideas. Yu Yingshi applies Karl Jasper's notion of the Axial period to these developments, and claims that Chinese culture shifts from a magical shamanism to a logical cosmos based on *qi*, and that this was a philosophical breakthrough in ancient China.[29] For Yu Yingshi, however, this breakthrough is considered transcendent, which similarly conflicts with Ames's views.

As mentioned earlier, Yu Yingshi, based on his shared assumption with Jaspers (on the breakthrough of transcendence) and the weakening of deity-related aspects of *tian*, concluded that Chinese thought progressed towards rationalism. As a New Confucian, Yu focused on immanent transcendence, and he would thus take Dong Zhongshu's correlative cosmos combining *yin*, *yang* and the five phases with humans and *tian* to build a coherent system, as a regression in thought, as being not rational enough. However, based on a renewed analysis of Xunzi's ideas, it is hard to claim that Dong Zhongshu's cosmology was a regression in Chinese thought. According to Claude Lévi-Strauss' theory of structure, the correlative cosmology provides a rational and coherent meaning by depicting an ordered cosmos. [30] As such, it can be considered a progression rather than a regression, and it would be a clear way to describe an ordered pattern of humans and *tian*. From the perspective of historical development, Dong combined ideas from the different schools and developed a greater correlative cosmological view in order to explain the cosmos and our society in a coherent and ordered way. He developed the idea of 'great union' (*datong* 大同), and depicted an ideal social-politics called the 'great unity' (*dayitong* 大一統). This image is not a historical institution, rather it is based on a

[29] Yu Yingshi, *Lun tianren zhji—zhonguo gudai sixiang shitan* [*Relationship between Tian and Human: The Origin of Chinese Thought*] (Taibei: Taiwan Lianjing press, 2004), 135.

[30] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 77.

correlative cosmos in which there is a mutual correspondence with humans, and it provides a compelling and cosmologically continuous reason why the ruler should apply humaneness in politics.

1.2 Inward Sincerity (*Cheng*) and Humaneness

Mencius presents a clear way of understanding how it is possible for humans and *tian* have continuity: this continuity concerns an inward turn. As the most influential modern scholar, Mou Zongsan attempted to use Kant's methodology to fix the 'problem' of Chinese thought. He conceived of the heart-mind as both immanent and transcendent, and in this way we can have continuity of humans and *tian*, as the heart-mind is itself the bridge that connects humans and *tian*. In the preface of *Xianxiang yu Wuzishen* [*Phenomena and Thing Itself*], Mou writes that the original heart-mind is subjective, objective and absolute. On the objective level, it is the *dao* of *tian* and the mandate of *tian*; on the subjective level, it is humaneness and the natural tendency of the heart-mind. Mou's inward heart-mind is derived from Mencius's understanding, but these subjective and objective elements constitute his own contribution to the notion. In contrast, in Confucius's understanding these two levels (*tian* and heart-mind) do not appear to be separate: 'I study what is near at hand and aspire to what is lofty'[31] (*Analects* 14.35). Zhu Xi's commentary suggests that this study is self-cultivation, which is a way to practice the heart-mind, and thus achieves the level of *tian*. Mencius claimed that it is possible for commoners to reach the realm of *tian*, if they practiced self-cultivation, cultivating their heart-mind and nourishing their refined *qi*. All these ancient thinkers' interpretation of *tian* is situated in our everyday life and our lived experience, rather than in a transcendental analysis. Although it is difficult to reach the level of *tian* in such a way, it is nonetheless possible for humans to do so. Both of these aspects indicate that *tian* is not an absolute objectivity.

[31] Ames and Rosemont trans., *The Analects of Confucius,* 180.

If the immanent-transcendent distinction does not present a sufficient basis for the continuity of humans and *tian*, pursuing this continuity through human self-divination is also problematic. Following from what was discussed earlier, Puett argues that the divine aspects of *tian* may have weakened, but this was because the divine aspects of humans strengthened. Based on *Mencius* 7A4 and 2A2, Puett concluded that Mencius and Zhuangzi accepted the divine power of humans.[32] The unity of humans and *tian* can work, according to Puett, because of the human capacity for self-divinization, through which humans can connect with *tian*. I think Puett's general approach is correct, and agree with the logic of his argument, but what he takes as evidence in the paragraphs *Mencius* 7A13 and 7B25 about divinity (*shen* 神) is inaccurate. *Shen* in this context, according to Zhu Xi's commentary, means 'amazing, inscrutable' rather than divinity. In *Mencius 7A4*, Mencius maintained that we can have continuity of *tian* by looking inward, as we have sincerity in our heart-mind, and this is what we share with *tian*. Mencius became more focused on practising humaneness, but he never proclaimed that humans can become *tian*, as *tian* and humans are fundamentally different.

If neither of these approaches provides an acceptable basis for continuity, the idea of 'natural tendency' may furnish such a ground. The *Zhongyong* (*The Doctrine of the Mean*) describes how it is possible to connect natural tendency and *tian* in our life. According to this text, our natural tendency comes from *tian*: this tendency means that human beings have a good part of *tian*. If one can fulfil or complete one's tendency then one can have the continuity of one's tendency and *tian* in one's life: this is the completion of one's moral practice. The combination of tendency and *tiandao* is the completion of the human being. Humaneness is the idealised natural tendency, which works as the bridge to connect tendency and *tian*. Because humaneness is based on the assumption of continuity between humans and *tian*, this humaneness is not anthropocentric. Rather, such a humanity never tries to conquer the natural world for the benefit of human beings. This kind of humanity instead tries to cooperate with other things in *tian* on the condition that caring has different

[32] Michael J. Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 134.

levels (to love one's family more than strangers and so on), this type of humanity can then confirm to the continuity of humans and *tian*.

In order to better appreciate this line of thought, it is necessary to draw on similarly related insights in Confucius's thought. In the *Analects*, Confucius not only frames the idea of *tiandao* in the realm of humaneness and natural tendency, but also gives concrete ways to practice it. What Confucius claimed is that acting according to humaneness, and practice in arts, is a means towards *dao* (*Analects* 7.6). If one can practice the six arts, then one can understand *tiandao*. This is because practicing the six arts can resonate with and endorse the way of humaneness, humaneness penetrates into our every-day concrete life, and this is a process of cultivating the good aspect from *tian*, which is natural tendency. When Confucius discusses humaneness, he uses the term 'humaneness' to resonate with *tiandao*. This is a particular understanding of *tiandao:* 'What *tian* commands (*ming* 命) is called natural tendencies; drawing out these natural tendencies is called the proper way; improving upon this way (*xiudao* 修道) is called education (*jiao* 教).'[33] Inwardly, humaneness is the final aim for one's cultivation, it is the lofty realm of our moral personality when we cultivate ourselves or practice. Outwardly, humaneness can resonate with the higher level *tiandao*. Natural tendency is the good part derived from *tian*, and that is why one can be lead by natural tendency to follow the *dao*, it is the beginning of self-cultivation, and i also provides a good seed for the completion of humaneness. Hence, humaneness and natural tendency are not closed off from each other, they are themselves lofty and connected with *tiandao*. Sages and gentlemen use their morality for the *Dao* of governing. This is the embodiment of applying humaneness.

Humans follow the way of humaneness because humaneness is from *tian*, and because humans are the only beings that can follow the way of humaneness, then

[33] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, *Ames: Focusing the Familiar* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 89.

humans are thereby the only ones who can participate with *tian*.[34] Even though animals may have the ability to care and love for their own types, the proper *dao* of sage-hood resides beyond this to further participate with *tian* and earth, and achieve harmony between these two.

From the human perspective, humaneness is the way of approaching the continuity of humans and *tian*, whereas sincerity approaches the same question from *tian*'s perspective. From *tian*'s perspective, there is no humaneness, as *tian* does not have a specific preference. Sincerity, for *tian*, means that in the process of continuity (between *tian* and human beings) humans must engage in practice and self-cultivation. We cannot have this continuity naturally without putting in any effort, especially since this is a process of (what is termed) 'completion'. Mark Edward Lewis translates Confucius's *cheng* as the complete and undivided focus of the refined energies that makes possible higher human functions.[35] I think this translation more concretely captures the emphasis on embodiment and everyday concrete life better than the translation of 'perfecting' or 'completing' from Roger Ames. C*heng* means that one is very steadfast and sincere, and Lewis's translation specifies the underlying conditions for this.

'In the world only someone of perfect *cheng* is considered able to complete his nature'[36] (*Zhongyong* 22). In this chapter, this use of *cheng* means sincerity, which Ames has translated as 'perfecting'. When one is sincere, one can complete his or her natural tendency and help other things fulfil their natural tendency as well, and one can join with *tian* and earth. In chapter 25, being sincere is to be naturally complete, when *Dao* is spontaneously unfolding. 'Completing the self is humane. Completing things is knowledge'[37] (*Zhongyong 25*). Thus, from the perspective of humans,

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[34] This idea is from Dong Zhongshu's *Chunqiu fanlu* [*Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*]: 人受命乎天也，故超然有以倚。物疢疾莫能为仁义，唯人独能为仁义；物疢疾莫能偶天地，唯人独能偶天地。（《人副天数》）.

[35] Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2006), 18.

[36] Ian Johnston and Wang Ping, trans., *Daxue & Zhongyong*, Bilingual edition (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2012), 325.

[37] Ibid., 337.

sincerity is humane, while from the perspective of *tian* it is sincerity of *tian*, and towards other things it is knowledge. Humaneness and knowledge are the expressions of our natural tendency in a different context. Sincerity is from the heart-mind and is the opposite of hypocrisy or fake behaviour (*wei* 伪), and it is a unified singular concept rather than a duality. 'Being true is the way of heaven; to reflect upon this is the way of man' (*Mencius* 4A12). D.C. Lau translates *cheng* as 'true', and so *cheng* may thus be seen as the fundamental condition for the existence of things in our world. Without *cheng* we would not have this world, as the *dao* of humans has to follow the *dao* of *tian*. Humans have to pursue sincerity, because 'sincerity, perfecting, or the true' (*Cheng*) is the *dao* of *tian*.

In 6B1 of *Mencius* it is claimed that 'Our body and complexion are given to us by *tian*. Only a sage can give his body complete fulfilment' (*Mencius* 7A38). Mencius tries to connect our natural tendency to *tian*; every living thing has different traits in our world, this is *tianxing* 天性 (which means the natural tendency of *tian*, or inborn natural tendency). However, if humans' natural tendency is from *tian*, then humans have to be different from other natural things (for instance, animals and plants). For Mencius, natural tendency is that which can distinguish humans from animals and plants. The good natural tendency and a good *tian* have this continuity, but it still necessary to address how a neutral *tian* can have this continuity with humans.

1.3 Neutral *Tian* and Good Natural Tendency

One aim for humans to practice is to keep the continuity of humans and *tian*, but does this mean that humans need self-cultivation in order to confirm this continuity? This would mean that humans take the risk of returning to chaos (*luan* 乱), as *tian* does not share the same preferences as humans. Certainly, the continuity of *tian* and humans appears as a continuity between these two parts, but this continuity is based on division: humans have to have *li* to give themselves order, and they also have to be aware of the difference between humans and their surroundings. It is instead through practice, then, that one can say that one confirms the continuity of the

human and *tian*. The continuity of *tian* and humans always involves self-cultivation: one cannot achieve a level of continuity between *tian* and humans without a division with other things under *tian*.

This division indicates a significant problem that must be addressed in considering *tian*. As Puett highlights, 'the central tension for Mencius [...] is that although heaven is the ultimate source of moral patterns, it can and does arbitrarily act in opposition to these patterns. And yet we must accept what heaven commands.'[38] There are only two ways to solve this problem. First, one can claim that *tian* can sometimes be humane, and sometimes not. Or, alternatively, one can say that *tian* is altogether indifferent to moral judgement. Laozi and Zhuangzi similarly noticed this tension, adopting the latter stance: while people should act according to *tian*, *tian* itself is amoral and thereby indifferent to moral judgement. Confucianism, however, faces the problem of having to explain a discontinuous *tian*, and this apparent tension between humans and *tian* is embodied not only on a theoretical level but also on the directly personal level of practice or self-cultivation.

For Mencius, humaneness and appropriateness come from our natural tendency, which is why he has to strongly disagree with Gaozi (as yet another philosopher similar to Laozi and Zhuangzi in his approach on this issue), who held that our natural tendency is neither good nor bad but would adjust according to the relevant environment. Instead, humaneness and appropriateness are innate in our natural tendency for Mencius. Hence, relating to the described tension, Mencius has to explain how a good natural tendency can generate bad behaviour. Mencius here introduced two important notions: his understanding of heart-mind and 'energy'. Using these notions he likewise argued that the emergence of bad behaviour arises when humans simply give up in their efforts to be good.

Natural tendency is spontaneous kindness towards others for Mencius, and spontaneous kindness is derived from the care that we find in the family. Franklin Perkins translates *xing* as 'natural dispositions' or 'characteristic tendencies'.[39]

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[38] Puett, *To Become a God*, 144.

[39] Franklin Perkins, *Heaven and Earth Are Not Humane: The Problem of Evil in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 129.

Particularly for Perkins, *xing* refers to spontaneous reactions. Natural desires are not natural tendencies for Mencius, as this is only to be the same as animals. As we have seen, Mencius explained that people give up on themselves or do not have enough confidence to be humane, and this is the reason why there are evil people (*Mencius* 4A10). Alternatively, someone may not pursue it when one's heart-mind strays (*Mencius* 6A11). In order to avoid this, one, therefore, has to persevere in one's heart-mind and nourish one's natural tendency in order to avoid obsession with material desires. *Xing* can be connected with heart-mind: in Chinese this is called *xinxing* (natural tendency of heart-mind). Especially in Mencius, the natural tendency of humans is closer to the natural tendency of heart-mind.

Also important in Mencius's understanding is the environment. The outside environment can likewise have an effect on people's striving. 'In the good years the young men are mostly lazy, while in bad years they are mostly violent. Heaven has not sent down men whose endowment differs so great so greatly. The difference is due to what ensnares their hearts' (*Mencius* 6A7). Mencius then uses the example of barley: the place and the timing of sowing are the same, but we may have different outcomes when barley ripens because of rain, human effort or the richness of the soil. Mencius said that we can understand the outcomes of barley but we are confused when human beings are understood in the same situation. Human beings share the same natural tendency, but the outside environment may be different, and this forms part of the reason why people may become evil. In *Mencius* 6A8, Mencius gives the example of trees on the Ox Mountain: because people ceaselessly chopped trees there and cattle ceaselessly grazed on the vegetation, the consequent lack of trees is not the natural tendency of Ox Mountain. Mencius said that if people do not have enough time to nourish their 'night energy (*yeqi*)', then they may become bad people, but this does not mean that people have an inherently bad natural tendency.

The heart-mind's relation to *qi*, itself a cosmological notion, facilitates a further grasp of the continuity with *tian*. Heart-mind is the seat of the refined *qi* which must be cultivated: 'nourish it with integrity and place no obstacle in its path and it will fill the space between heaven and earth' (*Mencius* 2A2). The gentleman is 'in the

same stream as heaven above and earth below' (*Mencius* 7A13), self-cultivating in order to grasp *qi*. In the human microcosm of the greater cosmos, one can practice one's refined *qi* by cultivating one's heart-mind, because the heart-mind is not outside oneself. Rather, the heart-mind is part of the body: *qi* is the thing shared with our body and the 'outside' world that is essential for Mencius's continuity of humans and *tian*. One's heart-mind can then generate refined *qi* and this *qi* can resonate with 'outside' *qi* as well. This practicepractice is to nourish what heaven generates in humans' body, as *qi* inside of the body can achieve harmony with *qi* outside one's body. Lastly, and briefly, for Gaozi, however, our natural tendency is empty without any good seeds, good tendency or preference. On yet another side, for Mozi humaneness and appropriateness come from the will of *tian*, which is why Mozi focuses on the will of *tian*, and how *tian* can punish and reward people according to their behaviour.

As an important figure in the Ru school during the Han dynasty, Dong Zhongshu explains via analogy, in a similar manner to Mencius, how a supposedly good natural tendency can come from *tian* in light of the fact *tian* does not necessary always appear as good to the human world.

> Goodness is like a kernel of grain, and nature is like the growing plant of grain. Though the plant produces the kernel, it cannot itself be called a kernel. [Similarly,] though *xing* [here used in its broader sense, as basic 'stuff'] produces goodness, it cannot itself be called goodness. The kernel and goodness are both brought to completion through man's continuation of heaven's work, and are external [to the latter]. They do not lie within [the scope of] what heaven itself does. What heaven does extends to a certain point and then stops. What lies within this stopping point pertains to heaven. What lies outside of it pertains to *jiao* [teaching, culture] of the sage-king.' *Chunqiu fanl*[40]

By using the analogy of a growing plant, Dong Zhongshu instead maintained that *tian* only gives *xing* and other possibilities to human affairs, but is not responsible

[40] Feng and Bodde, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, 34.

for the outcome of human affairs. And as a kernel does not necessarily thereby produce a growing plant, *tian* itself as the one that gives such possibility does not necessarily have good tendency, as *tian* is not equivalent to humans. Rather, the human is only one part of *tian*, as the kernel is just one part of the growing plant. *Tian* gives humaneness to humans, but this does not necessarily mean that *tian* must itself always be humane.

Dong also went further in stating that 'the silk cocoon contains silk fibres and yet is not itself silk, and the egg contains the chicken, yet is not itself a chicken' (*Chunqiu fanlu*).[41] This highlights that even though the continuity of humans and *tian* is assumed, it does not mean that humans can be *tian*: they are not equal to each other. Furthermore, if the egg is natural tendency, then the chicken is the humaneness: our natural tendency always has the possibility of becoming humane, but the outcome may not always be positive. Our natural tendency, then, is humaneness. In this sentence, humaneness is just one trait of our natural tendency, 'is' in this sentence is not a strict definition of what natural tendency is. Rather, the point is to use an analogy explain how it is possible for humans, who have a good tendency, to not be humane.

> The heaven-derived *xing* of human beings leads us to humaneness even though heaven itself is not humane, just as the *xing* of Ox Mountain leads it to grow trees even though heaven itself is not wooded. In shifting the relevant ground for human action from heaven to our own nature, Mencius makes the purposes of heaven irrelevant.[42]

I suggest that because humans need to interact with *tian*, and the continuity is already present, this part of *tian* cannot be neutral to give space for the interactions. It is possible for an amoral *tian* to generate a good natural tendency for humans because of the mutual affection. The interactions between humans and *tian* produce order and chaos. What one can do is promote one's good natural tendency, which comes from *tian*, and also play one's role properly, and maintain harmony with it.

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[41] Ibid., 34.
[42] Ibid., 149.

This interaction between *tian* and humans also exists in politics. In *Mencius* (1A7,1A6, 2A6) it can be seen that virtue and political success are positively connected. Mencius depicts the continuity of the heart-mind of *tian* and the heart-mind of humans: '[h]eaven sees with the eyes of its people. Heaven hears with the ears of its people' (*Mencius* 5A5). *Tian* embodies its heart-mind through humans, this continuity between *tian* and humans already exists, there is no need to build any connection between them. As the heart of *tian* is embodied through the heart of humans, rulers need to gain the hearts of humans by cultivating and displaying virtue. Jie and Zhou lost their 'all under *tian'* (*tianxia* 天下), because they lost the heart-mind of their commoners (*minxin* 民心) (*Mencius* 4A8). Losing the heart-mind of humans is therefore the reason why Jie and Zhou failed, rather than through a direct punishment from *tian*. Rulers have to guarantee the common good of people, rather than focusing on appeasing *tian* through sacrificial ceremony, which is the intentional connection between humans and *tian*. The common good for people is mainly their interests or profit (*li* 利) (*Analects* 4.16). For Mencius, then, when he argues that people should not focus on their own self-interests, the specific audience he intends are rulers and gentlemen. This is because rulers should take peoples' interests as their own rather than focusing on their own profit and thereby harming people. When he cares about interests for people it is a political care for people, which is essential for the rulers to account for in order keep the mandate of *tian*. However, in *Mencius* 1B14, humaneness cannot endorse rulership either because of *tian*. As Mencius explains, this is simply because of *tian:* Duke Wen of Teng was a humane ruler, but he nonetheless had to face the difficult problem of either fleeing or defending himself to his death. Franklin Perkins maintains that *tian* explains the failure of virtue, not its success.[43] Hence, when humane rulers succeed it is because *tian* sees and hears through the people, rather than rulers winning the will of *tian*

[43] Franklin Perkins, *Heaven and Earth Are Not Humane: The Problem of Evil in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 122.

directly. In the case of Duke Wen as a humane ruler, it was his fate to be in such unfortunate circumstances. It is here that *tian* more closely resembles *ming* as individual fate. Confucius admitted that fate is that which is unchangeable and beyond control, and Mozi responded in *Against Fatalism* that if one accepted this, people would be lazy, as working hard would not change their fate. For Confucius, though, fate and proper behaviour are separate from each other, and the rulers should not stop working hard or practising because of this fate.

Tian always endorses the success of the mandate of *tian* for the acting ruler in the context of dynasty. In *Mencius* 2B13 and 3B9, we can see that history develops according to a pattern, and in 4A7 it is said that when one follows *tian* one is preserved, whereas one who goes against *tian* is destroyed. For Mencius, humans have to submit to *tian*. To solve the problematic conflict of human good and indifferent *tian*, Mencius highlights the notion of 'appropriate time, opportunity'. In this way he explains how Confucius, Yan Hui and Yao all had humaneness, but *tian* nonetheless promoted Yao rather than Yan Hui or Confucius. This was because *tian* has this historical pattern (*shi*). Because of this patterning, *tian* may sometimes not dictate peace and order, whereas humans inherit goodness from *tian* and may want to pursue peace and order. Through this tension, we can see the story of Confucius, who knew he would not succeed and nonetheless persisted in his efforts of cultivation. It would seem in cases like this that *tian* goes against humans. This is thus in accordance with humans being unable to influence *tian* or deviate from it, as earlier discussed in the case of Xunzi. Even as a most radical Confucian, Xunzi still insists that we need to follow the pattern of *tian*, so it is thus plausible that the human has to accept the order of *tian*: 'If the way is going to prevail in the world, it is because circumstances would have it so; if it is not going to prevail, it is because they wouldn't (*Analects* 14.36). One must accept what *tian* gives, and as in *Analects* 14.35, *Mencius* 2B13 and *Zhongyong*, humans are encouraged not to resent *tian*: they should instead understand their own limits and in doing so be able to understand *tian*.

Tian and humans interact and mutually affect each other in many ways, and the continuity between the two always remains. Even Xunzi noticed that *tian* and

humans have differing responsibilities, but his aim was to provide distinctions to structure an ordered universe, while still remaining in the narrative of *tian* and humans. Continuity means that they have a resonance and reciprocity in the way in which these aspects of the cosmology emerge together. They are not being unified or connected—they are already continuous. What happens is that a productive relationship between them produces depth (*du* 度), harmony (*zhonghe* 中和), and enhanced significance (*dadao* 達道).

Chapter 2: The Productions of the Emerged Continuity between Humans and *Tian*

Since I have analysed the structure of the continuity of *tian* and human, we are now in a position to analyse what this continuity produces. This continuity negatively embodies through fate, which is from *tian*, positively as order and harmony between *tian* and humans.

Because of the limits for humans from *tian*, humans cannot change or regulate *tian*, but they can cooperate with the timing of *tian* to their advantage. In this process, all forms of *li* have been shaped according to timing: for instance, rites of worship of natural things are correlative to seasons; and *li* as a way is not a fixed rule, rather, it is a general principle needing each individual to act according to their circumstances and situation, which is another embodiment of Chinese timing. Through repeated action of following the way of *li*, which is acting with timing, people receive positive feedback, and it shapes efficacy between the actions of timing and success.

The time of *tian* can be embodied negatively as fate for humans, and positively as opportunity. Observing this timing also implies efficacy for humans. *Li* as a way to show its timing can include not only the forms of *li* between everyday relationships among humans, which are based on humans' natural dispositions (and shaping humans' dispositions) but also the political forms of *li* which aim at bringing order and harmony. The way of *li* embodies the overlap between the social and political in China, as well as the holistic order.

2.1 Human *Ming* (fate) as Negative Continuity with *Tian*

Ming embodies the continuity of humans with *tian* from a negative way, *tian* is inscrutable in human affairs, and this inscrutability is linked to a lack of endorsement of humane behaviour, as I discussed earlier. *Tian* does not necessarily endow a good human with a long life span (a long *ming*) or riches: these kinds of

ming are passive, as we find in the case of Yan Hui and Confucius, who are good people, but have negative *ming*: this highlights the tension between humans and *tian*. Confucianism held that humans have to accept whatever *tian* gives to them, and it also discusses a positive *ming*: for instance, *ming* as the responsibility of humans from *tian*.

The mandate of *tian* (*tianming)* is connected with the emperor and the legitimacy of his power. *Ming* is more closely connected with the individual person, and in the *Analects* the meaning of *ming* is close to circumstance, limits and situation. *Ming* is connected with *tian*, because *ming* is the order from *tian* to human beings. *Tian* and humans are in one pattern, and *min*g and natural tendency are in another pattern. An analysis of *ming* and *xing* can therefore also reflect the relationship of *tian* and humans. As Mencius writes:

> The way the mouth is disposed towards tastes, the eye towards colours, the ear towards sounds, the nose towards smells, and the four limbs towards ease is human nature, yet therein also lies the Decree. That is why the gentleman does not ascribe it to nature. The way benevolence pertains to the relation between father and son, duty to the relation between prince and subject, the rituals to the relation between guest and host, wisdom to the good and wise man, the sage to the way of Heaven, is the Decree, but therein also lies human nature. That's why the gentleman does not ascribe it to Decree.[44] (*Mencius* 7B24)

It seems that Mencius took our desires as *ming* as well. But here, he makes a distinction between *xing* and *ming.* For him, *xing* is more involved with human affairs, but *ming* is further beyond our control and more related to *tian*.

> Seek and you will get it; let go and you will lose it. If this is the case, then seeking is of help to getting and what is sought is within yourself. But if there is a proper way to seek it and whether you get it or not depends on destiny (*ming*), then seeking is of no help to getting and what is sought lies outside yourself. (*Mencius* 7A2)

[44] D. C. Lau, trans, *Mencius* (London: Penguin UK, 2004), 162.

In this context, an external *ming* can be distinguished from inward natural tendency. *Ming* is also a possible limit in some circumstances for people, but neither Confucius nor Mencius ascribes failure to *ming*. This is why Confucius claimed: 'I don't hold any ill will against *tian* nor blame other people'[45] (*Analects* 14.35).

Understanding *ming* is important for Confucius himself: 'Someone who does not understand the propensity of circumstance has no way of becoming an exemplary person' (*Analects* 20.3). If Confucius claimed that gentlemen must know circumstance (*zhiming* 知命) then he understood the importance of limits in our lives. Mencius goes further in stating the idea of standing firm on one's proper destiny (*liming* 立命), which gives a more compelling reason for why people still need to cultivate themselves: 'Whether he is going to die young or to live to a ripe old age makes no difference to his steadfastness of purpose. It is through awaiting whatever is to befall him with a perfected character that he stands firm on his proper Destiny' (*Mencius* 7A1). If our short *ming* or longer *ming* is something we cannot control, then we should not worry about it, and focus instead on moral practice. One should therefore always practice in order to be a moral person, even if one fails or has misfortune in other parts of life. One who can hold this attitude toward life is standing firm on one's proper destiny. Similarly, for Mencius, self-cultivation cannot be affected by *ming*, as all ethics can be picked up or discarded by each individual (*Mencius* 4A10).

Ming takes different forms, and humans therefore have different relevant ways of cooperating with it. When *ming* means opportunity, this refers to an opportunity from *tian* which is a reflection of *shi*. Humans should seize it, as this *ming* is predictable. Since m*ing* is an order from divine *tian*, humans should thus take it as their responsibility: this is to have received *ming* (*shouming* 受命), just as Confucius received an order from *tian* to be a teacher. *Ming* can also mean the mandate of *tian* as the fate of a dynasty, which is the order from *tian* for the ruler. Compared with Confucius's individually-received *ming*, this is where a particular state has received

[45] Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr, trans., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999), 180.

ming from *tian*. *Ming* can mean life span (s*hengming* 生命), and a 'short *ming*' (*duanming*) conveys the sense that someone 'was to die young' (*Analects* 6.3).

Ming is also related to appropriateness (*yi* 義): 'Confucius went forward in accordance with the *li* and withdrew in accordance with what was right (*yi*), and in matters of success or failure said, 'There is the Decree (*ming*)' (*Mencius* 5A8). Mencius uses appropriateness to explain the meaning of decree in this context: one has to act according to *li* and appropriateness in any different *ming* (circumstance). For instance, Shun had a bad father: that was his *ming*; but Shun nonetheless had to show filial piety to his father, because that was to follow appropriateness. Bigan had a cruel king named Zhou, but Bigan had to follow the *li* of subjecthood because that constituted appropriateness. These 'bad' *ming* therefore do not give a reason to Bigan and Shun to deviate from acting according to appropriateness. This explains why Confucius claimed he did not know the decree of *tian* until he was fifty (*Analects* 2.4), as he noticed that *tianming* is connected with appropriateness, and that one has to think extensively about appropriateness, or what one should do.

According to Zhu Xi's commentary, *tianming* is the process of the *dao* of *tian*, and it gives traits to concrete events and things, dictating why things and events are the way they are. As Mencius writes:

> Though nothing happens that is not due to Destiny (*ming*), one accepts willingly only what is one's proper Destiny (*zhengming* 正命). That is why he who understands Destiny does not stand under a wall on the verge of collapse. He who dies after having done his best in following the Way dies according to his proper Destiny. It is never anyone's proper Destiny to die in fetters (*Mencius* 7A2).

It is risky to stand under a dangerous wall, and this is a risk that can be avoided. It is not one's fate to die: rather, the death is because of one's own stupidity. Another example is one who does die in fetters; according to Zhu Xi's commentary, this is the example of criminals, who are similar to one who dies under a dangerous wall. Their misfortune has not come from *tian*, but from themselves. Proper destiny

therefore relates more to the limits of human beings. Proper destiny or *zhengming* has to follow proper *dao* or *zhengdao* 正道.

In *the Analects*, Confucius seldom discusses the *dao* of *tian* directly, but this does not mean that he is uninterested in an understanding of *tiandao*. Rather, he did not wish to discuss *tiandao* in an abstract way. As such, the original relevant sentence literally means that you cannot hear Confucius discussing natural tendency and *tiandao* (*Analects* 5.13).

Based on the requirements of coherence, Zhu Xi claimed that the real meaning of this sentence was not common for Confucius's disciples to hear on such a topic, so when they did hear it, they praised how valuable it was. It may therefore actually have been an important topic for Confucius. Based on *Analects* 7.24, Hall and Ames come to a conclusion that conflicts with Zhu Xi's interpretation. They argue that it does not mean that Confucius had something hidden or withheld some deepest insight regarding the matter, but that it is instead still essential for the exemplary man to know fate.[46] Thus although Confucius does not talk about the *dao* of *tian* that much, he balances this by assigning *ming* an important position in his thought. In Confucius's account of his own life experience, the ultimate meaning and value of his mission in life is bound up with 'recognizing the destiny of Heaven' and 'learning to follow this destiny' (*Analects* 2.4). Furthermore, Confucius says: 'three things of which the noble man stands in awe: the destiny of Heaven, great men, and the words of the sages' (*Analects* 15. 8). And finally, in the last lines of the *Analects*, Confucius says, 'Unless one recognizes the destiny of Heaven, one cannot be a noble man' (*Analects* 20.3).

Zhuangzi's understanding of *ming* is not in conflict with the Ru school either, because *ming* is also present in the context of our lives, and humans have to understand and follow it in this context too: 'To understand what you can do nothing about and to be content with it as with fate' (*Zhuangzi* 4.3) From this, we can tell that Zhuangzi noticed the tension between humans and *tian* as well. Even though his thought concerning *tian* is amoral, and he does not confront the problem of a neutral

[46] David L Hall and Roger T Ames, *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 197.

tian and a good natural tendency as Confucianism does, Zhuangzi still promotes the continuity of *tian* and humans in the sense of following the fate of *tian*, and taking it as what humans cannot do.

According to Fu Sinian's analysis of the pattern of characters in ancient Chinese writing, *ming* is originally from the order of *tian*, as *ming* 命 consists of order 令 and mouth 口, and natural tendency consists of heart-mind 心 and 'birth, generation' 生 (this *xing* is also the generation of *tian)*. In the very beginning, then, the *ming* of *tian* and our natural tendency is in the same category (in the sense that both of them are from heaven).[47] Fu carefully examined the ancient development of this writing and illustrated that both *ming* and *xing* are from *tian*, but his research here cannot provide a clear distinction of individual *ming* from the mandate of *tian*: it can only generally explain that our natural tendency is from *tian*.

Confucius did not deny the existence of the mandate of *tian*, but his mandate of *tian* is not a fixed and unchangeable concept as it was in the early stage of mythical time. Confucius discussed an individual mandate of *tian* as well, which more or less means the responsibility of individual people, or what one should do. For instance, the mandate of *tian* for Confucius was to be 'a wooden bell-clapper' (*Analects* 3.24), which suggests that his responsibility from *tian* was to guide the people in all-under-*tian* when there was no proper *dao*, and to be a teacher for people. Further, Mencius can be interpreted as continuing the mandate of *tian* for Confucius, in claiming that he had to help in governing all-under-*tian* (*Mencius* 2B22*).* Hence, both Confucius and Mencius had the aspiration to help all-under-*tian* go with *dao* of *tian*, to teach and guide rulers and commoners.

Since *ming* is the passive order from *tian* for humans, and humans can only understand and follow it, does this mean that humans can neglect self-cultivation and practice? 'Becoming authoritative (*ren*) in one's conduct is self-originating---how could it originate with others?' (*Analects* 12.1). Following this point, people pursue humaneness because they want to be a humane person from their inward heart-mind, rather than for some external achievement or benefits. If one is born into

[47] Fu Sinian, *Fu Sinian quanji juaner* [*Collection of Fu Sinian Volume Two*] (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003), 631.

a poor family, that is one's fate, but one still needs to practice humaneness. As Confucius said of one of his followers:

> He has a bamboo bowl of rice to eat, a gourd of water to drink, and a dirty little hovel in which to live. Other people would not be able to endure his hardship, yet for Hui it has no effect on his enjoyment (*Analects* 6.11).

Bad circumstances do not stop Yan Hui from practising humaneness. Confucius suggests that people should complete the affairs of the human, and then follow the mandate of *tian*. This is why Confucius regards himself as 'the one who keeps trying although he knows that it is in vain' (*Analects* 14.38): he knew that his understanding of *li* would not be accepted by the acting rulers of his time. That was his fate, but that did not mean that Confucius should have thus stopped striving: he wanted to be complete in what he could do in those circumstances rather than awaiting the outcomes of *ming.* As Mencius writes:

> When something is brought about though there is nothing that brings it about, then it is Heaven that does it. When something arrives though there is nothing that makes it arrive, then it is destiny that does it. A common man who comes to possess the Empire must not only have the virtue of a Shun or a Yu but also the recommendation of an Emperor. (*Mencius* 5A6)

This is why Confucius, who had virtue, could not possess a state, and why the Jie and Zhou dynasties had states but lost them soon, because they did not have excellence or virtue (*de* 德), and therefore were not qualified to be sage-kings. *Ming* is the outside limit of circumstances for Confucius, that which he could not change and had to follow.

Since Confucianism made an effort to connect *ming* with appropriateness and humaneness, the meaning of fate was weakened. If natural tendency also assumes the responsibility of our behaviour, as natural tendency is the idealised good for Confucianism, it is not entirely a matter of decree, and people may still make a legitimate effort to follow the way of humaneness. Such a position would thus avoid the argument from Mozi that Confucianism tends toward fatalism.

Another important aspect of *ming* is its role in proper timing and opportunity. Mencius holds that gentlemen should know how to wait until the correct time and

fate come, and then act. (*Mencius* 7B79). In this context, fate and opportunity (*shi*) are mutually interpretable. 'Appropriate time or opportunity' and 'fate' in a word is called *shiming* (时命) which means 'opportunity' or 'chance' in general. For Mencius, since this opportunity is from *tian*, one cannot then pursue it in a forceful way. The opportunity is like the natural growing of a plant: one should not go against natural law or timing and pull on one's crops in an attempt to help the plants grow quicker (*Mencius* 2A2).

The production of continuity is then based on timing or opportunity. Timing is understood from the view of *tian*, and opportunity stands as an equivalent relation for humans. This notion of time is not a fixed concept.

2.2 Timing and Opportunity for Individual Personhood

Shi as opportunity from *tian* is not only the continuity of the mandate of *tian*, but it also serves as timing for individual humans. Humans have their own freedom and can make their own choices under this form of timing.

In *The Dao of Tangyu* (*Tangyu Zhidao of Guodian Chu Slips*), it is suggested that the success of Yao was because of his opportunity from *tian*: Yao encountered a good *ming* and a good opportunity. One may have wisdom and humaneness like Yao, but one cannot compete with Yao's opportunity. This text explains why abdication cannot succeed in the case of King Kuai in Yan. It suggests that this type of opportunity has nothing to do with inward virtue, but it is essential nonetheless for succeeding.

> There is Heaven, there is man; Heaven and man differ. Investigating differences between Heaven and Man, we know how to act. If he is an appropriate man, but the times are not appropriate, then even if he is worthy, he will not be able to act. But if he attained his age, what difficulties would face him? Shun cultivated land at Mt. Li, made pottery on the [Yellow] River's

> banks, and then rose to become the Son of Heaven—this is because he encountered Yao. (Q*iongda yishi)*[48]

In *Qiongda yishi* (the relevant passage in this work literally means 'failure and success depend on timing', in part 7 of *Guodian Chu Slips*) there are many examples of how people succeed because of good opportunity. In the process of interaction between humans and *tian*: one either grasps this opportunity and succeeds or has this opportunity but cannot seize it and then fails. Since *tian* decides whether humans have good opportunities or not, people should instead focus on self-cultivation. This is because humans should take full responsibility for virtue and humaneness, while recognising that the autonomy of *tian* will control whether one succeeds or not. In this text, 'whether one meets the correct time or not, that is up to heaven' (*Qiongda yishi*).

In the *Yijing*, *ming* is an order connected with luck from *tian*, and has the meaning of 'unpropitious', 'inauspicious' and 'propitious'. Good *ming* can coincide with good luck or back luck depending on how humans interact with *shi*. Through interaction with *ming* and *shi*, one can coincide good *ming* with back luck, and vice versa. According to Wang Bi's commentary on the *Yijing*, the hexagrams are *shi*. The sixty four hexagrams always have the meanings of unpropitious, inauspicious or propitious, and are concerned with what one should and should not do, and when. Here, *ming* is closely connected with *shi*. When it refers to an appropriate time, that is propitious, whereas when it is not good *shi*, it is that which is unpropitious, and humans will fail if they insist in acting against *shi*. With Xunzi there is a similar statement, but *tian* is replaced by right time.

> Just as whether one meets (*yu* 遇) with success depends on the right time, so too matters of death and life depends on fate. Now if a man has not met with the right time, even though he is worthy, how would he be able to put [his ideas] into practice? If he should chance to meet with the right time, what difficulties would he have? Thus, the gentleman broadens his studies, deepens his plan, practices and cultivates himself to await his right time. (*Xunzi* 28.8)

[48] Cited in Yuri Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 151.

Xunzi has a similar discussion about good opportunity as well, and he further made clear his ideas about what humans should do. For Xunzi, whether a sage is encountered or not is up to good opportunity. As such, it is possible that one may be intelligent but cannot enact one's ideas. In such cases, one should focus on self-cultivation and await the coming of a good opportunity, at which point it will be easy to succeed. Likewise, Confucius's gentleman (*junzi*) 'remains unsoured even without being recognized' (*Analects* 1.1). Confucius himself had to struggle on in adverse circumstances, and political frustration was not necessarily a sign of moral failure, because it is possible that these *junzi* simply did not encounter *shi*.

Since *shi* is from *tian*, humans must be flexible and cooperate with it, and always act in a timely way. 'Sensing their approach, a bird took flight, and soared about before alighting. The master said, "This is the hen-pheasant on the mountain bridge---how timely! How timely! "' (*Analects* 10.27). In one of the very few mentions of *shi* in the *Analects*, even a bird can be praised because of its timeliness. Hence, Confucius noticed the importance of *shi*, even though he did not significantly discuss it in the *Analects*. He maintained that the gentleman should always be appropriate (*shizhong* 时中), because outside circumstances are always changing: *shi* in this context means that which is adaptive and appropriate. One can thus do too much, while too little may also be inappropriate; it therefore means to go with the trend and not against it. As Xunzi writes:

> He handles dangerous situations, responding, changing, and adapting as is suitable; he modifies and adjusts at the proper time and initiates or desists with the proper season; through a thousand affairs and ten thousand changes, his Way is one. (*Xunzi* 8.9)
>
> Bigan has his heart cut out; Confucius is besieged in Kuang. … How utterly unpropitious that they should meet (*yu* 遇) with no opportunity (*shi* 時) …
>
> Devote yourselves to study, for heaven will not forget you. The sage only folds his hands, awaiting the approach of his opportunity. (*Xunzi* 26.6)

Shi and meet, as evidence of interaction between humans and *tian*, constitute a remarkable way of embodying the will and pattern of *tian*, and to explain how one

can change bad to good luck with one's subtle work. Most thinkers began to move the focus to identifying the *shi* to explain one's life encounters, and this could provide a more refined way[49] of explaining why clever and good people like Bigan and Confucius could have failed in spite of *tian*'s endorsement, and vice versa.

2.3 Timing as the Pattern of *Tian*

Because of the correlative cosmology of Chinese philosophy, one has to act according to numerous patterns in order to co-operate with *dao*. *Tian* has a processual pattern, and according to the process of the four seasons (*shi* 時) of *tian*, seasons change naturally and spontaneously. This process is sometimes generative, and at other times leads to the perishing of things. In a state mainly reliant on farming, the people are essentially focused on this process. From this point of reference, humans noticed that *tian* embodies itself by giving opportunities or limits to humans, and they then analogise this insight with other circumstances. Similarly, when humans have not been granted opportunities by *tian* it may be interpreted in turn as failure and chaos for humans.

The interaction between humans and *tian* exists because of the tension between order (*zhi* 治) and chaos (*luan* 乱) in human history. This is because *tian* can be neutral regarding chaos, and while such order and chaos is only embodied as the time pattern (*shi*) for *tian*, humans nonetheless always want order and peace. *Tian* itself is chaos in the beginning, but if the human world requires order then this ordering process requires decisive effort: it is through the ordering *li* practicepracticed by humans that they are able to distinguish themselves from animals and other things, and become self-cultivated in turn. All things under *tian* are mutually influential, and therefore this process can change the pattern of *tian* as well. This appears as the movement of *tian*, which is the time of *tian*. Humans in this process are always a part of *tian*, as one part of this continuity.

[49] Compared with the primitive one which maintains that virtuous people all gain reward, the idea of timing gives us a better way to explain the individual's adverse circumstance.

If one applies this processual *shi* to the development of history, one can arrive at the conclusion formed by Mencius: 'This is one time; that was another time. Every five hundred years a true King should arise, and in the interval there should arise one from whom an age should take its name.' (*Mencius* 2B13). If this is the pattern of *tian*, even though there are some sages who were qualified, they could not become the ruler and give peace and order to our world because they were not born at the right time.

This pattern of realistic history is not always conducive to peace and order, 'The world has existed for a long time, now in peace, now in disorder.' (*Mencius* 3B9). In Chinese, this is called *yizhiyiluan* 一治一亂, a notion referring to the peaceful world and chaos replacing each other in a cycle of patterns. This chaos will then happen regularly, but great chaos will lead to great peace.

When one dynasty replaced another, the essence of governing remained the same. The structure of such upheavals does not resemble the revolutionary structure of equivalent phenomena in the West. Therefore, if Chinese society is not sufficiently affected by Western ideas, it may keep changing in this pattern. One emperor may lose the mandate of *tian* if he or she is not qualified (not morally perfect) to govern a state well, and one person among the masses who is morally perfect has the right to adopt the mandate of *tian* if he or she is qualified. The stability of society is maintained in this process, and it gives legitimacy to all acting emperors. As Xunzi says:

> What is the relation of order and chaos to heaven? I say: the revolutions of the sun and moon and the stars and celestial points that mark off the divisions of time by which the calendar is calculated were the same in the time of Yu as in the time of Jie. Since Yu achieved order and Jie brought chaos, order and chaos are not due to heaven. What about the time? I say that crops germinate and grow to maturity in the course of spring and summer and are harvested and gathered for storage during autumn and winter. This also was the same in the time of Yu and in the time of Jie. Since Yu achieved order and Jie brought chaos, order and chaos are not due to the time. (*Xunzi* 17.6)

Xunzi claimed that if inept rulers like Jie and Zhou share the same period of time as the sage-king Yu, it is not because the time of *tian* made chaos for society: it is rather that humans are themselves responsible for having chaos. In Xunzi's argument, it is suggested that good governing is more reliant on human affairs than on time or *tian*.

Compared with Xunzi, Mencius is more prudent about the function of *tian* and time. Even though Mencius interprets the mandate of *tian* in a more radical way, he still thinks that one not only needs to gain the heart-mind of commoners and be approved by *tian*, but also needs the recommendation of the former acting ruler to be the coming acting ruler (*Mencius* 5A5). *Tian* does not have any will: rather, one can only analyse *tian* by turning to an outside circumstance. There is no way to understand the intention of *tian* directly: people need to seize the opportunity and see whether *tian* approves one's behaviour or not.

Having understood this, there remain two ways to know *tian*. On the one hand, passively, we can understand *tian* by analysing the orders from *tian* which we have to follow. On the other hand, positively, we can analyse the opportunity derived from *tian*, and turn *tian*. In this correlative cosmology, there is an interaction between humans and *tian*: timing can be applied as good luck or bad luck, depending on how a person responds to it.

2.4 Change: the Content of Timing

In his *Thinking from the Han Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture*, Ames and Hall maintain that time and space are interdependent with each other. There is thus no possibility for the concept of the eternal in the Chinese tradition.[50] Ames maintains that *wuhua*, or ~~always changing~~ does not allow time to exist without things or things without time. Time penetrates everything. For Ames, the capacity of things' ceaseless transformation is the meaning of time. Time

[50] Hall and Ames, *Thinking from the Han*, 249.

is essential in ancient Chinese Daoist philosophy. Time and temporalizing manifest themselves especially in the *Yijing*.

The assumption of ceaseless change is the reason that there is no fixed entity in Chinese thought. 'Temporalizing phenomena and thus perceiving them as 'events' rather than 'things,' the pervasive capacity of the manifest world to transform continuously is the meaning of time.'[51]

The idea of order does not refer to all things in one pattern, rather, in the context of Chinese thought, it means adjust to different circumstances, and is a process towards harmony. The reason that the idea of order is like this is because the idea of *shi* is also embodied as change, or the ceaseless transformation. Because the idea of timing is concerned with changing, Chinese thought does not focus on fixed concepts. As Roger Ames writes: 'Temporalizing phenomena and thus perceiving them as 'events' rather than 'things,' the pervasive capacity of the manifest world to transform continuously is the meaning of time.'[52] This ceaseless transforming does not permit timing without things or things without timing: timing pervades everything, but there is no abstract timing or thing.

Time and temporalizing manifest themselves especially in *Yijing*. In *Yijing*, the images of hexagrams imply *ji* or omens, which could offer suggestions to the ancient kings about the appropriate time to act. This time is certainly non-linear, time and the knowledge of human beings of the past and the future are interdependent on each other. The changing illuminates the past and interprets the future.

The main focus of the *Zhuangzi* is 'changing' (*hua* 化), there are 54 paragraphs that mention this idea. From the story about a fish who transforms into a bird, to one who changes into an insect, Zhuangzi's 'change' is also connected with non-action (*wuwei* 无为). 'You have only to rest in non-action and things will change themselves'[53] (*Zhuangzi* 11). In this context, '*hua*' means 'to follow' and adapting,

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[51] Roger T. Ames, *Yuan Dao: Tracing Dao to Its Source* (Ballantine Books, 1998), 24.

[52] Roger T. Ames, *Yuan Dao: Tracing Dao to Its Source* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998), 24.

[53] Burton Watson trans, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).

but not to be against or conflict with others. In modern Chinese, '*huajie* 化解'means 'de-conflict', and we can see that *hua* is a method of reducing conflicts and fitting with circumstances. This 'changing' is changing to fit in outside circumstance and doing so without harm or conflicting with it, it is thus a process of merging with circumstance naturally. 'The foul and rotten may change into the rare and unearthly, and the rare and unearthly may change into the foul and rotten' (*Zhuangzi* 22), thit suggests that changing is the process of a whole universal development, which includes the death and birth of humans, the perishing and generation of things. 'Having been changed, things find themselves alive; another changing (*hua*) and they are dead' (*Zhuangzi* 22). In this context, changing is following time as similar to a life span, and changing represents all natural processes.

> The men of old changed on the outside but not on the inside. The men of today change on the inside but not on the outside. He who changes along with things is identical with him who does not change. Where is there change? Where is there no change? (*Zhuangzi* 22)

Zhuangzi maintains that we have to 'follow the external' or '*waihua* 外化' which is going along with the external changing circumstance. One has to keep one's heart-mind still, even when one confronts a difficult life or an affluent life. If one betrays one's heart-mind but pursues the benefits of outside society, that is to be 'changed inside' (*Zhuangzi* 22). This is because, in some circumstances, we have to change ourselves to live in this world. In accordance with this we can follow the natural tendency of heart-mind. But this adaptivity and flexibility is not without principle, rather, the principle is that one cannot change one's heart-mind of *dao* for Zhuangzi, this is his principle that cannot be changed.

According to the commentary of Guo Xiang, ancient people know how to follow the outside circumstances, but not change their heart-mind which is inside, because the heart-mind should be quiet and empty. But today's people cannot cooperate with external circumstances, and their heart-minds are changed.[54]

[54] Guo Xiang and Cheng Xuanying, *Nanhua zhenjing zhushu* [*The Commentaries of Zhuangzi*], (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 436.

‘Worth lies within yourself and no external shift will cause it to be lost. And since the ten thousand transformations continue without even the beginning of an end, how could they be enough to bring anxiety to your mind?’ (*Zhuangzi* 21). From this, we can discern that to ‘not change’ is something inside yourself, it should still be the heart-mind. Also, for Mencius, even if one lives in adversity, one should still keep one’s heart-mind unmoving (*Mencius* 2A2, 6B35) and focus on self-cultivation to await the correct and appropriate time.

2.5 The Positive Productions of Continuity: Order and Harmony

From the perspective of humans, timing can mean a strategy about how to act, if we connect this way of acting to the value of humans, it is acting to follow *li* and proceeding towards harmony. This value is seen in *Yijing*:

> Retreat, prosperous and smooth. Prosperity and smoothness lies in retreat. The firm is at the right place and properly responds. It accords with the time. The little, favourable to be steadfast and upright. It is advancing and growing. Great indeed is the significance of retreat at the proper time.[55] (*Yijing*.33)

The image of ‘retreat’ goes smoothly with time, as this time concerns how people cooperate and act according to circumstance. Humans not only retreat in accordance with time but also should move on with time. This means acting when one needs to and withdrawing when it is the correct time. It is the highest realm of life for Confucianism when one can act according to timing. ‘He was the sort of man who would hasten his departure or delay it, would remain in a state, or would take office, all according to circumstance… Confucius was the sage whose actions were timely’ (*Mencius* 5B1). What is opposite with timing, and what Confucius warned that humans should avoid, is to ‘speculate, claim or demand certainty, [to be] inflexible and self-absorbed’ (*Analects* 9.4), these four actions do not appreciate timing.

Such timing acts according to outside circumstance, and it can be practiced in the process of individuals’ self-cultivation. Even though timing gives each individual

[55] Ibid., 281.

space to act according to each one's circumstance, the key principle of *dao* does not change. The value of timing is embodied in the unchangeable *dao* and different individuals.

Timing also connects with '*zhong'* (middle, appropriate): 'The ignorant can be prosperous and smooth if he acts in accordance with the proper time and follows the principle of the central way'[56] (*Yijing*. 4). The middle way follows timing, changing with timing, and can bring order and harmony to humans' world. This middle way of behaviour includes one's way of speaking, emotions and so on:

> [My] master only spoke at the proper time, no one grew tired of what he had to say; because he only laughed when he was happy, no one grew tired of his laughter; because he only took what was appropriate for him to take, no one ever grew tired of his taking. (*Analects* 14.13)

Confucius praises a consciousness of timing in behaviour. Timing is not only a rule that one should follow when one cultivates oneself, but timing is also important in governing a state. It is important to work to follow the timing in an agricultural country: 'put the common people to work only at the proper time of year' (*Analects* 1.5).

When timing and appropriate behaviour are combined together, it is order and harmony:

> The way of the initiating is change and transformation, So that each being obtains its true nature and destiny. And the union of great harmony is preserved. This is what is favourable and upright. The Initiating is high above all beings.[57] (*Yijing.* 1)

Harmony can not only refer to the appropriate behaviours that humans have, and ordered socio-politics inside the state, but also the harmonious relationship between *Tian* and humans:

> When joy, anger, sorrow and happiness have not yet arisen, we call this 'the centre' (*zhong* 中). When they have arisen, but are all in the centre and

[56] Ibid., 67.

[57] Alfred Huang, *The Complete I Ching* (Rochester: Inner Traditions Bear & Co, 2010), 24.

regulated, we call this 'harmony' (*he* 和). The centre is the great foundation of the world. Harmony is the all-pervading Way of the world.[58] (*Zhongyong* 1)

This idea of 'harmony' in the context of appropriate behaviour also embodies the idea of timing in dealing with humans' relationship with humans. This timely behaviour can be embodied in concrete rites when one cultivates oneself. 'When one's food and drink, clothing and dress, dwelling and home, activity and repose follow the dictates of *li*, they are harmoniously measured' (*Xunzi* 2.2). Basically, to achieve harmony, one needs to follow what is an appropriate or middle way. *Yizhuan*[59] embodied the main principle of order in the context of 'middle way':

> Greatly luminous, from beginning to end. Each of the six stages completes itself in its own time. As mounting on six dragons soaring in the sky. Commentary on the Symbol: Heaven acts with vitality and persistence. In correspondence with this [time]. The superior person keeps himself vital without ceasing.[60] (*Yijing.*1)

Even though time is important for Confucianism, it is not its ultimate aim, what is more important is order and harmony. '*Tian*'s favourable weather (*tianshi* 天时) is less important than Earth's advantageous terrain (*shi* 势), and Earth's advantageous terrain is less important than human unity (*renhe* 人和)' (*Mencius* 2B1). Here, timing as an objective description of season or weather is less important than the harmony (*he,* in Lau's translation, becomes unity, I would instead state that harmony is better) in humans. The time of *tian* and time of earth contribute to the harmony of humans which is the value of time.

Harmony not only means the harmonized relationship between humans and *tian,* but also the harmonized interrelationship between people. 'Achieving harmony is the most valuable function of observing ritual propriety' (*Analects* 1.12). *Li* plays an

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[58] Ian Johnston and Wang Ping, trans., *Daxue & Zhongyong*, Bilingual edition (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2012), 215.

[59] Confucius's commentary of *Yijing.*

[60] Huang, *Complete I Ching*, 23–24. 《乾·象》云:"大明终始，六位时成，时乘六龙以御天。"《文言》云:"终日乾乾，与时偕行".

important role for Confucianism, not because its forms, but rather because *li* is the outside embodiment of humaneness: 'Through self-discipline and observing ritual propriety one becomes authoritative in one's conduct' (*Analects* 12.1).

'What has a person who is not authoritative got to do with observing ritual propriety?' (*Analects* 3.3). *Li* is important because it is the embodiment of humaneness, if a person does not follow the way of humaneness from their heart-mind, it is useless for one to follow all different forms of *li*. *Li* and humaneness are correlative with each other: without forms of *li*, one cannot really practice the way of humaneness; without the company of humaneness, *li* is empty and useless. Different forms of *li* cover how to deal with one's relationships properly; with friends and family members, or how to treat other people, how one should behave properly in funeral and marriage, the proper rites towards *tian*, earth and other things, and also what the appropriate rites in politics are. Some of these rites towards *tian* and earth are sacred concerning awe and reverence, the other *li* is more or less appropriate and timely emotional expressions towards ones' ancestors, family members and other things (*Analects* 3.12); not all *li* is sacred. What is appropriate is the most significant for the essence of *li*.

> The Master on entering the Grand Ancestral Hall asked questions about everything. Someone remarked: "Who said this son of a man from Zou village knows about observing ritual propriety? On entering the Grand Ancestral Hall he asks questions about everything." When Confucius heard of this, he said: "To do so itself observing ritual propriety." (*Analects* 3.15)

Because different forms of *li* exist, for Confucius, it is not important to know all forms of rites, rather, one should always have a modest heart-mind, as Mencius highlights, 'the heart of courtesy and modesty [is the germ] of observance of the rites' (*Mencius* 2A6). The correct way to follow *li* endorses not only one's behaviour, which should follow a proper way, but also, more importantly, one's attitude and intention should be modesty and sincerity, because the forms of *li* can always change with different circumstances and situations.

The idea of harmony does not mean that people require sameness, it is rather that sameness is opposed to harmony. 'Exemplary persons seek harmony not sameness;

petty persons, then, are the opposite' (*Analects* 13.23). Harmony can be used to describe an ideal society with all difference contained inside it. It is similarly described in *Zhongyong*:

> The ten thousand things are nurtured at the same time, and yet are not contrary to each other. Small virtue flows like a stream; large virtue is genuinely transforming. These things are what make Heaven and Earth great (*Zhongyong* 30).

Inspired by the idea of ceaseless changing, and that all different things not only not conflict with each other, but can also nonetheless keep order and harmony, this harmony itself is change without confliction. Once order and harmony have been put in the most important position, all other things can find their relative positions too: this is a macro-process that order has formed:

> Being in the "the centre" is the great foundation of the world; being in "harmony" is the all-pervading way of the world. Reach "the centre" and "harmony," and Heaven and earth are in their positions and the ten thousand things are brought forth. (*Zhongyong* 1)

When expresses their desires and emotions, they should be in accordance with the middle way, one can then find a point to balance different desires. For instance, Confucius praises 'pleasing without being excessive' and being 'mournful without being injurious' (*Analects* 3.20). This concerns how one should appreciate the enhanced significance of following the middle way.

In summary, the interaction between *tian* and humans is not only embodied in inward humaneness and sincerity, but also in *shi*. The continuity between humans and *tian* not only refers to people in general, but also to the individual person. Hence this continuity of *tian* and humans means a harmony not only between these two parts, but also a harmony internal to humans.

Chapter 3: *Li*: The Structure of Order

The overlap between the idea of *li* and order inside states or under *tian* can be embodied in the ideal images of integrated societies. That people within this society spontaneously follow their own dispositions, without even applying all forms of rites, does not mean that *li* is not important in this society. Rather, having a modest and sincere heart-mind is to follow the way of *li* without noticing *li* itself. The way of *li* is derived from following and also shaping humans' dispositions, and through this process, following the way of *li* can bring order and harmony not only inside one's family, but also all under *tian*.

3.1 Two Ideal Unified Sociopolitical Patterns

In the first two chapters, it is seen that Chinese thought turned inward and that the idea of humaneness is knitted into the continuity between humans and *tian*. In the process of knowing *tian*, it is also seen that humans can specifically act to follow such timeliness and avoid conflict with *tian*. This timely behaviour is embodied in *li*, as a process of self-cultivation. *Li* not only plays a significant role in determining proper relationships with others, but is also important in the process of ordering the world. Hence, there is a significant overlap with time in *li*.

The Chinese scholar Zhang Desheng maintains that Chinese have an ideology of order, which is why they require harmony.[61] Because of the presumption of the continuity of *tian* and humans, there is also a continuity between the ancient Chinese cosmos and politics. Based on the cosmology of a specific continuity of *tian* and humans, the relevant ideal society is that of a highest level, 'Grand Union'. This functions as an ideal socio-political structure that can play a role in critiquing the

[61] Zhang Desheng, *Rujia Lunli yu Shehui Zhixu* [*Confucian Ethics and Social Order*] (Shanghai: shanghai renming chubanshe, 2008), 112.

existing political system if the existing one is not good enough, and if not, the political level should nonetheless reach the level of 'Small Tranquillity'.

> When the Great Dao was pursued, public and common spirit ruled all under the heaven [*tian xia wei gong*]; they chose men of talent, virtue, and ability for public service. . . They did not treat only their own parents as parents, nor treat only their own sons as sons. Provision was secured for the aged till their death. . . . People showed kindness and compassion to widows, orphans, childless men, and those who were disabled by disease, so that they were all sufficiently provided for. . . Possessions were not wastefully discarded, nor were they greedily hoarded. . . In this way selfish schemings were discouraged and did not arise. Robbers, thieves, and rebellious traitors were unknown, and doors remained open and unlocked. Such was the Great Union (*Book of Rites*).[62]

The highest level of ideal politics occurs 'when the great *dao* prevails, [and] all under *tian* is for the public' (*Book of Rites*). On this level, people complete themselves and fulfil their good natural tendency; they take the good of the great community normally called 'all under *tian'* as their own good, and there is no conflict between self-interests and the interests of the larger community. People also take themselves as one part of the harmonious cosmos, this being called 'Great Union'. In the highest level of social and political structure, order is from spontaneous good. There is still a problem, however, of how a primitive time can have spontaneous order. Actually, 'great union' as an ideal structure did not exist in ancient times for Confucius, it was only an ideal description that humans could participate with *tian*, with there being harmony between humans and other things in the universe. This is so when understood from the wider perspective: because there are no political states, it may seem chaotic, but everyone nonetheless has their own position and cooperates well within this state of affairs. People will not only care about their immediate relations, but will extend their care to other people as well. In this society, Confucius did not even mention the ruler's position: this is because it is unnecessary to have a ruler in the Great Union. In the ideal pattern of the 'Great

[62] Cited in Joseph Chan, *Confucian Perfectionism: A Political Philosophy for Modern Times: A Political Philosophy for Modern Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 225.

Union' there is a process that completes humaneness, and everyone can thereby overcome the harmful aspects of self in order to cooperate with others. On this level, people still have filial piety and other ethics, but humans following the idea of *li* comes only from their spontaneous dispositions. As such, the focus is more about participation with *tian* and having continuity with it; humans cannot even know they are following the way of *li*, because in such a society all forms of concrete rites do not need to exist, as humans act spontaneously in the way of *li*. On the level of small tranquillity, filial piety is more focused, and it is more related to realising and completing the self. This is a way to understand humaneness and a way to prepare for having the great union.

However, in the beginning of small tranquillity, Confucius mentioned Yu 禹, Tang 湯, Wen 文, Wu 武, the king of Cheng 成王, and Duke Zhou 周公 as rulers who lived in 'small tranquillity'. We can thus infer that people still needed a ruler in this society. When we still need a ruler to govern, the primitive level of ideal politics persists; but if we want to progress to the Great Union, we have to achieve the 'small tranquillity' first.

'When the *Dao* is hidden, take all under heaven as one family' (*Book of Rites*). This is called 'Small Tranquillity' (*xiaokang* 小康). Because in this big family, caring and loving inside of the family is still the priority, and people cannot extend this loving to others and participate with *tian*. When people still need to fulfil their natural tendency, they cannot expand this good to others, and there will then be a conflict of interests between the self and the expanded community. On the level of *xiaokang*, which existed in ancient times and was more achievable, Yao, Shun, and Yu were the ideal kings for Confucius: they were moral examples for the people because they were morally like sages, and they were also successful kings. They held the *dao*, and implemented *dao* in their times. Confucius and Mencius praised these kings in their works, and took them as their moral model exemplars. On Mencius's understanding, they retained their thrones because of their innate virtuosity. On this level, rulers need be both outside rulers and inward sages.

The Great Union as an ideal will prevail in times when people do not have an idea of states (historically, they instead only had the idea of all under *tian*), and *xiaokang* already existed in Yu's time, when all people fitted well in their positions. Confucius therefore thought that the ideal highest level politics should have the perspective of all-under-*tian* rather than individual states.

For Liu Qingping, 'great union' is only a description for a primitive clan society that combined primitive democracy and consanguinitism, and between 'great union' and 'small tranquillity', small tranquillity is to be more preferred for Confucianism, as Yu and other sages are praised widely.[63] Firstly, without giving evidence, Liu assumes that Confucius' great union is the primitive society. Second, when only based on the work of some sages, there is insufficient evidence to prove that small tranquillity is better. It is further problematic that he concludes that Confucianism does not have the idea of a public moral, since Confucians only focus on private, extended family members. Actually, the great union embodies the public love and caring which instantiates humaneness, when people care *not only* about their own parents and sons; small tranquillity, however, embodies the virtues inside of the extended family, which is the private sphere, when people only care about their own parents and sons. It is not necessary to have a tension between great union and small tranquillity, because humaneness as spontaneous compassion is not a concrete ethic. Rather, it is embodied in all other virtues, and it is a public feeling towards everything, including strangers. The private virtues only exist in the private field, and thus these two socio-political patterns can exist in parallel and do not harm each other.

This 'great union' as the ideal political and social pattern is a unity allowing difference within rather than oneness. 'Division is the direct outcome of ritual, the outcome of division is 'category' (*lei* 类), from these 'categories' one can have holistic ordered unity.'[64] The division and unity of *li*, then, are two sides of one coin,

[63] Liu Qingping, "Rujia tichang de shi tianxia weigong haishi tianxia weijia" [What is Promoted by Confucianism--Public or Family], *Tansuo Yu Zhengming*, 2013(11): 70-73.

[64] Han Deming, *Xunzi yu rujia de shehui lixiang* [*Xunzi and the Ideal Society of Confucianism*] (Jinan: Qilushushe, 2001), 184.

and the final aim of division is unity. Because the division of *li* aims at giving order rather than separation, the final image is harmony and a holistic all-under-*tian*.

The similarity between small tranquillity and great union is order: the order in great union is spontaneous and humans have it without even having knowledge about it; the order in small tranquillity is derived from *li*, *li* is thereby the key notion to connect these two ideal socio-political structures.

3.2 How Can This Socio-political Pattern Give Order?

In the time of the 'great union', order is derived from the spontaneous good, but it is not easy to achieve, since people may simply relinquish the pursuit of goodness. In contrast, 'small tranquillity' is more realistically achievable. This kind of order is not derived from a natural organic development, rather, it is involved in self-cultivation, which means that people need to practice and follow *li*.

Further, in 'small tranquillity', people still need an exemplar to follow:

> Heaven and earth give birth to the gentleman, and the gentleman provides the organizing principle for heaven and earth. The gentleman is the triadic partner of heaven and earth, the summation of the myriad of things, and the father and mother of the people (*Xunzi* 9.18).

Here, *Jun* is a sage-king (*junwang* 君王) rather than a gentleman, as the ruler for humans, and is to help *tian* give order to human affairs. The relationship between the ruler and his commoners is like father and son: he gains his authority in this way as well, and he can serve as a good model to the commoners. As commoners are not capable of ordering themselves, they need a ruler to bring order to society.

The way that rulers bring order is through good examples, and it is thereby necessary that rulers are capable of being good, as rulers are those who people follow: 'when the ruler is benevolent, everyone else is benevolent; when the ruler is dutiful, everyone else is dutiful; when the ruler is correct, everyone is correct. Simply by rectifying the prince one can put the state on a firm basis' *(Mencius* 4A20).The idea is that the ruler needs to cultivate himself beginning from his own body:

> The Master said, "If his self/body is correct (*zheng* 正), then his commands will be carried out without his even making them. If his self/body is not correct, even should he command others they will not obey. If someone could correct his own self/body, then what problem would there be to his devotion to governing? If he cannot correct his self/body, then what has he to do with correcting/governing other people?"[65]

In this socio-political structure, if one begins to self-cultivate, it is a way of taking part in political practice and developing order.

Practice of the body is the first step towards beginning to govern a state. According to its understanding as the small correlative cosmos, one has to cultivate oneself, and it is here that we can see the connection with *li*. One cultivates one's body by participating in *li* and by being aware of the division of society, and by doing so properly, one can have an ideal whole. If everyone can act properly in such a way it is called order. 'Governing effectively is doing what is proper (*zheng* 正). If you, sir, lead by doing what is proper, who could dare do otherwise?' (*Analects* 12.17) The reason that the ruler has to be *zheng* is that if he is not proper, he will lose authority: his commoners will not follow his orders.

In the *Book of Rites*, there is no clear description of how to achieve order. Xunzi, based on the assumption of a continuity of humans and *tian*, maintains that humans should be divided from *tian* as well. Unsurprisingly, in the social and political structure he maintains that the reason why people can live together in order is because of the possibility of division. Division is reliant on practicing the concrete forms of *li*, and when people follow *li*, there are then orders in grouping, because this division (*fen* 分) is based on *li* and 'proper acting' (*yi* 義). It is dangerous if the people simply focus on grouping and not on division, because people will then fight and argue with each other (*Xunzi* 9.19 and 9.20). Sato Masayuki maintains that

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[65] Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China*, 15. I adopt Mark Lewis's quote rather than Roger Ames here, Ames translation is 'If people are proper (*zheng*) in personal conduct, others will follow suit without need of command. But if they are not proper, even when they command, others will not obey.' *Analects* (13.6). 'But if not able to be proper (*zheng*) in their conduct, how can they demand such conduct from others?' *Analects* (13.13)

'division' for Xunzi is an ethical rule to fairly divide resources among human beings.[66] People can have groups with divisions, these divisions give rules and guide people to live a well-organized life with the proper manner of co-operating with others. This maintains human beings in order, and other animals cannot do this, even though they may live together. In Xunzi's use of this term, we can tell that this grouping (*qun* 群) does not simply mean 'groups'[67], rather, it is an ordered and co-operating society with *li*. *Li* in 'groups' not only helps distinguish people from animals, but Xunzi also uses *li* to set orders for society and politics.[68] 'Accordingly, the ancient Kings acted to control them with regulations, ritual, and moral principles…this is indeed the way to make the whole populace live together in harmony and unity' (*Xunzi* 4.14). That people live harmony and unity in the community is the final aim for Xunzi, and this unity is the completion of *li* and self-cultivation.

Facing the tension between filial piety and loyalty in *Mencius*, Xunzi developed his understanding of 'group' in a more stable way in order to replace the family's position in *Analects* and *Mencius.*[69] Although Xunzi puts the family inside of the 'group' in a less fundamental way (compared with Confucius and Mencius, who place filial piety in a more important position for political ethics to dismiss the tension), he still thinks that filial piety is important for ethics. Although Xunzi has the reputation of claiming that humans' natural tendency is bad, if humans are totally bad then people may ask how it is possible for them to adopt the rule of *li*, realise they are good and then be willing to practice them. Numerous commentators have

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[66] Sato Masayuki, *Xunzi lizhi sixiang de yuanyuan yu Zhanguo zhuzi zhi yanjiu* [*The Origin of Ritual Governing in Xunzi and Research of Other Schools in Zhangguo's Period*], (Taibei: Taida chuban zhongxin, 2013), 18.

[67] Knoblock uses the term 'society' to translate 群 (*qun*), whereas I have used the term 'group', which is a more literal translation.

[68] What makes a man human lies not in his being a featherless biped but in his ability to draw boundaries. Even though wild animals have parents and offspring, there is no natural affection between father and son (*Xunzi* 5.9).

[69] Since Confucius takes private family morals as the foundation of political morals, then inevitably there is confliction between filial piety and serving the public. Xunzi puts the family in a neutral group, which is a less emotional way to dismiss this tension.

described the complexity of Xunzi's position. Robert Cummings Neville, for example, writes:

> Mencius's mistake, according to Xunzi, was to believe that desires could grow their needed semiotic focus from within. Because Xunzi believed that the semiotic or ritual elements derive from human contributions (e.g., the ancient kings) rather than the biological impulses given by Heaven and Earth, he rejected Mencius's theory of internal exfoliation of virtue as simply wrong. Moreover, by expecting people to become rightly related to others and nature simply by letting their natural impulses grow uncorrupted, Mencius's theory in practice would lead to adult babies, selfish and aggressive, envious and hateful. Or it would smuggle in ritual training disguised by romantic posturing.[70]

Sato Masayuki maintains that Xunzi's aim is to end chaos and rebuild an ordered society.[71] Xunzi relies on *li* to rebuild order, and also to guide humans to goodness. The final aim for Xunzi is therefore the same as Mencius, but their methods of achieving it are a bit different.

Donald Munro maintains that both Mencius and Xunzi share the idea that natural tendency has constancy which is a potentiality for repeating action, action that will emerge if conditions permit, and that the constancies are not in conflict with Mencius.[72] The difference is only that Xunzi is more focused on a realistic form of natural tendency, rather than an idealistic one like Mencius. Mencius tries to guide humans to realise and complete their inward tendency of goodness, whereas Xunzi's method is to restrain other tendencies which conflict with goodness; goodness is then embodied when one is actually successful in restraining one's superfluous desires.

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[70] Robert Cummings Neville, *Ritual and Deference: Extending Chinese Philosophy in a Comparative Context* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2009), 34.

[71] Masayuki Sato, *The Confucian Quest for Order: The Origin and Formation of the Political Thought of Xun Zi* (Leiden: BRILL, 2003), 425.

[72] Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China* (Redwood City, California: Stanford University Press, 1969), 81.

Eric Hutton discusses bad natural tendency in more detail. He maintains that Xunzi believes all human beings have desires, and without correct guidance these desires will involve people in chaos and fighting.[73] Xunzi, then, does not mean that human beings have a bad natural tendency that is inborn; rather, natural tendency is a process that people can develop due to external reasons or a lack of restraint.

James D. Sellmann also holds the idea that natural tendency is not fixed, and he even rejects using the term 'natural tendency' (*xing* 性), as it may mislead interpreters. 'That the very quality of human character is not fixed, and because it varies with time and context, requires a flexible art of rulership that accommodates and fulfils the interests of masses.'[74]

Unlike scholars who focus on the concept of natural tendency and try to solve the problem of bad natural tendency, Chen Lai makes a two parallel-line account to describe two different kinds of 'badness' for Xunzi. Desires and the heart-mind have a tension in Xunzi's ideas: humans can respond both to our heart-mind and to desires, so our consciousness is not only controlled by our disposition but by desires as well. For Chen, there are two different 'likes'(*hao* 好 as a verb means like, and as a noun means good) and 'dislikes' (*wu* 恶 as a verb means dislike, and as a noun pronounced 'e' means bad): one is the 'like' and 'dislike' for our disposition and natural desires, the other is 'like' and 'dislike' for our heart. [75] For Chen, then, even though human beings have a bad natural tendency, they can still practice good *li*, because they have heart-mind to help them distinguish bad and good. The real problem is that human beings cannot satisfy all their desires, rather than that these desires themselves are bad or good. The problem of bad natural tendency may thus be dismissed in this way.

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[73] Eric Hutton, 'Does Xunzi Have a Consistent Theory of Human Nature?' in *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi* , ed. T. C. Kline and P. J. Ivanhoe (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2000), 221.

[74] James D. Sellmann, *Timing and Rulership in Master Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 48.

[75] Chen Lai, "Qingxing yu liyi—xunzi zhengzhi zhexue de renxing gongli" [Disposition and Ritual—the Postulation of Human Natural Tendency in Xunzi's Political Philosophy], *Zhongguo shehui kexue teji* [*Chinese Social Science Special Collection*], 2009(1): 43-54.

The process of self-cultivation is to inspire and nourish the good part of one's natural tendency, and includes participating with *tian* and bringing order to the whole cosmos: 'What the gentleman holds on to is the cultivation of his own character, yet this brings order to all under heaven.' (*Mencius* 7B32)

This process of self-cultivation is like following a path, one cannot be a sage or gentleman by practicing only one ethic: 'He followed the path of morality. He did not just put morality into practice' (*Mencius* 4B19). Humaneness is a general principle for people to follow humaneness rather than a concrete ethic one can practice. Also, from this we can tell that humanity and appropriateness are not norms that allow human beings to simply have them or to practice them for good fame. Humanity and appropriateness are processes that need each individual's completion rather than being fixed states. All forms of rites as the concrete embodiment of humaneness and appropriateness are both organic and instrumental. It is *li* that gives basic structure and order to the internal family and external politics, and thus the discussion shifts to why people can choose and follow the way of *li* for a thousand years without the power of coercion.

3.3 Dispositions and the Way of Humaneness and *li*

Li, historically, did not need to be forcefully applied in society, and ancient Chinese thinkers give good reasons for this: most significantly, because *li* as the idea of appropriateness is derived from our dispositions.

Based on the relationship between humans and *tian*, it is timing that humans have to follow. Timing can embodied in forms of rites, not only giving guidance to how to live a proper life, but also promoting order and a harmonious world.

Humanness and *li* are correlative: there is no *li* without humaneness, and there is no humaneness without *li*. In contemporary life, it is pointless to follow all forms of rites, because those rites may be out of date and become unsuited to the modern world. In spite of this, the way of *li* which refers to the modest and sincere heart-mind is still necessary, and needs to be followed in modern world. The forms of rites can be adapted with time, because the forms of rites are based on humans' natural

dispositions. 'Thus, the meaning of ritual is to nurture. The meat of pastured and grain-fed animals, rice and millet, blends and combinations of five flavors, are what nurture the mouth' (*Xunzi* 19.2). Humans' basic desires are first order, as they maintain their lives. Satisfying this first level, which cannot distinguish humans from animals, the second level is dispositions: humans can have dispositions towards others they love, these are also natural and necessary. The third level is *li*, which aims at regulating all these desires and dispositions in different levels, and maintaining harmony. Without this regulation, humans cannot be civilized by their natural dispositions, but likewise, if humans only follow the forms of rites without involving in their natural disposition, order and harmony will be obstructed:

> When one's basic disposition overwhelms refinement, the person is boorish; when refinement overwhelms one's basic disposition, the person is an officious scribe. It is only when one's basic disposition and refinement are in appropriate balance that you have the exemplary person (*Analects* 6.18).

It depicts how one should be balanced to follow one's disposition and the forms of rites: the way of *li* should be based on both dispositions and refinement, and find an appropriate balance point.

Although dispositions and natural tendency are interconnected, Xunzi distinguishes these two. It would appear that disposition (*qing* 情) is more connected with what is appropriate, for instance, *qingli zhizhong* 情理之中 which means to have an appropriate scope. Likewise, dispositions have an aspect of appropriating or timing. Xunzi also endorses that what becomes the model is derived from dispositions:

> Now the state of becoming a teacher and the creation of a model are the result of accumulated effort and are not something received from one's inborn nature,[76] for inborn nature is inadequate to establish by itself a state of good order. 'Inborn nature' is what it is impossible for me to create but which I

[76] The original text is: 而师法者，所得乎情，非所受乎性。Which means the things which can be followed is from dispositions (*qing* 情) rather than one's desires (*xing* 性). Here, *xing* is more close to desires rather than natural tendency. We can see that rites are based on one's dispositions and play a role to regulate them.

> can nonetheless transform. 'Accumulated effort' consists in what I do not possess but can nonetheless create. It is by fixing the mind on the goal, devising ways and means to realize it, and effectuating it through the habituation of custom that the inborn nature is transformed (*Xunzi* 8.21).

Once humans can follow the way of *li* for a long enough time, they will automatically use proper action in different circumstances. Unlike Mencius, who takes *xing* as a good tendency which can help people spontaneously choose what is good, Xunzi's *xing* is more or less akin to desires. Eventually, Xunzi and Mencius choose to take disposition (*qing*) and natural tendency as following the way of *li*. But Xunzi especially emphasises the importance of accumulation, because he believes that one cannot spontaneously follow the way of *li* by merely following one's dispositions. When one follows the way of *li* and keeps accumulating one's dispositions, one can reach the level of humaneness, which is to have continuity between humans and *tian*: 'When everything is unified and there is no duality, one can communicate with the Spiritual Intelligences and form a Triad with Heaven and Earth' (Xunzi 8.21). This is a description of how humans and other beings can achieve harmony by following *li*, and the idea of humaneness is implied in this as well, because humaneness emphasizes how the self and others interact with each other and co-exist as a whole body. This is the level of humaneness which refers to the continuity between things; the other level is the humaneness borne from sympathy, and these two levels depict the process and aim of self-cultivation: self-cultivation begins from one loving people who are close to oneself, and then expanding this love to others, and then to other things, in order to reach the level of continuity between humans and *tian*. This level of continuity is the achievement of self-cultivation.

3.4 Heart-mind and the Way of *li*

For Xunzi, *li* is also derived from distinguishing (*bian* 辨) between human beings and animals. *Bian* is the one ability that heart-mind has, which concretely means human beings' ability to distinguish things: for instance, the different roles between

father and son, the difference between man and woman (*Xunzi* 5.9). Human beings realize these distinctions and then have divisions (*fen*) for different relationships; *li* then becomes important in our ordered life (*Xunz*i 5.10). That is why *li* is valuable for human beings to live in an ordered group. Since *li* is from the heart-mind's ability to distinguish things, it explains why people have desires and are self-centred, but they nonetheless still accept *li* and other regulations.

The ability to distinguish from the heart is a response to a dynamic *dao* of *tian* that also serves as the key to making possible the communication with *tian*. Human beings know the movements of the four seasons and plan according to the appropriate time, know the movements of *yin* and *yang* to act properly, and then develop relevant different kinds of rites to cooperate with an ordered life.

Human beings use *bian* and *fen* to give structure and order to society, and this process is called *li*. 'The *Rituals* contains the model for primary social distinctions and the categories used by analogical extension for the guiding rules and ordering norms of behaviour' (*Xunzi* 1.8). Different with Confucius and Mencius, who approach *li* from inward humaneness and appropriateness, for Xunzi *li* is derived from the division of events; this can resonate with his specific relationship between *tian* and humans. The essential way to complete the continuity between *tian* and human beings consists in participating in *li*.

> Heaven and earth are the beginning of life. Ritual and moral principles are the beginning of order. The gentleman is the beginning of ritual and moral principles…Thus, heaven and earth give birth to the gentlemen, and the gentlemen provides the organizing principle for heaven and earth. The gentlemen is the triadic partner of heaven and earth. (*Xunzi* 9.18)

The continuity between *tian* and humans is embodied in *li*, but in Xunzi's case he did not make it clear whether commoners can have continuity with *tian*, while 'gentleman' here clearly denotes the ruler. *Li* reflects that the human world endorses order, and the ruler can set up rites. These rites refers to social and political principles. *Li* have efficacy as well, which resembles *tian*, if human beings have to follow its rules.

> When the world observes their precepts, there is order; when it does not, there is anarchy. When it observes them, there is safety; when it does not, there is danger. When it observes them, there is survival; when it does not, there is annihilation (*Xunzi* 19.7).

This is how *li* accumulate authority and power. Just as *tian* can complete events, *li* can help people complete themselves as well.

Order and chaos are the ideas of humans, these are interpretations of all-under-*tian* from the perspective of humans. Humans need to use their heart-mind to distinguish order and chaos, to understand the timing of heaven and to follow the way of *li*. Having this kind of heart-mind is knowing heaven: '[understand] the division between Nature (*tian*) and mankind, then you can properly be called a "Perfect Man"' (*Xunzi* 17.1).

According to Xunzi the heart-mind can reflect things like a mirror, and it can also provide judgements about what is right and wrong. With the practice of following the way of *li*, the good can further be identified. The heart can know the world, but it must itself first be clear like the surface of still water.

> The human mind may be compared to a pan of water. If you place the pan upright and do not stir the water up, the mud will sink to the bottom, and the water on top will be clear and pure enough to see your beard and eyebrows and to examine the lines on your face. But if a slight wind passes over its surface, the submerged mud will be stirred up from the bottom, and the clarity and purity of the water at the top will be disturbed so that it is impossible to obtain the correct impression of even the general outline of the face. (*Xunzi* 21.11)

For Xunzi, the highest level of heart is 'emptiness, unity and stillness (*xuyi yijing* 虛壹而靜)' (*Xunzi* 21.8). On this level, the heart-mind is not blocked or covered: rather, it is absolutely clear, and human beings can thus restrain the unnecessary desires, and choose to practice *li*. In this realm, one can reflect all events, and then communicate and participate in harmony with *tian*. This is how Xunzi explains knowledge of *dao*: he describes the experience of knowing *tian* rather than telling people how the heart can know *tian* directly. In this tension between humans and

tian in *Xunzi*, it seems that there are some inward elements of the heart as well: the heart bridges the gap between human and *tian*.

When the heart can reach such a level that our old perception does not block or disturb our new perception, emptiness (*xu*) is achieved. When our inside perceptions do not disturb each other, that is unity (*yi*). When the movements of heart do not disturb or harm our observation of stillness, that is stillness (*jing*).

> What do men use to know the way? I say that it is the mind. How does the mind know? I say by its emptiness, unity, and stillness. The mind never stops storing; nonetheless it possesses what is called emptiness. The mind never lacks duality; nonetheless it possesses what is called unity. The mind never stops moving; nonetheless it possesses what is called stillness (*Xunzi* 21.8).

Xunzi may have inherited the idea of the empty heart-mind from Zhuangzi, but he also criticised Zhuangzi for being blinded by *tian* and being insensible to humans. Besides Zhuangzi, Xunzi also inherited the idea of heart-mind from Mencius. Xunzi therefore tried to combine the ideas of both the *Ru* school and Lao-Zhuang. The difference between Xunzi and Lao-Zhuang is that Xunzi still takes gaining new knowledge as important, even though they all hold that emptying the heart-mind is important. For Xunzi, emptying the heart-mind aims at knowing more without bias.

Similar to how *wuwei* does not simply mean doing nothing, having an empty heart-mind does not mean that one stops thinking. Rather, for Xunzi, it means to not store and focus too much information, as this information may mislead you or make you stubborn and unable to acquire new knowledge. This is why Laozi and Zhuangzi claimed that it is better to go back to the state of an infant, as an infant does not store information, and by doing so they can actually learn faster and easier. In this way, the empty heart-mind can help people to better understand *tian*.

> The heart/mind that dwells within the central cavity is used to control five faculties—it is called "the lord provided by nature (tian)." The mind takes advantage of things not belonging to human species and uses them for the nourishment of humans—these are termed "the nourishment provided by nature." The mind calls what conforms to properties of its category "fortunate" and what rebels against the properties of its category "cursed"—this is called

> the "rule of order in nature."… When his conduct is minutely controlled, his nourishment minutely moderated, and his life suffers no injury—this indeed is called "understanding nature" (*Xunzi* 17.4).

Xunzi analyses humans' natural tendency based on the possible bad outcomes, but he gives heart-mind an ability to control one's other organs and regulate one's different desires. This seems to lead to the conclusion that the way of self-cultivation is to cultivate one's heart-mind to maintain an open-minded way without bias: this heart-mind not only has the epistemological ability of recognition, but also the moral ability to make a distinction between bad and good. Different from Mencius, who takes heart-mind as the foundation of good, for Xunzi it seems that heart-mind only plays a role that can regulate one's behaviour and recognize what is good.

> What do I mean by what men hate? Baseness and recklessness, contention and plundering, and a rapacious appetite for profit are such. What do I mean by what men like? Ritual and moral principles, polite refusals and deference to others, and loyalty and trustworthiness are such (*Xunzi* 16.4)

Although Xunzi does not directly refer to heart-mind here, because heart mind evidently serves as the organ with 'a discriminating intelligence' (Xunzi 23.19), it makes humans make the choice to be good and follow the way of *li*.

For Xunzi, the heart-mind can also understand *tian* or *dao* (*Xunzi* 21.7), because the heart-mind knows *dao*, it can always follow the *dao*, and this further suggests that the heart-mind replaced shamans as the bridge connecting *tian* and humans. Human beings should always follow *dao* and *tian*, but because they only emulate one part of *tian* and *dao*, different schools have different interpretations of them. Zhuangzi already discussed (in the 'Discussion on Making all Things Equal') how different schools hold different opinions, but it is difficult to state which one accords with the way things really are, as people criticise others from different standpoints who do not agree with their own ideas. From this state of affairs, or argumentative stalemate, nothing will become clearer, as people are stubborn in what they already hold, which will produce fighting and chaos.

Xunzi adopted Zhuangzi's notion of 'fasting the heart-mind' and turned it into 'emptiness' in order to say that although the different schools are blinded by their

own ideas and insensible to other ideas, emptiness (*xu* 虚) does not interfere with what is being received by the heart-mind, and the emptiness of our heart-mind can thus be of benefit in allowing us to gain new knowledge and knowing *tian*.

In modern Chinese, emptiness is connected with the heart-mind, and in modern Chinese '*xuxin* 虚心' means to not self-satisfy, and to always be humble in order to gain new knowledge. 'Unity' (*yi* 壹) means that one should focus when one studies new things: '*yixin* 一心' in Chinese literally means 'one heart-mind or absorbed'. '*Jingxin* 静心' literally means to 'quiet one's heart-mind or calm the heart-mind'. But, as Xunzi said, one has to confront the tension between emptiness and storing, unity and duality, stillness and moving. Storing, duality and moving are natural events that we cannot avoid, but we should not let these events block the way for us to gain new ideas and be flexible.

Although Mencius did not present an explicit way to understand *tian*, he noticed that one could understand *tian* by instead analysing the heart-mind.

> For a man to give full realization to his heart is for him to understand his own nature (*xing*), and a man who knows his own nature will know [*tian*]. This retention of his heart and the nurturing of his nature are the means by which he serves heaven (*Mencius* 7A1).

If one exhausts one's heart, one can know *xing* and *tian* because they share one pattern or principle. Zhu Xi comments:

> *Xin* is the clairvoyance of humans, that is why it has many different patterns but it can nonetheless give an appropriate response to different circumstances. *Xing* is the pattern of *xin, tian* is where this pattern comes from. If humans have this kind of heart-mind, then one can know everything (*tian*).[77]

From the perspective of principle or pattern, it is *tian;* from the perspective of embodiment, it is natural tendency, and from the perspective of preservation or storage, it is heart-mind. Therefore *tian*, natural tendency and heart-mind are a unity.

[77] Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, [*The Commentary on the Four Books*] (Beijing: zhonghua shuju chubanshe, 2003), 349.

Xunzi therefore still takes the continuity of humans and *tian* as the structure of his idea; his division between human and *tian* is actually the beginning of the process of continuity, as the human has to have a singular heart and then practice their 'emptiness, unity and stillness' to know *tian*, and participate in the movement of *tian*. Finally, Xunzi's notion of heart moved to an inward direction from the level of perception.

Xin reshapes our rough dispositions through the ability of distinguishing and understanding, playing an important role to regulate desires. *Xin* gives the possibility of letting humans act according to timing, which then allows them to live in an ordered and harmonious society.

Timing is the significant content of the way of *li*. In the case of how to follow different forms of *li*, Confucius suggests that humans should use their heart-mind to make the proper judgement and choice that follows timing:

> The use of a hemp cap is prescribed in the observance of ritual propriety. Nowadays, that a silk cap is used instead is a matter of frugality. I would follow accepted practice on this. A subject kowtowing on entering the hall is prescribed in the observance of ritual propriety. Nowadays that one kowtows only after ascending the hall is a matter of hubris. Although it goes contrary to accepted practice, I still kowtow on entering the hall (*Analects* 9.3).

When Confucius makes a decision about how to follow the way of *li*; in either following or being against what the majority does, Confucius follows the way that he thinks is appropriate. What is more important for Confucius is the idea of *li* rather than the concrete rites, these concrete rites can always change and adapt with different period of time. What is important for Confucius is the inward sincerity of heart-mind.

According to A. C. Graham, Mencius and Zhuangzi shifted attention inward to the heart-mind in 'the discovery of subjectivity'[78]. But this subjectivity does not have the same meaning in China as it does in the West. Chinese thinkers noticed an inward heart, but this idea of heart-mind is far different to Descartes's purely

[78] A. C Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (Chicago: Open Court, 1989), 95.

thinking subject: Chinese thinkers always propound the continuity of heart-mind and the body. One cannot talk about the body without the heart, and vice versa, it is the same in the case of humans and *tian*. Hence, the narrative beginning with 'correcting heart-mind' progresses to having to 'be sincere in one's will', 'cultivating one's body', 'completing and giving order to one's family', 'giving order to the state' and then 'completing all under heaven' (*Daxue.*10).

3.5 Order, *li* and Self-cultivation

Li brings order to the socio-political, and human beings accept the way of *li*. In the non-transcendent context, it is a question of whether gaining order is a natural process or an outcome of education. 'When human character is perceived within a temporal setting as an achievement in process, human social order, especially the state, is understood primarily as a historical achievement.'[79]

Disagreeing with the idea of an organic theory which holds that humans are political and social animals by nature, James D. Sellmann argued that social and political order in the pre-Qin context was not a consequence of natural development. Rather, the state should be seen to reflect a spontaneous order developed out of the habit of humanity and sympathy. Nor, however, is a solely instrumental theory appropriate as an explanation, as Pre-Qin thought lacks the explicit idea of a contract. Sellmann thus proposes an organic instrumental theory.[80] As the source of *li* is involved in both dispositions and the ability of the heart-mind, in addition to Xunzi promoting the importance of accumulation and study, organic instrumental theory can explain the process of gaining order.

Humans' heart-minds can only distinguish things, but also have the will to practice themselves by following the way of *li* spontaneously. Such practice and learning is essential for Confucianism, it is learning how to follow *li*, it 'disciplines [one's] behaviour through the observance of ritual propriety' (*Analects* 9.11, 6.27).

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[79] James D. Sellmann, *Timing and Rulership in Master Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 67.

[80] Sellmann, *Timing and Rulership in Master Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals*, 71.

> Do not look at anything that violates the observance of ritual propriety; do not listen to anything that violates the observance of ritual propriety; do not speak anything that violates the observance of ritual propriety; do not do anything that violates the observance of ritual propriety (*Analects* 12.1).

The refined natural emotions of humans come forth first, and *li* comes after that, 'observing ritual propriety itself comes after' (*Analects* 3.8).

Xunzi developed Mencius's idea about achieving order through *li*, and he points out that achieving order is also a way to participate in the continuity of humans and *tian*. 'Heaven has its seasons; earth has its resources, and the human has his government (*zhi* 治)'[81] (*Xunzi* 17.2). But Xunzi does not describe further details about the ordered cosmos.

In *Master Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals*, there is a correlative relationship between cosmos order and *li* of cultivation. *Li* is based on natural tendency and because the highest level of self-cultivation is in participation with *tian*, and gives order to *tian*, natural tendency is thus the beginning of everything. In this cosmology, humans and cosmos are correlative: the order of humans' world is the beginning of ordered *tian*.

> Great fame and significant titles cannot be aggressively sought. They must be acquired by according with the right Way. The means to put things in order (*zhi*) does not lie in the things, but lies in people. The means to put people in order does not lie in them, but lies in the rulers. The means to put the rulers in order does not lie in them, but lies in the Son of Heaven. The means to put the Son of Heaven in order does not lie in the Son of Heaven, but lies in his desires. The means to put the desires in order does not lie in the desires, but lies in the character (*xing* 性). Xing is the root of the myriad things. It cannot be lengthened; it cannot be shortened (in degree). Going with what is

[81] Seasons are *shi*, *zhi* 治, I think it is better translated as order, because zhi especially means ordered and harmony government.

> inherently so, and recognizing it as so, these are the natural degrees (*shu*) from heaven and earth.[82]

As *li* is based on a correlative cosmos, practicing *li* not only endorses the harmony among human beings but also contributes to an ordered cosmos. Given the division between human and *tian*, one can live in harmony within *tian* by practicing *li*. 'The chilly winds come. The white dew falls. The cicada of the cold chirps. Then, hawks sacrifice birds. This is the time to begin the practice of punishments and executions.'[83]

For the *Ru* school, the way to complete and fulfil oneself is to cultivate oneself: one can then give order to one's family, and then one can give order to all under *tian*. Self-cultivation then assumes an essential role in the political order. If each individual self maintains self-cultivation, then all-under-*tian* will have order easily. Hence, the ideal political model relies on the completion of self-cultivation. Also, this self-cultivation focuses on extension, letting all humans take the responsibility of humaneness. This expansion is from the self to one's family members, and then to respect one's neighbour, and then strangers. Confucianism maintains that this cultivation can and should be completed and practiced by everybody (everybody has the ability), 'from the son of heaven to commoners, all need to take self-cultivation as the foundation' *(Daxue).*

According to Graham Parkes, when people practice rituals, they will have the feeling of awe and humility.[84] If I may expand on this a little bit further, the fundamental reason that humans have this feeling of awe is because such *li* is based on humaneness in Chinese thought, and this humaneness always has the basic assumption of obeying and following *tian*. Humaneness is derived from *tian* as well. As Zhang Xianglong maintains, *tian* is the original source of all philosophical

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[82] Sellmann, *Timing and Rulership in Master Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals*, 50.

[83] Ibid., 56.

[84] Graham Parkes, "Awe and Humility in the Face of Things: Somatic Practice in East-Asian Philosophies" Eur. J. for *Philosophy of Religion* (Autumn 2012): 69-88.

questions.[85] All such Chinese thinking patterns are from *tian*, and thus humaneness in the Chinese context, as Parkes holds, is not human-centred. Rather, because humans are from *tian* they are thereby indebted to *tian*. *Li* also give efficacy: if people follow them, they will gain luck, if not they will have disaster. This, then, is why humans are in awe in the practicing of *li*.

Under this thinking pattern, Chinese thinkers extend such awe towards *tian* and parents, and ultimately to the ruler, in order to structure a coherent political system. This state is more or less intended to function like a large and harmonious family. There is also the concept of all-under-*tian*, which is different from the state. For Mencius, one can have a state without humaneness, but one cannot have all-under-*tian* without humaneness (*Mencius* 7B13). D.C. Lau translates *tianxia* as Empire, I would advocate that all-under-*tian* is a better term, because *tianxia* is an ideal political term for the *Ru* school. It is believed that if the ruler applies humaneness in his governing and gains the commoners' heart-mind, they will attain *tianxia* (*Mencius* 4A3, 4A9). Even Legalism discusses the gaining of the heart-mind of commoners as well, although for Legalism the method of gaining such a heart-mind is quite different from the *Ru* school.

Dong Zhongshu developed a similar structure for the world of *tian* affairs and the world of human affairs: the analogy of a continuity between humans and *tian* works not only in the context of the human's body but also in the context of the human's emotions. Humans and *tian* share the same emotions, and since *tian* is good, Dong maintained this as the reason explaining how humans can be good.

> Beneficence, rewards, punishments, and executions match spring, summer, autumn, and winter respectively, like the fitting together of a tally. Therefore I say that the king is co-equal with Heaven, meaning that Heaven has four seasons, while the king has four ways of government. Such are what Heaven and man share in common.[86] *Chunqiu Fanlu*

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[85] Refer to appendix for a translation from Zhang's book: *Haidegeer he zhongguo tiandao* [*Heidegger and Chinese Tiandao*], he clarifies that heaven is the source for Chinese thought.

[86] Youlan Feng and Derk Bodde, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), 48.

For Dong the correspondence between human and *tian* is based on *yin* and *yang*: both humans and *tian* have *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* interact with each other, and this process is the movement of humans and *tian*. This is a correlative cosmos model based on the idea that members of the same categories affect each other. Dong then applied this correspondence to political practice: when there are natural disasters or strange natural phenomena, it is because the ruler has not performed adequately; when the weather is good, it is suggested that the ruler is good.

> The constant principle of Dao of heaven is the succession of *Yin* and *Yang*. The *Yang* is Heaven's beneficent force, while the *Yin* is its chastising force…heaven has its own feelings of joy and anger, and a mind which experiences sadness and pleasure, analogous to those of man. Thus if a grouping is made according to kind, Heaven and man are one.[87] *Chunqiu Fanlu*

Even though Dong's structure of continuity between human and *tian* puts *tian* on a supreme level, and gives authority to the ruler, Dong still thinks that the power of the ruler should nonetheless also be restrained by *tian*, as *tian* can show its will through natural disaster or strange natural phenomena. When there is a natural disaster or strange phenomenon, it is an instance of the humaneness of *tian* for Dong, because it means that *tian* is not satisfied with the ruler: *tian* is thereby being humane to its humans. The commoners' will embodied *tian*'s will, and *tian* rewards or punishes the ruler depending on whether the ruler supports or violates the commoners' will. In this way, it seems that Dong's understanding of the meaning of *tian* has many different perspectives and functions, but he still takes *tian* as a whole, and it seems that he does not clearly take this as a problem. This, however, is not only a problem that can be traced to Dong, or even relegated to Chinese philosophy in general. In Chinese thought, *tian* always has both sacred and secular parts, in a holistic manner.

This examination of various ideas from ancient Chinese thinkers and modern contributors shows that the continuity of human beings and *tian* exists in socio-

[87] Yu-lan Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: Free Press, 1997), 193.

political patterns as well. One can achieve small tranquillity by following the way of *li*, and achieve great union by following the way of humaneness, and then by participating with *tian* in harmony. Even though human beings have spontaneous goodness towards others, this does not necessarily lead to good outcomes, and Xunzi and Mencius rather focus on how to have good and ordered socio-political patterns instead of what is the good or the bad itself. *Li* as an overlapping point not only helps people with self-cultivation in their realm of life, but also gives order to society and politics. It is recognized that even though Xunzi's philosophy has a bad reputation of 'bad human natural tendency', Xunzi's discussion of heart-mind still gives humans a good reason to follow the way of *li*. A question arises here whether the individual or self will be dismissed if people are overly focused on order or harmony, and this is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Towards Order and Harmony between Person and Community

Person is the subject of practice or self-cultivation and the concrete context of *li*. Person is actually the beginning of order and harmony, rather than the centre of it. Self-cultivation is the first step towards order, involving different relationships with others in the community, and selfhood interweaves the concrete structures of order inside the community.

4.1 Person as the Beginning of Self-cultivation

One's natural tendency is inward, and disposition is outward appearance. Both natural tendency and disposition give people reasons to be good. Zhu Xi claimed that the body of the heart-mind is natural tendency, the application of heart-mind is dispositions, and he also uses the metaphor of water to demonstrate this relationship between these three: heart-mind is akin to water, with natural tendency resembling water that is still, and disposition resembling water that is flowing. Heart as the perceptive organ for the self not only has the function of what Mencius called 'the heart of shame' and 'the heart of empathy', but can also regulate natural tendency and disposition: the process of function in one's heart-mind is the process of self cultivation, one's self cultivation is not only involved in bodily being there and acting as such, but is also involved in sincerity.

Disposition for Feng Youlan (who is influenced by Western thought) is mainly negative, this is why he maintains that humans should overcome the refrain of disposition which mainly brings on pain and worry. This negative disposition is derived from Zhuangzi. Unlike Zhuangzi, who maintains that we should be 'disposition free', Feng concludes that we need to maintain 'no self' in this way to avoid such pain. But this freedom from disposition does not mean that one is emotionless, rather, it is that one should use knowledge to control one's emotion.

Meng Peiyuan and Huang Yushun maintain that Feng only focuses on the 'small self' which mainly takes disposition as a personal negativity. However, disposition can actually be positive. This positive disposition is the spontaneous goodness towards others, such as loving one's parents and, as in the example, saving the child who falls into the well. This kind of disposition is the most fundamental for Confucianism rather than filial piety. Because this positive disposition is the root for Confucianism, one can expand this disposition to all kinds of things and *tian*.

If the order of society is based on *li*, then humans only need to follow the framework of *li*. The process of following *li* in this sense is a process that completes one's personhood. Confucianism does not explicitly discuss the topic of subjecthood, but we can still discover how Confucianism views this topic by analysing the relevant words, and seeing whether it is person-focused. These words, for instance, are 'body' (*shen*), 'wants' (*yu*), 'like' (*hao* 好), 'dislike' (*wu* 恶), 'heart-mind' (*xin* 心) and 'I' or 'me' (*wo* 我, *wu* 吾), this person is not separate mind and body, rather, it is a whole idea with all desires and other elements inside. Self-cultivation is *xiushen* 修身: one needs to take care of one's behaviour to reach a higher realm of life, all of these behaviours are completed by one's body with a particular emphasis on the body's heart-mind[88]. Wants or desires, for Confucianism, can include not only our desires for refined foods and wealth but also humaneness (*Analects* 7.30) and *li* (*Mencius* 6A10). When Confucianism uses the term '*wo'*, it is either describing a subject that can have behaviours, or an egoistic self which needs to be overcome (*Analects* 9.4). What people really enjoy are *li* (*Analects* 1.15) and humaneness (*Analects* 4.6), and this understanding of person in Confucianism is highly connected with *li* and humaneness, to the point where following the way of *li* and humaneness is the process whereby each person attains selfhood. This is a process of denying and overcoming some part of the self in order to realise the better part of 'selfhood', and while this process will conclude at the end of each

[88] See *Analects* 1.4: 'Daily I examine my person (shen 身) on three counts. In my undertakings on behalf of other people, have I failed to do my utmost?' Body in this connection not only involves one's physical body but also one's reflection from one's mind.

individual's life span, the idea of humaneness and *li* will persist with other peoples' lives.

The self develops its perspective on society when one participates in socio-political action. One can also be integrated into a holistic selfhood when one cultivates oneself: those two different perspectives can be integrated in *li*, because *li* not only plays a role in giving order in the socio-political pattern, it also works in one's self-cultivation to improve one's realm of life. *Li* shapes the person in both the cultural and socio-political spheres, and from analysing *li*, one can see how the person can realise greater personhood through playing one's roles inside the family and society.

The process of self-cultivation is also a process of self-critique: it always maintains a tension between one's realistic situation and ideal personhood. The process of cultivating oneself is not only a process towards critiquing oneself, there is also a continuity between the realistic situation of the person and the ideal personhood, because cultivating oneself is a process of the development of the potential goodness from the person, and when one fulfils one's potential goodness, one can release greater personhood. If sages and gentlemen seem as if they have no potential choice that comes from themselves or are called 'selfless', it is because their realm of life has reached such a level that their action can always follow *li*, and these actions are also derived from their heart-mind. The process of their action is also to follow the way of choice, but this choice is based on self-soing. Even though it seems that sages and gentlemen only follow the way of *li*, rather than their own desires and wills, it is rather the case that *li* is based on the natural feeling of humans, for instance, caring for parents and other family members. The reason that people need to follow *li* is therefore because they need to regulate their different feelings and desires, and follow the middle way. For Confucius himself, 'from sixty [his] ear was attuned; from seventy [he] could give [his] heart-and-mind free rein without overstepping the boundaries' (*Analects* 2.4). The process of self-cultivation is a process of following one's heart-mind, and a process strengthening the goodness of oneself.

As Yang Guorong writes:

> When one identifies oneself in relation to society, it is based on the realisation of oneself: the process of identifying with society is completed by self. Then the process of one identifying oneself with society and the process of one having one's idea of "oneself" are actually two perspectives of one process.[89]

These two different perspectives depict how 'self' cannot be separated from concrete society, and how society cannot be separated from each concrete 'self'. There is no abstract self in China, the self is always understood through society.

Since it seems as though Confucianism does not give people the free will to make their own choices (because people have to follow the strict roles and *li* when they are dealing with their relationship with others), there could arise the problem of a weakening of the self in the modern world, as Confucianism is a form of thought which can cooperate with time, and a thinking that contributes to politics and society. It will therefore be valuable to consider a new, contemporary way of approaching the self in Confucianism. Zhang Desheng argues that because Confucianism focuses on order it is easy for it to have a structural bias, that is, that it sees roles rather than individuals.[90] This way, the individual and concrete father can die, but the role of father can keep going, and when only order is preferred, individual's rights may be dismissed in several ways. Is it true, then, that because order is preferred in Confucianism, it cannot guarantee private rights?

When there is no *dao*, individuals should keep an independent character rather than staying inside the monarchy and losing oneself: this serves as one way to keep their dignity. Confucius endorsed a singular self and individual value, for instance, that '[e]xemplary persons make demands on themselves, while petty persons make demands on others' (*Analects* 15.21). The exemplary person has a strong heart-mind and can reflect inwardly for self-support rather than relying on some outside power, and this self is therefore self-dependent and endorses self-ability. This is why Mencius likewise maintains the importance of being an independent 'great man'.

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[89] Yang Guorong, *Lunli yu cunzai* [*Ethics and Existence*] (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2009), 20-21.

[90] Zhang Desheng, *Rujia Lunli yu Shehui Zhixu* [*Confucian Ethics and Social Order*] (Shanghai: shanghai renming chubanshe, 2008), 115.

> A man lives in the spacious dwelling, occupies the proper position, and goes along the highway of the Empire (*tianxia*). When he achieves his ambition he shares these with the people; when he fails to do so he practices the Way alone. He cannot be led into excess when wealthy and honoured or deflected from his purpose when poor and obscure, nor can he be made to bow before superior force. This is what I would call a great man (*dazhangfu* 大丈夫). (*Mencius* 3B2)

This great man has an independent character and the strong will to serve for the *dao*. The value of an individual is not a matter of wealth, it is concerned with how people can control the desire for material things and become masters of themselves. Xunzi makes this clear when he discusses how one should cultivate oneself.

> If the mind is serene and happy, then colors that are less than ordinary can nurture the eye. Sounds that are less than average can nurture the mouth. Robes of coarse cloth and shoes of rough hemp can nurture the body. And a cramped room, reed blinds, a bed of dried straw, plus a stool and mat can nurture the bodily frame. Thus, even without enjoyment of all the beautiful things of the world, he can nurture his happiness. With no position of authority and rank, he can nurture his reputation. In the case of such men, were they given the whole world, although it might mean much to the world, it would mean little to their peace and happiness. This indeed may be called "oneself and making a servant of things." (*Xunzi* 22.17)

For Xunzi, making oneself a servant of things is not valuable: one should rather strengthen oneself, and be the master of things. In any case the gentleman should serve for the *dao*, not for wealth or other private interests, and doing so one can be independent. Like Confucius, Xunzi maintains that studying and learning is for oneself or one's own sake: 'the learning of the gentleman is used to refine his character' (*Xunzi* 1.10). Xunzi not only values the cultivation of self, but he also values individual life.

> Thus men prize nothing so highly as life and enjoy nothing more than peace. Among the things used to nurture life and bring about the enjoyment of peace, they consider nothing as important as ritual and moral principles. (*Xunzi* 16.4)

The self needs to complete the aim of '[bringing] peace and contentment to the aged, to share relationships of trust and confidence with [one's] friends, and to love and protect the young' (*Analects* 5.26). Confucians always stress ethics and self-cultivation as originating from the self and as the centre of ethics. As Mencius said: 'All under heaven has its basis in the state, the state in the family, and the family in one's own self' (*Mencius* 4A5). When Confucius discusses practice and learning, he maintains that it is 'for [the] self' (*Analects* 14.24). Herbert Fingarette writes that the self is inside of *li*: '[Confucius] talks of what it is to be man, and he sees that man is a special being with a unique dignity and power deriving from and embedded in *li*.'[91]

Self-cultivation begins 'through self-discipline (*keji* 克己) and observing ritual propriety' (*Analects* 12.1), and having both is called humaneness. On the basic level, human beings love and care for their own family: this is appropriate behaviour for Confucianism. Confucians also highlight the need to have another level, which is *keji*, literally meaning 'to overcome oneself' which is to overcome the 'small self' or the desires from oneself which are not good for one to follow the way of humaneness, and expand one's love and caring to more people outside their families which is called 'bigger self'. One can thereby expand familial love to other people or even to other things. This love, however, is not equally expanded towards different people or things, as people have different emotional responses towards different people and things.

> A gentleman is sparing (*ai* 爱) with living creatures but shows no benevolence towards them; he shows benevolence towards the people but is not attached (*qin* 亲) to them. He is attached to his parents but is merely benevolent towards the people; he is benevolent towards the people but is merely sparing with living creatures. (*Mencius* 7A45)

Qin as the love inside one's family is biased and only based on clan and lineage; in this respect Mencius distinguishes between humaneness and *Qin*. For him, humaneness is closer to a natural sympathy towards people which is beyond *qin*, and

[91] Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular As Sacred* (New York City: Harper & Row, 1972), 76.

it is more specific than the spontaneous feeling of sympathy, because humaneness is always combined with appropriateness[92]. Also, it seems that Mencius mentions that *qin* is the beginning of humaneness and loving other things, and so one cannot skip *qin* and go to the level of humaneness.

All moral values in Confucianism are derived from self-cultivation, but this self is not equivalent to the self of Western individualism. Rather, Confucianism builds its holistic social and political structure beginning from the first person's spontaneous feeling. For Confucianism, this structure begins from the self but assigns values in the relationship with others in a community, people in this structure have to overcome themselves (*keji*) or go beyond self-love, which is too close to only loving one's own family to cooperate with others.

When Confucius discusses 'no self', he is critiquing an 'existent self' rather than a holistic self: 'he was not self-absorbed' (*Analects* 9.4). The reason for such criticism is to realise oneself and to achieve completion in oneself, rather than being a straightforward dismissal of selfhood:

> It is not worth talking to a man who has no respect for himself, and it is not worth the trouble to make a common effort with a man who has no confidence in himself… Benevolence is man's peaceful abode and rightness his proper path. It is indeed lamentable for anyone not to live in his peaceful abode and not to follow his proper path (*Mencius* 4A10).

Hall and Ames uses the notion of focus and field to explain the relationship between self and expanded union: 'the focus-field model results from understanding one's relation to the world to be constituted by acts of contextualization. The self is focal in that it both constitutes and is constituted by the field in which it resides.'[93] This shows in a clear manner how the self can cooperate with others, and that there is no tension present as there is in Western individualism. Yu Yingshi and W.M.

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[92] 'Benevolence is man's peaceful abode and rightness is his proper path.' *Mencius* 4A10

'Benevolence is the heart of man, and rightness his road.' *Mencius* 6A11

[93] David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1998), 43.

Theodore De Bary maintain that the self or individual of Confucianism should be understood through personalism rather than individualism.

Confucius proceeds from a moral and individual perspective rather than an epistemological perspective. The individual in Confucianism is always connected with other people. Self-cultivation is always based on improving the relationships with other people in a community. 'They cultivate themselves by bringing accord to the people' (*Analects* 14.42).

The content of self-cultivation is also included:

> Daily I examine my person on three counts. In my understanding on behalf of other people, have I failed to do my utmost? In my interactions with colleagues and friends, have I failed to make good on my word? In what has been passed on to me, have I failed to carry it into practice?' (*Analects* 1.4).

This self-cultivation is a process of self-completion, but the 'self' here embodies the value from connections and having relationships with other people in a harmonious community.

For Confucianism, self is not an abstract form of completing or perfecting oneself, rather, it is a process that both begins with one's life and ends in one's life, as the individual has limited life span. As Yang Guorong puts it: 'Confucius finds value in the continued individuals' life and the continued history (continued culture).'[94] It is, then, difficult to concede that Confucianism has a transcendent outlook, since the ideas of Confucius rely on each concrete individual in their own circumstance: hence Confucius was not interested in discussing the question of life after death. But this does not mean Confucianism does not concern itself with the value of limited life. Rather, for Confucianism, people not only have the perspectives of individuals but also the view of groupings or the community: in the history of humans, even though individual humans die, the idea of filial piety exists in life, and this idea of caring exists in each human's concrete life.

[94] Yang Guorong, *Shande licheng* [*The Process of Goodness*] (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2009), 57.

One issue raised by Hans Georg Moeller is that the family is incapable of being the root for modern society, which goes against the continuity between humans and *tian*:

> While social systems such as the family still exist, they are no longer the 'root' of social life – to use an old Confucian metaphor. Functional differentiation is based on the non-hierarchical co-existence of a multiplicity of social systems, and individuals cannot but divide themselves into multiple social agencies if they want to take part in contemporary social life. Therefore, the vision of 'organismic unity' seems not to be 'unimaginable', but simply structurally impossible – at least for today.[95]

Liu Qingping also maintains that Confucianism is mainly focused on a family virtue rather than a public one, which could therefore be a problem for modern society and politics.[96] One can respond to these criticisms by highlighting that even though Confucius espouses filial piety in a very important way, that does not mean that filial piety is the root for other forms of ethics or humaneness; 'As for filial and fraternal responsibility, it is, I suspect, the root (本) of authoritative conduct' (*Analects* 1.2). Here *ben* is translated as 'root': if filial piety is the root of humaneness, there would be a tension between filial piety and general humaneness when people need to make to a choice between loving family members and loving strangers, and it may also in this way conflict with a modern social structure if filial piety is the root.[97] But *ben* also has the meaning of beginning or origin. Taken this way, the whole sentence would instead mean that filial piety is the beginning rather than the root of humaneness, implying that the position of filial piety is more important than humaneness for Confucius. This explanation is also compatible with 'correlating one's conduct with those near at hand [which] can be said to be the method of

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[95] Hans-Georg Moeller, "New Confucianism and the Semantics of Individuality. A Luhmannian Analysis", *Asian Philosophy* 2004(14): 25–39.

[96] Liu Qingping, "Lun kongmeng ruxue de xueqin tuantixing tezheng" [The Character of Consanguinity in the Analects and Mencius], *Zhexuemen*, 2001(1): 73-82.

[97] This tension is from 'love one's self and one's family' and 'love strangers', loving one's self and family is from filial piety, loving strangers is from humaneness.

becoming an authoritative person' (*Analects* 6.30). As for most people, parents are the first people with whom they begin their spontaneous goodness, which belongs to the 'small self'. After this initial point, they can show their more general humaneness to strangers, which belongs to the 'bigger self'. Filial piety is then the beginning of humaneness rather than the root of it.

In the context of the continuity between *tian* and human beings, the self cannot be equivalent to the self of Western individualism; rather, this view of self shows that Confucianism begins its thought from daily life, and then expands to participate with *tian*. Rather than defining a clear line with others, the self in Confucianism always tries to inter-relate with others in a proper time and to follow a proper way (*li*).

One should always try to perfect oneself: this has been elaborated as 'creative transformation' by Tu Weiming. This creative transformation is fundamentally derived from *li*. Herbert Fingarette instead promotes the importance of *li* also, balancing humaneness and *li* in his theory, and making it clear that *li* can endorse dignity for individuals within the community. Tu Weiming has criticised Herbert Fingarette for weakening the role of inward humaneness, and because of this it is easy to turn *li* into a totally empty form.[98] Even though Tu Weiming still takes humaneness as the most foundational idea for Confucianism, and disagrees with Fingarette, who holds that there is no inward self in Confucianism, he still admits the importance of *li*, and maintains that *li* should always be accompanied by humaneness.[99] *Li* and humaneness are correlative: humaneness without *li* is too abstract and empty; *li* without humaneness only leaves empty forms. Humaneness produces the inward possibility for human beings to accept following the way of *li*, and to complete themselves; *li* gives human beings a road to walk in the direction of both humaneness and to complete oneself and participate with *tian*.

Self-cultivation is learning the realm of life for one's own sake, but Confucianism is concerned not only with self perfection but also with serving others. In this way,

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[98] Tu Weiming, "Rujia renwen sixiang zhongde shehuixing getixing he tianrenheyi" [Society, Self and the Continuity of Humans and Heaven in Confucianism], *Guoxuexuekan*, 2009(6): 87-93.

[99] Tu Weiming, "The Creative Tension between Jên and Li", *Philosophy East and West*, 1968(18): 29-39.

self-cultivation is always based on building a better relationship with others in a community, rather than being a merely isolated cultivation.

This self does not endorse the tension between the self's and others' values; rather, it is a process of the self finding its ordered group, and then finding its value within this community. But this does not mean that the individual does not have any meaning; it is rather that this system endorses both self and group values, as one has to self-cultivate to keep harmony in society. Self-value and dignity are embodied in moments when one wants humaneness, and humaneness is dependent upon one's own will, 'no sooner do I seek it than it has arrived.' (*Analects* 7.30) Self also has a strong will from inside: 'common peasants cannot be deprived of their purposes' (*Analects* 9.26).

Confucius's encouragement of one's working or even sacrificing oneself for humaneness is more or less a means of promoting the expansion of group value; but this group should cooperate with *dao*, likewise, one should not serve the ruler without *dao.* In this respect, it is important to highlight that humans' dignity is also embodied when they choose not to serve.[100]

The self of Confucianism is close to the concept of self in communitarianism, insofar as the Confucian self is always concrete in the context and relationship with others. This does not mean, however, that Confucianism promotes the view that individuals should sacrifice their individual good for common good: it is always important to complete oneself, and sometimes family obligations have priority compared with serving authority.

Even though the self of Confucianism is always in context, this self is also based on a universal assumption of human nature, that human nature is good. This self or individual, even though it can be independent, is different from the self in communitarianism (which is more focused on sociology). Even though Confucianism may not intend to be a universalism, it still holds an assumption of unified natural tendency. Confucians not only take each family, ethnicity, state and culture as one community, but also our lived world as a holistic all-under-*tian*.

[100] See *Analects* 15.9: 'they might well give up their lives in order to achieve it.'

Because all people have spontaneous kindness, they will thus take other people's suffering as their own, and aim for the creative perfecting of all-under-*tian*. It is only when everything is in harmony in all-under-*tian* that it can be taken that self-cultivation has been completed.

4.2 Between Private and Public within the Community

The notion of self also has some relation to the Chinese word *si* 私, which has the meaning of selfishness or the private part of the self. *Si* is a state in which one's love only exists in one's family and one cannot expand this love to others; the opposite word is *gong* 公 which means 'selfless', or the part that one can sacrifice for public interests; at a stage where one can expand one's love to others.

If one approaches Confucianism from the West, it may appear not to have a private sphere since Chinese traditional thought does not promote the idea of the absolute individual. For Chinese scholars, however, they critique Confucianism for not having the idea of a public sphere, because it is too focused on ethics in small groups.

Even though Confucianism did not discuss the topic of such a public and private problem directly, there are examples about the tension between private and public concerning rulers, caring about the family (*qinqin* 亲亲) and respecting morally superior people (*zunxian* 尊贤). It thus seems that Confucianism noticed, in some respect, this problem. As Mencius writes:

> Tao Ying asked, 'When Shun was emperor and Kao Yao was the judge, if the Blind Man killed a man, what was to be done?' 'The only thing to do was to apprehend him.' 'In that case, would Shun not try to stop it?' 'How could Shun stop it? Kao Yao had authority for what he did.' 'Then what would Shun have done?' 'Shun looked upon casting aside the empire as no more than discarding a worn shoe. He would have secretly carried the old man on his back and fled to the edge of the sea and lived there happily, never giving a thought to the empire.' (*Mencius* 7A35)

Mencius noticed the tension between filial piety (*si*) and justice (*gong*), and also that Shun (as a ruler), if he insists on arresting his own father, goes against filial piety. Mencius's answer could be explained as either avoiding a response to this tension by saying that Shun gives up the throne, or that Mencius took filial piety as more important than being a ruler and serving other people. In this paragraph the focus is on Shun rather than his father, who has killed one person. From this perspective, Shun cannot disturb the judge as a ruler (the son of *tian*), but also, emotionally, he cannot discard his father and allow him to be arrested by the judge. This does not mean that Shun could not distinguish justice from injustice: his decision to flee from the judge means that he noticed he could not use his public political power to protect his guilty father. Deng Xiaomang analyses the example from the focus that Shun's father killed people and harmed other peoples' interests. He maintains that the idea of covering for a criminal father can lead to the problem of corruption, Confucianism therefore needs to take responsibility for corruption[101].

Guo Qiyong and Ding Weixiang instead mainly focus on how Socrates also has the idea of protecting the father as well, and how both traditional Chinese and Western legal systems share similar ideas on avoiding the use of family members' testimony when it involves a matter of one's own family members.[102] Even though Socrates and Confucius share the idea of covering for the crime of one's father, this is not sufficient to support the conclusion that Confucianism does not need to take responsibility for corruption. This is because, fundamentally, rightness and *li* for Confucius are weighed more important than law.

Another interpretation is from Huang Yushun, who maintains that in the case of covering for one's father who stole a sheep the problem is about one's immediate emotional response to one's father. This turns the argument about whether Shun's choice is right or wrong to a neutral one: understood as such, it would then not be a

[101] Deng Xiaomang, *Rujia lunli xinpipan* [*The New Critique of Confucian Ethics*] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2010), 13-19.

[102] Guo Qiyong, *Rujia lunli xinpipan zhi pipan* [*The Critique of the New Critique of Confucian Ethics*] (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2011), 24-93.

legal or moral failure for Confucius.[103] In this case, Huang dismisses the logical problem of a Confucianism that conflicts with the legal system. Huang turns the public problem into a private problem which has nothing to do with the law. Confucianism does not go against public law, which is why Shun avoids using his public power, as it is a private problem for himself rather than the whole state. It is a description of a son's natural spontaneous response to one's father, just like the case of spontaneous caring for a child who falls into a well.

Also, in *Natural Tendency is from Fate* (*Xingzi Mingchu* 性自命出), if one's actions are from one's natural disposition, even though they may be exaggerated, this should still not be taken as bad.[104] If one loves one's family too much and goes against others' interests it is understandable for Confucianism, as this emotional spontaneous response is the foundation and root for Confucianism rather than filial piety, filial piety and other concrete ethics are formed based on our natural dispositions.

Humaneness and *li* as a general principle are embodied in the process of self-cultivation, and cannot be reduced to filial piety or other concrete ethics. Even if all these ethics embody the idea of humaneness, these ethics are not equivalent to humaneness: as filial piety is the beginning of humaneness, the final aim is that one should expand the love inside one's family to other people: 'take all-under-heaven as one family, take China as one person' (*The Book of Rites)*[105]. This highly integrated culture is dominant even in modern Chinese culture: for instance, senior college students call junior students younger brothers or sisters, and children call their parents' friends aunts or uncles. Even though the idea of family is significant in China, I would rather take it as a beginning of Chinese thought rather than the foundation, because it can conflict with the idea of harmony world if each person only loves their own family members.

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[103] Huang Yushun, "Xing yu zhi: lifa yu qinggan—kongzi jiujing ruhe kandai zhengfurangyang" [Punishment and Direct Disposition: Ritual and Emotion—How Confucius Views Covering Father's Criminal], *Zhexue dongdai* [*The Trends of Philosophy*], 2007(10): 46-49.

[104] 苟以其情，虽过不恶

[105] 天下为一家，中国为一人

According to Huang Yushun, humaneness has two perspectives, the public and the private: the private is loving and caring inside the extended family, while the public is humaneness towards the whole world.[106] On the public level, people have to overcome private love, and pursue humaneness. Huang's humaneness is not biased towards the public sphere, rather it should serve the function of justice in society. Huang's interpretation seems like a solution for the problem of possible confliction between filial piety and modern society. This is so on the condition that we only approach the private question on the private level, and the public question on the public.

> Fundamentally, legalism takes the state as the private tool for the ruler, on the practical level, then, it is difficult to put the regulation of 'private' and 'public' to the ruler. Rather, there is only the ruler's own desire which is taken as 'public' needs. 'Private' for Xunzi is mainly the ruler's own emotional desires and kinship based on lineage or personal connection, 'public' is general public rules or needs of the state which are beyond these lineage or personal emotions.[107]

Xunzi maintains that the private interests for commoners are public for the ruler, but the rulers' interests are private ones that need to be restrained.

For Western tradition, the family's value is less important than the love for God, because loyalty to the unity and the interest of the state needs to be guaranteed. The interests of the family are thereby normally dismissed. For instance, in Plato's ideal republic, pursuing family interest is seen as bad.[108] For Western culture, there is always tension between private and public. But in the Chinese tradition, family interests or obligations inside the family are normally higher than other obligations or interests.

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[106]Huang Yushun, "Zhidu wenming shi shehui wending de baozhang—kongzi de zhuxia wujun lun" [Institution can Guarantee the Ordered Society—Discussing 'Chinese States Without Rulers'], *Xueshujie*, 2014(9): 28-38.

[107] Han Deming, *Xunzi yu rujia de shehui lixiang* [*Xunzi and the Ideal Society of Confucianism*], (Jinan: Qilushushe, 2001), 193-194.

[108] "Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: Plato's Ethics and Politics in the Republic" Last modified August 31, 2009, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-ethics-politics/.

This does not mean that Confucianism is only fit to promote small communities. Bai Tongdong states that Confucianism is not against contributing to the private field, but also that its approach will actually contribute to public benefits. This is because this caring for family members is the beginning of contribution to the public.[109] To serve one's parents is the beginning and foundation to serving others and the state for Confucianism.

Confucius himself transferred politics to the ethics of the family when his student asked why he did not participate in politics: 'It is all in filial conduct! Just being filial to your parents and befriending your brothers is carrying out the work of government' (*Analects* 2.21). For Confucius, it seems that there is no clear line between private moral practice and public political practice: these two are correlative and interrelated with each other.

4.3 The Final Stage of Self Cultivation: Towards the *Dao*

Even though self is the beginning of self-cultivation, having harmonious relationships with others is the completion of it (*Analects* 5.26). The process of self-cultivation is a way to follow humaneness and *li*, these two are the *dao* of humans. Through this process, the dignity and value of humans can be embodied.

Because Confucianism takes *dao* as superior to one's political or social position (*shi* 势), the value of Confucians is also embodied in the spirit of critique. In an expanded community, Confucians serve as the moral model that can influence other people and build an ideal harmonious community. The reason people follow and admire them is that Confucians can always follow the *dao*.

> The *Ru* model themselves after the ancient kings; they exalt ritual and moral principles; as ministers and sons they are careful to esteem their superiors to the highest degree. Should a ruler of men employ them, they exercise power and influence in his court in an appropriate fashion. Should he not employ

[109] Bai Tongdong, *Jiubang xinming—gujin zhongxi canzhao xiade gudian rujia* [*New Task in old State—Ancient Confucian Political Philosophy in the Context of Comparing Ancient Time and Modern and also West and East*] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2009), 129.

them, then acting sincerely they withdraw and organize the people, being invariably obedient in their roles as subjects. Although they be impoverished and beleaguered, starving and freezing, they will certainly not use the same perverse way out of avarice…were *Ru* to reside in this court, the government would become refined; were they to occupy subordinate positons, popular customs would be refined. (*Xunzi* 8.2)

Xunzi uses Confucian intellectuals to balance the tension between state and society: ideally, these intellectuals should help promote the interests of states and commoners through acting according to *dao* and humaneness.

Mencius noticed that in real society, a moral person cannot always be in both a high social position and a moral position, he therefore promoted the moral position.

> Benevolence, dutifulness, conscientiousness, truthfulness to one's word, unflagging delight in what is good- these are honours bestowed by heaven. The position of a Ducal Minister, a Minister, or a Counsellor is an honour bestowed by man. Men of antiquity bent their efforts towards acquiring honours bestowed by heaven, and honours bestowed by man followed as a matter of course. Men of today bend their efforts towards acquiring honours bestowed by man, and once the latter is won they discard the former. Such men are deluded to the extreme, and in the end are sure only to perish. (*Mencius* 6A16)

Daniel A. Bell maintains that Chinese politics requires meritocratic rule, which means that those who occupy positions of power should possess the appropriate virtue and ability.[110] Bell is here focused on the role of intellectuals who can contribute to politics. As Yu Yingshi said: 'There is no definite connection between the gentlemen's (*junzi's*) social position and their ideal moral representation. Rather, the universal moral or virtue can go beyond specific position.'[111] The good name of gentlemen transferred from focusing on one's position on politics to one's position

[110] Daniel A. Bell, *Beyond Liberal Democracy: Political Thinking for an East Asian Context* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 34.

[111] Yu Yingshi, *Zhongguo sixiang chuangtong de xiandai quanshi* [*The Modern Interpretation of Chinese Tradition*] (Nanjing: Jiangshu renming chubanshe, 2003), 160.

of morality, gentlemen and petty men that are not merely determined by their social position. This separation between social position and morality also solves the problem of an asymmetric social structure, which means that moral people may not have a high social position.

'In point of position, you are the prince and I am your subject. How dare I be friends with you? In point of virtue, it is you who ought to serve me. How can you presume to be friends with me?' (*Mencius* 5B7). On the political level the ruler is higher than his subject (*shi*) but on the level of virtue, his *shi* is higher than him: this tension between a morally higher minister and his ruler always exists, since the traditional political reality is based on lineage.

A person's virtue cannot always be endorsed through political positions. Mencius does distinguish between higher and lower position, and he accepts this distinction, but his focus is *dao* rather than position (*shi* 势). That is the main difference between his philosophy and Legalism. Mencius claimed that it is necessary for a ruler with a higher political position to respect their ministers with lower political positions: this is called reverence (*xian*), and it is highly encouraged to be a ruler of reverence. 'Wise kings in antiquity devoted themselves to goodness, forgetting their own exalted position. How should wise gentlemen in antiquity be any different? They delighted in the Way, forgetting the exalted position of others' (*Mencius* 7A8). Even though the ruler has a higher political position, the minister is encouraged to ignore the higher political position and be free from flattery, this is called the *xian* of the minister. From this point, Mencius holds the idea that ruler and minister should be equal in the perspective of *dao*, and the minister should be independent as he only serves *dao*.

Since rulers may not have great virtue, it is then necessary for *shi* or Confucians to work for them. These Confucians do not just serve the ruler, but more importantly, since self-cultivation for Confucianism is not only inside but also needs to be expanded to others, they need to serve the *dao* and complete their ideal political position to finish their moral practice.

Confucians have the responsibility to carry *dao* in the community, but this is not like a priest's role, because it is a process necessary to complete themselves and be a

good example for others. 'Scholar-apprentices cannot but be strong and resolved, for they bear a heavy charge and their way is long. Where they take authoritative conduct as their charge, is it not a heavy one? And where their way ends only in death, is it not indeed long?' (*Mencius* 8.7)

Likewise, Xunzi says that a person should "follow the dictates of the Way rather than those of one's lord" (*Xunzi* 29.2). For Joseph Chan, *Dao*-based politics is a brand of political perfectionism, which, according to the contemporary literature of political philosophy, means that under certain conditions it is appropriate and legitimate for the state to promote the good life.[112]

'To follow the mandate of one's commission for the profit of one's lord is called "obedience." To follow the mandate of one's commission but not for the profit of one's lord is called "toadying."… One should follow the way and not follow the lord' (*Xunzi* 13.2). Intellectuals were the bureaucrats, or potential bureaucrats, of the *Ru* school. The conflict between central government and local governments was always the main problem for the emperor, so the emperor could use intellectuals who were selected by him against local governments. These intellectuals believed in the *tiandao.* Ideally, they sought to use *dao* to restrain the unlimited power of the emperor. If they thought *tianxia* lost its *dao*, they could become hermits and reject working for the government. During the Wei Jin period, there were many intellectuals who felt disappointment over their government, and they chose to live life as hermits to avoid involvement in politics or acting against the social general principle (which they called the *li*, this li is only a form of fixed *li*). These kinds of intellectuals were called famous intellectuals (*mingshi* 名士), because as intellectuals they had the courage to defend *Dao* against political powers.

These Confucian intellectuals also needed to go beyond all private interest, they could then care about all-under-*tian* rather than their own individual benefit, making it further possible for them to complete the ideal socio-political pattern (serve for *dao*). 'The Master said. "The scholar-apprentice who cherishes worldly comforts is

[112] Joseph Chan, *Confucian Perfectionism: A Political Philosophy for Modern Times: A Political Philosophy for Modern Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 51.

not worthy of the name"' (*Analects* 14.2). Through this tension between *dao* and the power of emperor, the value of intellectuals can be revealed.

Even though Confucius himself respects these *yinshi* who choose not to serve for the states, he still insists that intellectuals should have the aspiration to serve the state and complete their ideal political pattern, rather than only focusing on inward self-cultivation. Hence, serving the state is the appropriate thing for Confucians to do (*Analects* 18.7), Mencius also mentioned that serving the state (*shi* 仕), for intellectuals, is like farming for farmers: farmers cannot give up farming their land. (*Mencius* 3B3)

Also, however, Confucius maintained that whether serving or not serving, one has to follow the *dao*, 'It is a disgrace to remain poor and without rank when the way prevails in the state; it is a disgrace to be wealthy and of noble rank when it does not' (*Analects* 8.13). 'Yuansi inquired about shameful conduct, and the Master replied, "To receive a stipend of grain when the way prevails in the state and to be still receiving this stipend when it does not, is shameful conduct"' (*Analects* 14.1). Similarly, Bo Yi and Shu Qi died because they rejected eating the food from King Wu of Zhou to defend the *dao*.

For Confucius, serving or not serving is determined by whether the *dao* is prevailing or not, which means that intellectuals serve according to the appropriate time and opportunity. But according to Yuri Pines, intellectuals are not economically independent, they can only, and must, serve the state as a means of living.[113] De Bary also argues that the weakness of Confucians is that they cannot establish any power on their own, as Confucians themselves were insecure in that highly dependent political system.[114] But in the community of Confucians, they possess the *dao*, and act according to it: this actually developed a good reputation for them, and these Confucians can gain fame and influence other people as well. These

[113] Yuri Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 141.

[114] Wm. Theodore de Bary, *The Trouble with Confucianism*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 49.

Confucians also can work in other careers in life as well, and even for Confucius himself, pork was accepted as tuition fees (*Analects* 7.7).

Mark Lewis argues that Zhanguo "schoolmen" or intellectuals were economically independent of the state and could make their living not only as administrators but as teachers, technical masters, or retainers of a powerful patron. This economic independence was essential to the ensuing intellectual autonomy of the *shi* masters and their disciples.[115] Because of this independence, Confucians could have more freedom in choosing whether or not to serve the ruler.

As intellectuals are morally superior to the acting rulers, and also possess the *dao* (except for some career-seekers), there are also intellectuals like Confucius and Mencius who took serving states as their mission. These intellectuals did not need to serve just one state: there are many states in the Pre-Qin stage, they had freedom to serve the state that they thought deserved their service.

There was a famous debate between the intellectuals who worked for the central government and the intellectuals who did not. This historical event was documented in *Discourses on Salt and Iron,* written by Heng Kuan, which ended in the Western Han dynasty. In this debate, intellectuals who were pro-government held a perspective derived from legalism, whereas intellectuals who were not working for the government used the ideas of the Ru school in stating that the government should not strive to pursue its own interests or profit from commoners.

Who, then, could speak for the people? Legalists would claim that they promote the common good of people as well, but that commoners do not know what is good for themselves, so they need ordering from the government:

> Nowadays, those who do not understand how to govern invariably say, "You must win the hearts of the people!" If you could assure good government merely by winning the hearts of the people, then there would be no need for men like Yi Yin and Guan Zhong—you could simply listen to what the people say. The reason you cannot rely upon the wisdom of the people is that they have the minds of little children. If the child's head is not shaved, its sores will

[115] Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1999), 72–83.

> spread; and if its boil is not lanced, it will become sicker than ever. But when it is having its head shaved or its boil lanced, someone must hold it while the loving mother performs the operation, and it yells and screams incessantly, for it does not understand that the little pain it suffers now will bring great benefits later.[116] (*Hanfeizi* 50.11)

It seems as though Legalism does not necessarily reject the common good, and Han Feizi and Dong Zhongshu[117] instead agree that commoners do not know what is in their own interests. However, for legalists, commoners effectively need rulers to decide what is good for them, while for Dong only intellectuals can represent the heart-mind of humans.

Confucian intellectuals as intellectuals that possess *dao* can go beyond the tension between private and public, self and great union: not only can they go beyond their own social structure to participate in politics, but they can also speak for the people, as they have a general ethics. They can not only restrain the unlimited power of rulers for commoners, but also adopt the role of teachers in influencing commoners to act according to *li*.

4.4 Two Traits of Person: Roles and Flexibility

Flexibility (*quan* 權) as a skill against non-flexible rules means that one should act according to the concrete circumstance rather than fixed principles. The idea of flexibility supports the notion that individuals not only play their socially-related roles (because each individual has his own values in each concrete circumstance), but also endorses the significance of selfhood, because all behaviours and actions

[116] Burton Watson, *Han Feizi: Basic Writings* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2013), 129.

[117] Before Dong Zhongshu, the ways of changing the mandate of Heaven consisted of war between dukes or the rebellion of the masses. Dong adjusts the ideas of Mencius, who maintains that the heart-mind of the commoners is the heart-mind of heaven that can dominate the legitimacy of emperors. For Dong, however, '[a]n intellectual (*shi* 士) is one who practices or works (*shi* 事), the masses (*min* 民) are those who close their eyes (*ming* 瞑)' Chunqiu fanlu`shencha minghao. Hence, the commoners cannot present the heart-mind of heaven, rather, *shi* should serve this function for the commoners.

follow both the way of *li* and humaneness and adapt to the individual's concrete circumstances.

> Is that prescribed by the rites that, in giving and receiving, man and woman should not touch each other?' 'It is,' said Mencius. 'When one's sister-in-law is drowning, does not one stretch out to help her?' 'Not to help a sister-in-law who is drowning is to be a brute. It is prescribed by the rites that, in giving and receiving, man and woman should not touch each other, but in stretching out a helping hand to the drowning sister-in-law one uses one's discretion (*quan* 權) (*Mencius* 4A17).

In the story of Shun, Shun makes his own dramatic choice based on his concrete circumstances rather than insisting on one ethic alone and putting himself in a dilemma (*Mencius* 7A35). But that does not necessarily thereby imply that Mencius has a relativistic view about morality. Rather, when he discusses the case of saving one's sister in law, it is a case against *li*, but it is still in the sphere of humaneness: one must still act to save the other's life. In the case of Shun, who carried his father and fled, such an act is still in the realm of filial piety. As Yang Guorong writes: 'Flexibility plays a role that adjust *dao* and makes it works better rather than goes against *dao* itself.'[118]

The forms of *li* is always changeable: 'Day and day, [they keep] changing, and keep changing again'[119]. *Li* is not static and unchangeable for Confucians: 'Introduce the calendar of the Xia dynasty, ride on the large yet plain chariot of the Yin, wear the ceremonial cap of the Zhou, and as for music, play the *shao* and *wu*' (*Analects* 15.11), 'The Yin dynasty adapted the observances of ritual propriety of the Xia dynasty, and how they altered them can be known' (*Analects* 2.23).

This tolerance concerning flexibility and the focus on circumstance means that morality has a relative perspective, because morality is completed by each individual, but each individuals' ethics is connected with concrete circumstances.

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[118] Yang Guorong, *Shande licheng* [*The Process of Goodness*] (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2009), 81.

[119] My own translation of 日日新，又日新. It from both *Yizhuan* [*The Commentary of the Book of Change*] and *Daxue* [*Great Learning*].

Xunzi noticed this problem: 'Bigan and [Wu] Zixu were loyal subjects, but their lords would not use them. Confucius and Yan Hui were wise, but their generation left them in dire poverty' (*Xunzi* 27.116). It is seen that the value of Bigan, Zixu, Confucius and Yanyuan is not dismissed simply because they cannot complete their role or ethics.

> [L]ove and hate are tempered, and joy and anger made to fit the occasion. They are used to make inferiors obedient and to make superiors enlightened. Through a myriad transformations nothing becomes disorderly; but if one is divided in his loyalty to them, he will be brought to ruin. Surely it is true that the rites are indeed perfection! Establish them and exalt them, make of them the ridgepole, and nothing in the world can add to or subtract from them (*Xunzi* 19.7).

Even though *li* is based on humans' natural feeling or dispositions, it is still important to shape one's dispositions by following the timing and adjusting oneself to current circumstance. Xunzi highlights that *li* is perfect and cannot be added to or subtracted from, but this does not mean that the forms of *li* cannot be changed. Rather, the general idea of *li* and the timing of *li* cannot be dismissed.

When Mencius writes: 'rightness is the road and the rites are the door. Only a gentleman can follow this road and go in and out through this door' (*Mencius* 5B7), the fundamental meaning of following *li* here is following the direction of rightness, which is always correlated with *li*, as Confucius maintained. Humaneness and rightness are unchangeable, then, but all the outside forms are dynamic and can adapt to historical change.

Li, compared with laws, may constitute a better way to govern states; while as legalism cannot contribute more than Confucianism simply because it appears too narrowly focused on laws:

> Ancient Chinese law only set what people could not do, rather than giving people rights; commoners only had responsibilities for the ruler, and it was not reciprocal. This is the extreme dictatorial form of governing which is called law governing (*fazhi* 法治). Further, ancient Chinese people were punished if

> they violated ritual; when there were elements of punishment in ritual, then ritual could be seen as custom law.[120]

Legalism thus has the appellation of 'legal', but it is more dangerous than Confucianism, as legalistic law is only a strengthening of power for the monarchy. *Li* has a similar function to law in ancient times, but in difference with ancient Chinese law, people accepted *li* naturally, as *li* was based on natural tendency and began from spontaneous goodness. Unlike legalism's forceful and artificial application of laws, people accept *li* passively. Even though Confucianism is more focused on *li* and education, it nonetheless does not reject the modern law system. This is especially true for Xunzi, who maintains that we should apply both *li* and law to maintain order.

The idea of *rang* (讓 deferring to others) is one concrete correlative virtue of *li*, and also deferring, or modesty, is what Confucius takes as the beginning of *li*:

> The Master said, "If rulers are able to effect order in the state through the combination of observing ritual propriety and deferring to others, what more is needed? But if they are unable to accomplish this, what have they to do with observing ritual propriety?" (*Analects* 4.13).

Deferring to others, embodied in everyday life, is to always abdicate things to others, and to be reluctant to accept others' things. If this virtue is expanded to politics, then the abdication system should be ideal for Confucians, but Mencius was reluctant about this idea after the perishing of the state of Yan[121] (*Mencius* 1B17 1B18 and *Mencius* 2B17). The political reality was based on lineage, and the failure of Yan demonstrated that it was against timing to have an abdication (potentially creating disorder in society), which shows that the principle and the request for order and harmony in the socio-political comes as the first order in Confucianism rather than modesty.

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[120] Bai Xi, "Lizhi fazhi yu renzhi" [Ritual Governing, Law Governing and Human Governing], *Zhexue dongtai* [*The Trends of Philosophy*], 1998(4): 21-23.

[121] The state of Yan applied abdication in an inappropriate time, it lead to disorder and harmed its state, based on the highest aim of order rather than deferring, Mencius promotes order rather than deferring in this case, so Mencius maintains that it was proper to have a war with Yan.

For Confucius, that Guanzhong did not die cannot be seen as an action against loyalty, because it is a way to be flexible (*tongbian* 通变), if he did die, he would not be able to help Huan to become a leader in all-under-*tian*. Hence, to be flexible and serve lord Huan was a wise way to be humane.

Confucians state that flexibility (*wu gu*, *Analects* 9.4) and timeliness particularly pertain to circumstances in which moral decisions must be made. Moral discretion, flexibility, and timeliness are important qualities that a gentleman ought to develop. Hence, Mencius praises Confucius for being timely in action rather than stubborn and inflexible (*Mencius* 5B.1).

Yao, Shun and Yu as the model of abdication are widely praised in the *Ru* texts, but after king Kuai in Yan abdicated and passed on his throne (to his minister who was named Zizhi), Xunzi and Mencius discarded their abdication system to adapt to the new political circumstance.[122] Xunzi and Mencius were aware that linear succession was better for their time, and an abdication which did not follow the time would lead to disaster,[123] as with king Kuai in Yan.

Xunzi noticed the political shift, stating that 'the feudal lords get old, but the son of [*tian*] does not. That there have been cases of abdicating a state, but no case of abdicating all-under-heaven' (*Xunzi* 18.5). This appears in Xunzi's polemics against those supporters of the abdication who, like the authors of the *Tang Yu zhi Dao*, claimed that the rulers of the past abdicated due to their advanced age and its accompanying physical deterioration (*Mencius* 2B8).

In summary, it is not fair to say Confucianism does not promote the idea of (an individual) self, because self-cultivation is the beginning for Confucianism. Selfhood is always involved in the relationship with others, and the contribution of each self is important, because the idea of Confucianism is embodied in all concrete individuals. But the process of completing oneself is a process of overcoming some part of one's selfishness as well, so that one can then participate with others, the myriad things, and *tian*. In an ordered and harmonious society, it is unnecessary to

[122] The political circumstance inclined to promote lineage, and the ruler needed to have a more powerful government.

[123] Both Kuai and his minister were killed by the people, and Yan was destroyed because of this.

turn the self into an empty form: rather, each selfhood has its own judgement in its own circumstance. Also, Confucians noticed the tension between self and community: in Chinese it is called private (*si*) and public (*gong*). The idea of self does not always benefit the public, and the interests of the public are not always good for all individuals. Facing this problem, Confucians suggest that one should consider how to make judgements and decision based on one's own circumstance. The advantage of Confucianism is that it is concerned with both self and an ordered community.

Chapter 5: Order, Harmony and the Spirit of Critique

The continuity between humans and *tian* ―person and world, mind and body, inside and outside ―is the condition for self-cultivation, which exemplifies the value of human life. This holistic view shaped Chinese socio-political structure: even though humans play a significant role in having continuity with *tian* through self-cultivation, the Chinese cosmos is still *tian* and *dao*-centred rather than anthropocentric. Both *tian* and the natural tendency of humans endorse following the way of *li* and appropriateness.

As I discussed in chapter one, some political forms of *li* originally came from shamans' ceremonies that aimed at communicating with *tian*, and they were turned inwardly to sincerity and modesty. In particular, some forms of *li* were derived from our natural dispositions, for instance, filial piety. The way of *li* is the essential foundation for building a holistic socio-politics, and also allowing people to have enough freedom to make their own judgements and choices in different circumstances. *Li* as a process is completed by all different individuals, and the spirit of *li* is continued by all Chinese today.

How to fit traditional values into the modern world is a valuable thing to understand. The most valuable aspect that Confucianism can maintain today is the spirit of critique: the continuity between *tian* and humans does not ground an endorsement of power for monarchy, rather, it encourages a critical attitude towards monarchy, reflecting on the ideal social-political order and a restraint of the power of the ruler. The continuity of humans and *tian* is not out of date or not valuable in modern days; it can play a positive role in the modern world, especially regarding the process of completing humaneness, as humaneness is not only a process to complete oneself, but also to benefit others in the community. This process of self-cultivation beginning from the self not only critiques that which is self-centred but also critiques behaviour which dismisses self-interests and values.

What, then, is the new contribution of Chinese culture to the world? It should be the development and extension of a continuity of humans and *tian*, which serves as

the resource for all Chinese thought, and also as a unity that has profoundly shaped the specific Chinese socio-political order which can contribute a new narrative to Western world.

5.1 Creative Transformations of Confucianism in the Modern World

When confronting ideas from the West, Chinese intellectuals try to find answers in their own traditions, in order to keep the continuity of culture, even though they may combine Chinese thought with Western ideas. In 1898, Kang Youwei wrote the work *Kongzi gaizhi kao* ([*Reformed Confucius*] 孔子改制考). It is the first theoretical foundation for modernization in China. His theoretical aim is to facilitate the universal harmony *datong* of all-under-*tian* as one community (*weigong* 為公) [124]. Even though some scholars found evidence that Kang plagiarized Liao Ping's ideas, Kang is—unlike Liao—an intellectual who was significantly involved in and affected Chinese history with his ideas. Kang was inspired by the success of the Meiji restoration; he had an awareness that China had to change its society in the frame of the *Ru* school. He pointed out that the time of Yao, Shun and Yu was a time of democracy. He stated that technology will benefit society and should be developed rather than merely viewed as a tool to fight against Westerns.

In 1919, during the May Fourth Movement, science and democracy were widely discussed in Chinese society. Most young Chinese thinkers accepted these Western ideas. Both liberalism and early communism were extremely opposed to the *Ru* school, and for most Chinese scholars, it became an inferior Chinese culture that should bear the responsibility for the successful invasion of the Western countries. This period gave rise to many extremists, among which were some scholars who suggested that the Chinese should use Roman letters instead of Chinese script. The *Ru* school as nationalism or populism was relegated to the outskirts of this

[124] This all-under-heaven as one community will replace Chinese traditional empire. Kang was influenced by Western thinking, and he is the first to try to find reform information in the Chinese tradition.

movement. This is why judgement concerning Kang Youwei changed from that of being a reformer to a conservative in one night.

Confronting the difference between Western culture and Chinese culture, Liang Shuming cannot agree with the idea from Hu Shi that the process of modernization is a process of Westernization; Liang maintains that the Renaissance should be a revival of Chinese culture rather than an endorsement of Western culture.[125]

Liang argues that Chinese thought has some special characteristics missing from Western thought, and that this make it valuable. If it is only similar to Western thought and can do no more than function as a novel re-interpretation for Westerners, then Chinese thought would still be inferior.[126]

In light of this, the Chinese intellectuals of the *Ru* school have to defend Chinese culture in its historical context. Some liberals in China take Chinese traditional culture as a possible way forward for the modern Chinese government. This constitutes a process of dialogue and a combination of Chinese tradition and Western ideas. Even the most conservative Chinese intellectuals have to adapt to a modern society and situation, while the most liberal Chinese intellectuals cannot ignore the power of tradition.

Feng Youlan and Xiong Shili structure their own philosophy by using Western ideas to solve problems in Chinese philosophy. They both attempt to develop Chinese philosophy by making up for any perceived deficiency in Chinese thought through the adoption of Western ideas. They hope to modernize Chinese philosophy, and they have had a greater influence on the development of academic philosophy in China, compared to thinkers who have focused exclusively on Western thought. However, the value and meaning of these attempts have not been as successful as Sinicized Buddhism.

The separation of nostalgia and value, according to Lin Yusheng, is not a good idea. While Chinese intellectuals appear to reject tradition, their idea, which takes thought or culture as the way to solve all the problems of a country, is a typical

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[125] Liang Shuming, *Dongxifang wenhua jiqi zhexue* [*Western and Eastern Cultures and Their Philosophies*] (Beijing: Shangwu yingshuguan, 1999), 215.

[126] Liang, *Dongxifang wenhua jiqi zhexue*, 22.

outcome of Chinese traditional monism and intellectualism.[127] Hence, while many intellectuals criticise the Chinese tradition, they cannot separate themselves from it. Lu Xun, who gave up studying medicine in Japan, wrote novels that criticised the personality and traditional thought of the Chinese in order to enlighten people. For him, the Chinese are sick in their thought rather than the body, and if one wants to save China, one has to change the thought of the Chinese.[128] The intellectualistic-holistic mode of thinking assumes that Chinese traditional society and politics are directed by singular holistic, traditional thought. Such an assumption has led to the iconoclasm of intellectuals in the May Fourth Movement. Following this, intellectuals rejected all the values in traditional Chinese thinking in the context of holism. In this situation, Chinese traditional thought as holistic thinking mingled with Chinese traditional politics and economics has to be totally discarded. The main problem of the May Fourth Movement is that it was against tradition in the mode of tradition. If the spirit of critique in this movement is to be maintained, Chinese intellectuals must creatively transform Chinese tradition to adapt to the new environment.

Chinese traditional thought could not respond creatively to the new cultural and political situation. These intellectuals thus planned to discard the whole field of Chinese traditional thought, since this thought was the main barrier to reviving China. Hence, some radical intellectuals proposed that the Chinese should give up all Chinese traditional practices. Lin Yusheng wrote: 'Chinese intellectuals are always trying to solve the problem through analysing culture and thought'[129]. The idea is that there has to be a cultural and thought-based revolution first, and that social and political change can come afterwards.

Lin creatively explains that the fundamental problem was in Chinese thought: with the breakdown of culture and social order as a result of collapse of Qing

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[127] Yusheng Lin, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 48.

[128] Lu Xun, *Luxun wenji diyijuan* [*The Collected Work of Lu Xun Volume One*] (Haerbin: Heilongjiang renming chubanshe, 2002), 8.

[129] Yusheng Lin, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 29.

dynasty, the cultural-intellectual approach evolved into a holistic mode of thinking and became a weapon for iconoclastic totalism.[130] Chinese traditional thought was attacked on the whole because of the unified social-political structure, and as an organic whole, it was taken as a disease of traditional China that needed to be cured. This kind of totalistic critique of traditional thought from a fundamental level does not appear in other cultures because Chinese culture is holistic. Lin called the behaviour 'totalistic iconoclasm'[131], which is a total break from the past social-political structure. He further thinks that this kind of holistic idea need to be pluralistic during modernization.[132]

Even though the idea of 'great union' is holistic, this does not imply that great union cannot fit with modernization, because the pluralistic can exist in this union. The union does not mean a unified oneness. This 'great unity' according to Jiang Qing can give not only legitimacy of *tian* but also the legitimacy of peoples' heart-mind to Chinese government.[133] This is because the meaning of 'great unity' for Jiang is a metaphysical origin for Chinese politics rather than a unified and centralized empire.[134]

Meanwhile, the Communist party controlled the whole cultural field, endorsing research in philosophy only from the view of Marxism, while beginning to destroy all the traditions from 1950 to 1980. After 1980, because of an opening up in the area of economics, people began to have more cultural freedom. After a long period of repression, conservatives in China underwent a significant rebound.

Intellectuals have tried to connect modernization to tradition, theorising about how to respond to the modern world. Since the collapse of Marxism the government has begun to give up the idea of planned economics, and they now they need a new

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130 Ibid., 29.

131 Ibid., 5.

132 Cited from Lin Yusheng' creative transformation from Chinese tradition in Karl-Heinz Pohl, *Chinese Thought in a Global Context: A Dialogue Between Chinese and Western Philosophical Approaches* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 77.

133 Jiang Qing, *Zhengzhi ruxue* [*the Political Confucianism*] (Beijing, Sanlian shudian, 2003), 313.

134 Jiang, *Zhengzhi ruxue*, 328.

theory to adapt to the new situation in China. In this regard, traditional Chinese thought is presented with one possible way to prove its legitimacy of governing. The Chinese government is also eager to revive traditional thought, since it is the soft power of modern China and has great support with the masses. On the one hand, many Chinese intellectuals are aware of the great political value of traditional thought, and they have begun asking what kind of role traditional thought should play and how such thought works in modern politics. On the other hand, people have become confused about their faith. Since the collapse of Marxism, they need to find a place to set their heart-mind, and another prevalent question is how traditional thought will contribute to this problem.

Chinese thought has typically been integrated into actual history and politics rather than merely having been relegated to a museum or appropriated by businessmen in modern China. If a revival of Chinese thought is necessary, because of the image of 'great union' and perspective of all under *tian*, it needs to be practiced by the whole world rather than merely in China, and it needs to return from a museum to our real life. Chinese thought will not be revived if it only remains the subject of study by intellectuals in a university or used by many only in mercantilism.

With the development of Chinese economics, modern Chinese people have gained more confidence about their own cultural inheritance, which has led to a nostalgia for Chinese traditional philosophy[135]. The Chinese government has noticed this trend and begun to use more of the Chinese tradition, which is a better fit in China compared to the imported ideas of Marxism for facilitating their ideology. This also caters to the request of both the new left wing and extreme right wing[136] in modern China. Lately, the central government has endorsed research stating that it people not only need to have more confidence in Chinese culture, they also need to have greater political confidence.[137]

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[135] This nostalgia never faded except during the Cultural Revolution.

[136] Since China takes Marxism as authority, the right wing is pro-democracy and pro-liberalism.

[137] Guo Fengzhi, "Dangdai zhongguo jiazhi guannian de wenhua zixin" [The culture confidence of modern Chinese value], *Guangming ribao*, August 5, 2015, 13.

Chinese scholars are aware of the trend to revive Chinese traditional philosophy, and have begun to contribute to the relevant research on how to use China's own tradition to compete with Western universal values. Many scholars have given up their study of Western philosophy for Chinese philosophy. For instance, Zhao Tingyang developed an all-under-*tian* regime to deal with international relations.[138] All-under-*tian* as a regime is a perspective which has no centre inside (which does not put any role, principle or state as a universal ideal), and can go beyond the politics based on each individual country, compared with international politics, which still has an equal level inside different countries. The regime of all-under-*tian* can give order to the world, because it is a highly holistic and integrated ideal of the world. On the level of world, we need a structure to put all states inside with an order that is an all-under-*tian* regime. As I discussed before, this does not mean that all people should have same opinions about the world; rather, it just means they should focus on their own self-cultivation and then harmony in the community can be achieved spontaneously. All-under-*tian* as a world structure cannot be split into two or more, it is an integrated and ordered whole: 'If we put the individual's rights into a supreme level, and nothing can compete with them, then logically there is no way to have a holistic political world, thus one world is separated into many.'[139]

The concept of country or state is not clear in Chinese traditional texts, rather, all-under-*tian* is widely used. The ethics of the family are connected with the ethics of states. Even today, 'country' in Chinese is '*guojia*', literally meaning 'state family.' According to this logic, emperors should care for their people as they care for their offspring.

With the popularity of pragmatism, Chinese intellectuals began questioning whether traditional thought still had value. In this enlightenment, Chinese intellectuals who studied abroad began to criticize Chinese tradition through the perspective of Western thought, but they assumed their aim was to be the agent of the masses rather than improving themselves through self-cultivation. To be the

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[138] Zhao Tingyang, *Tianxia tixi--shijie zhidu zhexue daolun* [*All Under Heaven Regime—the Introduction of World Political Regime*] (Nanjing: Jiangshu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005), 24.

[139] Zhao, *Tianxia tixi--shijie zhidu zhexue daolun*, 24.

agent of the masses, these intellectuals needed to become sages. To cater to the requirements of the masses, humanism was understood as patriotism in China. Based on this, Deng Xiaomang states that people who criticized the Chinese tradition in the May Fourth Movement are populists and have political ambitions.[140] These intellectuals took this enlightenment movement as a tool to save China, without devoting enough attention to which ideas to use (and how to use them) to save China. As such, it did not really matter whether the idea was Marxism, Legalism or *Ru* school: these could all be put into practice to save China. Li Zehou states that in the May Fourth Movement, saving China prevailed over an enlightenment.[141] Hence, Chinese intellectuals tend to be more practical, and this is why they only focus on democracy and technology rather than freedom and human rights. The sense of the problem for *Ru* intellectuals is in terms of country rather than the awakening of individual people. As such, this enlightenment has not yet finished.

Deng Xiaomang has provided a new critique which he thinks is an inheritance of the spirit of the May Fourth Movement. This new critique, which mainly criticises Confucianism (Deng claims it should take responsibility for the problems of today's China[142]), tries to transform the sense of this problem from an emphasis on saving the country to the universal quality of human nature. Because all the intellectuals are influenced by the *Ru* school in some ways, the spirit of criticism should be ubiquitous. In order to be a productive form of criticism, this self-criticism needs not only to be based on an understanding of Western thought, but also to have the focus on solving the problems in Chinese thought.

Is it true that the continuity of humans and *tian* is more primordial, and not suited for the modern world? Chang Kwang-chih argues for 'the Chinese pattern as one of

140 Deng Xiaomang, "Jicheng wusi, chaoyue wusi" ["Inherited from the May Fourth Movement and Beyond".] In *Xin pipan zhuyi* [*The New Criticism*], edited by Deng Xiaomang, (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 11-14.

141 Li Zehou, *Zhongguo xiandai sixiangshilun* [*The study of Modern Chinese history of thought*] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2008), 21.

142 Deng, "Jicheng wusi, chaoyue wusi", 14.

continuity and the Western pattern as one of rupture.'[143] In this way, the problem of whether continuity and harmony between humans and *tian* is further primordial turns on the difference between the West and the East. For Chang, this continuity exists in both China and the West. However, if it is maintained in China but broken in the West, this does not then mean that the idea in China of continuity between humans and *tian* is more primordial. Rather, it only means that Chinese thought has continuity with its past historical reality.

Compared with Western thinkers who focus on the *dao* of regime, as with Plato and Aristotle in discussing different types of regimes, Chinese thinkers seem to focus more on the *dao* of governing. What kind of regime is better for modern China? A regime upheaval is more restrained by historical conditions, and it will also have dramatic changes in culture, social structure and authority. Instead, if we change the *dao* of governing, it will produce less of an upheaval in people. In ancient China, even though there was no dramatic change in regime, there were nonetheless different *dao*(s) of governing, and through this variety the Chinese still developed an effective system to restrain the unlimited power of the ruler.

Chinese scholars have many means of co-operating with or responding to this new modern context: Feng Youlan and Hu Shi studied in America with the aim to move Chinese thought further or present something new. This continuity is nonetheless novel in the sense that Feng devised new perspectives with which to interpret Chinese traditional thought. He tried to use the structure and terms of pragmatism to re-organize Chinese thought. Feng not only implemented Western philosophy in China or Chinese traditional thought, he also wanted to have a form of Chinese thought which had both Chinese tradition and Western, modern ideals. The character of Chinese thought is kept in this way. Feng's interplay introduces notions which are new for the West, like the realm of *tian* and earth (*tiandi jingjie* 天地境界). Feng realised that China needs a philosophy which can keep both the Chinese character and can also be modernized in order to resonate with the modern world,

[143] Chang Kwang-Chih, "Ancient China and Its Anthropological Significance," in *Archaeological Thought in America* , edited by C. Lamberg-Karlovsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 155–166.

rather than the traditional or pre-modern one. For Feng, it is not *jiezhejiang* if one only uses traditional words or language systems to explain Chinese thought.

Feng's statements can be narrow, because he thought if one does not use modern and Western systems to interpret Chinese thought, the ideas cannot be creative and valuable. He nonetheless highlighted the necessity of combining Chinese cultural character and modern Western thought to facilitate cooperation with Chinese society and political modernization. Confucianism should not only be open-minded to responding and contributing to Western philosophy, but should also keep the Chinese character. Feng's *jiezhejiang* should also include those who use ancient Greek thought to interpret Chinese thought, as it is a new contribution to both Chinese thought and Western thought. The most important point is that we need to find a new perspective and new way to approach philosophical problems and have a better understanding about both West and East.

5.2 The Critical Attitude of Confucianism Based on Ideal Socio-Political Order

The crisis of Confucianism began from the idea of Joseph Levenson, who maintains that Confucianism has been museum-ized in China, as the Communist party takes Marxism as its ideology. With the changing of the Chinese world, there is a break between traditional values and modern ones. Moreover, Confucianism as the Chinese's own cultural character seems more or less like a thing that can damage or block the process of modernization. For instance, Liu Zehua and Yuri Pines both assume that Confucianism and Legalism took the ruler as the centre of monarchy and became the tool for government. Their assumption would lead one to conclude that Confucianism is useless in the modern world, and it should be abandoned, as feudalism was abandoned. Their mistake, however, is that they do not distinguish Confucianism from Legalism in this regard. Yuri Pines and Liu Zehua maintain that the Confucianism always took monarchy as central in their thought. [144] Even

[144] Yuri Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Period* (University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 25–54. Liu Zehua was Yuri Pines's supervisor when he

though they still give Confucianism a very important position in traditional politics, it seems that as a consequence Confucianism cannot contribute to modern politics after the end of the last empire in China. If so, then there is a break in continuity which is a valuable opportunity for showing the worth of Confucianism. Instead, as the ideas of the Confucianism are flexible and adaptive (in keeping with the original continuity of *tian* and humans). They should therefore remain dynamic and suitable for modern society and politics as well.

As I discussed earlier, Confucianism serves *dao* rather than any monarchy. Also, the principle of timing makes it possible for Confucianism to develop in accordance with modern circumstances. This principle of timing can be embodied as the spirit of critique, because of this spirit, even though Confucianism and Western ideas are quite different, it can still adapt (or at least not conflict) with modern values.

The critical attitude of Confucianism is not only embodied in the sphere of self-cultivation, but also in the political sphere. Self-cultivation is a process of self-critique, as people have to follow the way of humaneness, but they always have their own unnecessary desires. Politically, Confucianism holds the idea of a public sphere which also serves as justice for commoners. In this process, the interests of commoners can be guaranteed, and it does not conflict with the idea of the free market, as Confucianism promotes the interests of commoners rather than the ruler.

Because self-cultivation is intertwined with the beginning of *li*, *li* also embodies a spirit of critique. *Li*, as a way, not only works in the social and cultural field, but also in politics—*li* critiques the humans' behaviour to approach the socio-political order, and it is also a way to critique the outcome of human natural tendency. The idea of 'great union' as the highest level of socio-political order in Confucianism, is a critique for historical events as well, even though it is unrealistic to attain.

This critical attitude is not only embodied in the process of self–cultivation and the ideal of 'great union', but also in the process of interpretation of the ideas of Daoism from the background of Confucianism. This is the case with Wang Bi

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studied in Nanjing, Yuri Pines's opinion about Chinese monarchy is heavily influenced by Liu. See Liu's book: *Zhongguo de wangquan zhuyi* [*Chinese Monarchism*], (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2000).

(226CE-249CE), who is not only famous for his commentaries on the classical texts of Daoism (*Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*) but also made commentaries on the *Analects*. Wang noticed the problem that *li* not only refers to external, concrete rites and practices, but that they also need an internal support, initially motivating people to act in accordance with them. He therefore rebuilt Confucianism by introducing the idea of the self-so (*ziran*) of Daoism to *li*, and he maintains that humans follow the way of *li* because it is the way of *ziran*. So *li* is turned into a natural response from humans inside.

Wang's commentaries about ritual in one paragraph of the *Analects* are as follows:

> Joy, fear, sadness and happiness are the self-so of humans, because the feelings are the natural response to the outside circumstances, humans then sing songs and write poems as a way to know humans' will and customs. Seeing the customs, they adjust them based on this. It is because of the customs that rules are set, and the level of ritual is reached.[145]

The difference between Wang and other Daoists is that he does not dismiss *li*. Rather, he endorses that *li* needs to come from our inner nature. This is a critique and a rebuilding of Confucians' value concerning *li*.

Consciously or unconsciously, Chinese intellectuals always try to connect traditional values and modern ones in order to maintain this continuity of order.

Jiang distinguishes political Confucianism from politicalized Confucianism, maintaining that politicalized Confucianism only supports the monarchy and becomes a tool for the ruler, but political Confucianism changes within the concrete historical context: it can always adjust its direction according to the historical context.[146] For the Ru school, there is a greater focus on promoting the common

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[145] Wang Bi, *Wangbi jixiaoshii* [*The Collected Work of Wang Bi's Commentaries*] (Beijing: Zhonghuashuju, 1980), 625. The text in *Analects* is: 'I find inspiration by intoning the songs, I learn where to stand from observing ritual property, and I find fulfilment in playing music.' *Analects* 8.8, Wang Bi's commentary in Chinese is: 言有為政之次序也. 夫喜,懼,哀,樂, 民之自然, 應感而動, 則發乎聲歌. 所以陳詩採謠, 以知民志風. 既見其風, 則捐益基焉. 故因俗立制, 以達　其禮也. 矯俗檢刑, 民心未化, 故又感以聲樂, 以和神也. 若不採民詩, 則無以觀風. 風乖俗異, 則禮無所立, 禮若不設, 則樂無所樂, 樂非禮則功無所濟. 故三體相扶, 而用有先後也.

[146] Jiang, *Zhengzhi ruxue*, 109.

good, as commoners' interests are public. There is less of a focus on private interests, such as those of the ruler.

Jiang maintains that modern China still needs 'great union' politics. This is a process of connecting the *dao* of humans with the *dao* of *tian*, rather than a centralization of authority, and to achieve a continuity between the two.[147] This kind of politics considers not only human beings' interests, but also considers harmony with *tian*. Jiang understands politics in the context of a continuity of humans and *tian*, and he also takes humaneness as the reason why *tian* and humans can resonate and maintain harmony with each other.

Confucianism holds the unity of the philosophy of life and political ideas: one cannot separate self-cultivation from political philosophy, and vice-versa, as life philosophy is the foundation of political ideas. In this new period, Chinese have identified the necessity of reviving Confucianism, but it is unclear which elements need to be revived and how to revive them. There are mainly two ways to approach Chinese traditional thought: the first one is keep the cultural and social aspects, but discard the political part, as it is useless in the modern world; the second is to further develop the political part, as it is the only way to revive Confucianism.[148]

Mou Zongsan (who moved to Hong Kong in 1949) is an important contributor to Neo-Confucianism. He maintains that the inward value of the Chinese tradition does not necessarily contradict democracy and technology. Rather, it can converge with democracy. Chinese society was never on the road toward democracy because of its philosophical ideals and its social, historical conditions, which were not always compatible due to the complexities of historical circumstances.

Because of the dramatic changes in Chinese socio-politics, all Chinese scholars need to give their opinion about democracy since the end of the Qing dynasty. Mou maintains that we cannot lose our cultural traditions in the modern world, but we will need to adjust them as well. For Mou, we need to generate a new outward king

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147 Jiang, *Zhengzhi ruxue*, 372.

148 Jiang Qing holds this idea, as he thinks that Confucianism needs to be accepted by the central government, and then people will follow and express respect spontaneously. Likewise, Confucianism will never be revived if it is from the people but not realised in its political ideational form.

from the inward sage, this outside *dao* of king is democracy and technology. He uses the self-negation of good consciousness/benevolence (*ren*) to produce the rational subject, and then deduces that we can have democracy and technology indirectly. Sages and gentlemen use their morality (*de*) for the *dao* of governing (*zhidao* 治道). This is the embodiment of applying benevolence.

Both Mou Zongsan and Zhang Xianglong attempt to conceive how to incorporate Chinese philosophy with the modern world, and better reveal the value of Chinese philosophy, because doing so will help Chinese people to find their cultural identity in the modern world. Zhang argues that Mou Zongsan's inward sages cannot generate outward democracy through the negation of *ren*. This pan-moralism is problematic. Zhang also advocates a constitutive context which is changeable, but Mou's benevolence, as immanent transcendence, is unchangeable. Mou himself notices this problem as well, which explains why he developed his self-negation theory (in order to allow for something new).

In this context, Chinese philosophers' comparison of West and East is not only a comparison but also, more importantly, a way of thinking used to defend Chinese traditional culture. This is why conservatives and liberals are not in total disagreement: they share the same idea of reviving China based on Chinese tradition. This is because they know people cannot separate from their own tradition. Therefore, Chinese philosophers' perspective of comparative philosophy is fundamentally different from sinologists, missionaries and various Western philosophers.

Mou Zongsan examines political thought in Chinese and concludes that even though ancient Chinese thought often discusses how to give order to a state, it is predominantly concerned only with adjustment of the same regime, rather than questioning how to change that regime dramatically (to democracy, for example).[149] In ancient Chinese thought, Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism mainly only discuss the way of giving order to states. Hence, Chinese thought only discusses how to govern a state rather than discussing changing the regime of the state, as was

[149] Mou Zongsan, *Zhengdao yu zhidao* [*The Dao of Regime and the Dao of Governing*] (Taibei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1987), 1.

the case with Western thinkers. Such a state of affairs explains why for thousands of years China did not change its regime form. Rather, Confucians focused on the expectation of a sage-like ruler to govern the state, and the provision of adequate Confucian-ministers to help the ruler.

In his *Zhengzhi ruxue* [*Political Confucianism*], Jiang Qin disagrees with Mou's statement that New Confucianism cannot generate a new outward king in the modern world.[150] This is because New Confucianism only focuses on extreme immanence, transcendence, and the self-cultivation of each individual rather than society, thereby becoming more abstract, without considering modern China's actual history and life situation; this leads to the inaction of New Confucianism. This abstract form of Confucianism obstructs what is important for Confucianism, that one can practice the idea of Confucianism in everyday life not only in self-cultivation, but also through politics. Jiang maintains that the *Ru* school not only teaches students how to become better people, but also teaches the need to persuade the leader to use benevolence in governing the state. The main aim of the *Ru* school should be political practice, and the outward king does not necessarily depend on the inward sage, as Mou maintains.

The *Ru* school used *tiandao* to posit the legitimacy of traditional politics, and moral guidance for the masses. With the collapse of the traditional political structure, the position of the *Ru* school became awkward. Modern democracy and science, however, have challenged both the inward sage and outward king. Because the traditional society and politics have changed dramatically, a question arises: do we still need Confucianism in the modern world? If so, how can Confucianism be adjusted to fit in with the modern world?

When Chinese confront the challenge from the West, there are mainly two responses. The first is to focus on politics (or 'outward kings'), trying to give a modern interpretation to the *Ru* school and give a possible modern politics based on the structure of the *Ru* school. The second is to try to put the *Ru* school in a position

[150] Jiang, *Zhengzhi ruxue*, 13-16.

of pure philosophy and compare the *Ru* school with Western philosophers. In this way, a new and modern philosophical meaning would be given to Confucianism.

Jiang Qin presents the Dao of the sage-king (*wangdao* 王道) system as a replacement for Marxism and as an indigenous ideology for China. He maintains that Chinese have to revive *rujiao* (儒教 the religious branch of Confucianism, which had political power during different empires, the second word *jiao* means education) when confronting the challenge of Western civilization, rather than taking the *Ru* school *rujia* (儒家 the thinking of Confucianism, the second word *jia* means family) for comparison with Western thought. Once Chinese begin to take *rujiao* as their faith, and the government takes it as the official ideology, the communist party will have the political legitimacy of the regime[151].

Jiang Qing claims that the biggest obstacle in reviving the *Ru* school is not the Communist Party. It is Christianity, and if the Chinese cannot revive Confucianism in society and politics, they will turn to Christianity.[152] The *Ru* school needs to compete with liberalism to embrace the elite, and to compete with Christianity to embrace the common people. For Jiang, since the collapse of Marxism, Christianity may become the mainstream faith. The future of Chinese culture is a battle between Christianity and Chinese tradition.

However, traditional philosophy, especially the *Ru* school, has never really been in the centre of political power, as most emperors are inwardly Legalist and outwardly *Ru* school. It may therefore be difficult for the *Ru* school to begin to manage modern Chinese politics. Both the Chinese government and the people of China have tried to determine the best way to incorporate Chinese tradition into modern society.

Facing the critique from the West that Chinese should accept its universal values, Jiang maintains that the problem is not about how to pursue democracy, but how China can retain its own character. Chinese culture does not need to combine with

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[151] Even though the Communism party has some economic achievements, and enforces political order, people in China, including elements of the party, still question the political validity of the regime.

[152] Jiang Qing, "Guanyu Chongjian Zhongguo Rujiao de gouxiang" ["Thinking about How to Revive Confucianism"] *Zhongguo rujiao yanjiu tongxun*, 2005(1): 3-8.

democracy when it confronts the challenge of Western culture.[153] For Jiang, if Chinese culture can achieve democracy, it will lose its own uniqueness. In such a case, it would be valuable to keep a distance from democracy. However, Confucianism has always been open to interpretation, and willing to accept other cultures, as it has a precedent of borrowing ideas from Daoism and Buddhism to strengthen its own ideas and to compete with its rivals.

Unlike Mou Zongsan, who tries to bridge the gap between inside sage and outside king, Jiang Qing separates these two parts. He distinguishes a Confucianism of lived experience from a Confucianism of politics. The structure of a Confucianism of life is from the inward to the outward, and from humans to *tian*, using life to explain the whole world. The Confucianism of politics is more open; it does not deny heart-mind and natural tendency, but it is more focused on the structure and events of the world from the perspective of world. It admits that the world can have independence outside of life, rather than using heart-mind and natural tendency to dismiss this world. To avoid the tension between filial piety and political duty, Jiang maintains that we should separate political morals and individual morals as well.[154] Even though political Confucianism discusses morals and virtues, it takes the inward sage and outside king as a parallel relationship, and claims there are two different ethics.

In the Western perspective, Chinese culture has not kept continuity with traditional thought since the May Fourth Movement. In modern Chinese politics, the Chinese government does not accept universal values and freedom; they favour traditional ideas. While the authority does not want to go back to traditional feudalism, it does want to know how traditional thought can contribute to modern Chinese politics. In the recent past, if there were any political or societal problems, scholars would tend towards solutions that could be found in Western thoughts or theories. But nowadays, there is a greater realisation that such solutions must be pursued in Chinese thought or thinking patterns.

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[153] Jiang, *Zhengzhi ruxue*, 228.

[154] Jiang, *Zhengzhi rxue*, 143.

For Zhao Tingyang, human rights are falsities if they only exist in the context of individual states and if one's rights have been protected through the sacrifice of another person's rights in another state. He therefore claims that the Western political system is not universal and cannot prevail, because its methodology is based on the assumption of individual states.[155] Because the Western value system is based on a small political entity (one state), it can only solve the problem of individual rights in one state. It cannot solve the problem of all human beings, and it cannot solve the problem of international structure because of its narrow perspective. Zhao concludes that Western politics is a discontinuous system; the system cannot promote order on the scale of the world as a whole. From the perspective of all-under-*tian*, even though there are close and distanced relationships, nothing is further or less 'outside' than anything else.

On the issue of how revive the *Ru* school, Jiang Qing holds that the *Ru* school cannot separate from politics: it has to be revived in a revolution through applying the ideas of Confucianism in the upper-level politics of China.[156] If it is urgent to revive the *Ru* school, then the most efficient way to do so is to maintain the centre of power, which Jiang calls the 'upper way'. It also needs the 'downward way' to cooperate with it, which is to build the community of Confucianism.

Jiang maintains that a good government needs three ways to guarantee legitimacy: 1) a sacred *tian*, 2) following the history in a particular place, 3) the will of the people. He states that the way of humane authority caters to these three rules.[157] He argues that the Chinese government not only needs to improve the income of people, but it also needs sacred *tian* as legitimacy to support their proper governing. Likewise, governing has to follow and keep the continuity of Chinese specific history. Historically, Confucianism dominated the social-political realm for a long time, and Jiang therefore claims that the Chinese government should follow the history of humane governing to maintain the historical continuity and legitimacy.

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[155] Zhao, *Tianxia tixi--shijie zhidu zhexue daolun*, 24.

[156] Jiang, "Guanyu Chongjian Zhongguo Rujiao de gouxiang", 3-8.

[157] Qing Jiang, *A Confucian Constitutional Order: How China's Ancient Past Can Shape Its Political Future* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 28.

This humane governing can not only benefit the government by giving it legitimacy, but it can also balance and achieve harmony within these three dimensions of legitimacy.

In confronting the challenge from Western culture, Jiang Qing maintains that democracy is not the only way to solve the problem, unlike Mou Zongsan and other Chinese scholars who claim that Chinese thought has to cooperate with Western value to fit in modern world. Jiang is confident that Chinese thought, especially Confucianism, can by itself contribute to the modern world. Jiang distinguishes between the *political Ru* school, which holds a mission of critique, and the *politicized Ru* school which totally becomes a tool for the rulers.[158] Political Confucianism still takes great union as the ideal image to critique an imperfect reality, unlike politicized Confucianism, which focuses on the apotheosis of emperors. If Confucianism loses the former spirit of critique, it will lose its key value and become a fixed rule.

The attitude of critique in Confucianism has also been embodied in the principle of *shi*. *Shi* means that one has to act with the trend that is going to happen, like a wise man or sage. It is essential to hold a critical attitude towards social-political reality, and so these people should be the pioneers in their times. For instance, the most famous example is Confucius, who reformed the content and forms of rites in his time. Following in the footprints of Confucius, Mou, Jiang and other modern scholars have done much valuable work in trying to critique social-politics, and to find a better way to interpret it or give an alternative for Chinese people. For a long time, Chinese socio-politics has been holistic: it is always flexible and can adapt to the needs of people and historical circumstance, and it can always make an efficient shift to fit in the world. Confucianism never determined a fixed state, because of the principle of *shi,* it is always a process towards the ideal social-politics.

5.3 A Phenomenological Approach to Confucianism

[158] Jiang, *Zhengzhi ruxue*, 109.

Zhang Xianglong and Huang Yushun both focus on the philosophy of life in Confucianism. They both believe that Confucianism should return to an original position where there is no dualism or metaphysics involved. The origin for Zhang is *tiandao*, while for Huang it is 'life'. This 'life' includes everything, and it goes back to a time when people did not distinguish themselves from *tian*[159]. This is the continuity of *tian* and humans, and the human in this instance is equal to *tian* for Huang.

Zhang Xianglong maintains that Western philosophers approach ultimate questions, or Being, though forms or concepts. They split subject from object, universal from particular, phenomena from substance, and language from their representations. According to these concepts and the way they frame the world, he has a vertical hierarchy for them from up to down. However, some philosophers, such as Kant and Heidegger, are said to escape from this to a degree. Zhang applies Heidegger's terminology to reconstruct *tian* and *dao*, to clarify how Chinese philosophy has a specific way to 'approach the ultimate horizon in our mundane life'.[160] *Tian* is the 'time' of *tian*, which means that action should be taken at the appropriate time. Zhang argues that this is similar to Heidegger's temporalizing. Therefore, he argues that the ultimate reality of *tian* is time, which he believes is more fitting than Heidegger's theory of time, since human beings are capable of leaps in the temporal realm of *tian*. The cultivation or practice for the temporal realm of *tian* is maintained in the horizon of phenomena without restraint from objects.

In Zhang Xianglong's text on time in Chinese philosophy, he gives an example outlining how to understand the Chinese notion of time through a phenomenological approach (see appendix). Zhang asks (and in his own manner, answers) an important question that I now deal with: how is it possible to seize and measure *shi*? *Shi* is complex and not easy to observe directly, but we can see its incipient movement (*ji*

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[159] Huang Yushun, "Juditiantong: congshenghuo ganwu dao xingshang goujian" ["Separation of Heaven from Humans: from Inspirations of Life to Rebuilding Metaphysics"], *Zhexue dongtai* [*the trend of philosophy*] (2005): 8-11.

[160] Zhang Xianglong, *Haidegeer yu zhongguo tiandao* [*Heidegger and Chinese Heaven and Dao*] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1996), 234.

幾), and this can give us a clue about potentially forthcoming events. We can then act appropriately, and seize the opportunity.

In *Yijing*, the images of hexagrams imply *ji* 幾 or omen, which could suggest when the appropriate time to act is to the ancient kings. According to Zhang Xianglong, the time that comes from 'the ultimate changes' is certainly non-linear. Time and knowing of the past and the future are interdependent. The changes illumine the past and interpret the future. Time is intimately linked with a person's understanding of his or her existential situation. Therefore, Time itself has intelligible, ethical, and aesthetic meaning.

> All beings are seeds of one another, yielding back and forth their different forms, beginning and ending like a circle, so that no fixed groupings apply. This is called Heaven as the Potter's Wheel. It is Heaven as the Potter's Wheel that we see in their Heavenly Transitions. (Zhuangzi 27)

Heidegger's notion of time is ceaseless becoming: 'time is "abstract" negativity. As "intuited becoming," it is the differentiated self-differentiation that is directly to be found, the concept that "is there," that is, objectively present.'[161] Zhang Xionglong connected Heidegger's interpretation of time with Chinese *ji* 幾, which refers to many different aspects of time, including: 'nearly,' 'probability,' 'imminent,' and its homophonous cognate, *ji* 機, which could mean 'pivot,' 'opportunity,' 'clever device,' 'machine' and 'danger.' *Ji* 幾 is the time which is going to happen, and *ji* 機 is the outcomes of time. *Ji* 幾 is omen or subtle seeds which are potential possibilities, *ji* 機 is more like a fixed time, that's why it can mean danger or machine.

> The seeds of things have mysterious workings (*ji* 幾). The roots of Crow's feet turn into maggots and their leaves turn into butterflies. Before long the butterflies are transformed and turn into insects that live under the stove…

[161] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein Und Zeit* (SUNY Press, 1996), 396.

Men in time return again to the mysterious workings. So all creatures come out of the mysterious workings and go back into them again.[162]（*Zhuangzi*. 18）

The mysterious working is *ji* or temporalizing, which gives all the possibility of change. So Zhuangzi said they come from *ji* 幾 and going to *ji* 機, and then go back to *ji* 幾. And also, it probably can give another vista to explain why Zhuangzi maintained that 'the machine heart' 機心 is dangerous. Since the outcomes of time contains the possibility of danger (*ji* 機), it gives all the opportunity to succeed and also the possibility to vanish, if we become addicted to the opportunity/machine or clever devices (*ji* 機) and forget to go back to the time/possibility/nearly/omen (*ji* 幾), it could be dangerous for human beings.

Ji 幾 is the subtle seed or omen which works as temporalizing and gives all the possibility to all the transformations of things. Because it is an omen of the future not-yet happened things, we can predict the happening of things, which also is the main aim of *Yijing*. *Qi* works as original time which determines the perpetual transforming, which is the stillness and agitation of things. *Wu* or nothingness is the original happening place of time, and *wuwei* is the active embodied pursuit of temporalizing. Temporalizing, which means acting in an appropriate time, is something flexible and between the useful and useless and between speaking and not speaking for Zhuangzi.

Zhang also connects the sincerity of Confucius with Heidegger's present constitution. When people practice and perceive the ultimate sincerity, they can know *tian* and earth, and then knowledge can expand to a thousand things. For Confucius, the *dao* of *tian* is the *dao* of the mean or middle, which means the elimination of different thinking from the constitution, rather than that the middle path taken between two extremes of thinking. The *Dao* of Laozi and Zhuangzi is to be seen as an ultimate origin and truth. *Dao* comes from *tian*, it is the *Dao* of *tian*, and the *Dao* as ultimate reality does not have a specific rule or principle. This explains why we cannot talk about it directly. Furthermore, people cannot perceive

[162] Zhuangzi, Burton Watson and Columbia College (Columbia University), *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).

the *Dao*, and so it is at a 'higher' level compared with Western philosophy. If we perceive constitution as the fundamental characteristic of phenomenology, it will give us the possibility to inspire both the Chinese *dao* of *tian* and phenomenology. Formal indication and the projection of *you*, *wu* and emptiness are comparable. Zhang maintains that during the post-Warring States period, *tian* and *Dao* lost their original meanings, and we need to go back to the primordial context of Lao-Zhuang and other schools. Zhang suggests that Daoism and Heidegger can enlighten each based on the concept of *Ereignis and* through the phenomenological method.[163] For Zhang, the original happening place or *Ereignis* is *qi*. *Qi* can produce other natural events, and these events perish or end in *qi* as well.

[163] See my appendix: first chapter of Zhang's text.

Conclusion

One cannot think about philosophical questions outside one's tradition, but one can distinguish different traditions by asking what the source of meaning and values is in each case. Values and meanings from such sources can be given by a god, or endorsed by the human world; this source can either promote the significant position of a transcendent world or world of 'ideas' (for instance, Plato) or the importance of humans' everyday life (Karl Marx). In Chinese culture, there is no transcendent god or a dualistic distinction: the meanings and values are the products of the continuity between humans and *tian*. Confucians approach the idea of heart-mind to make values and meaning more inward, but also use the idea of *li* to demonstrate the connection between inward dispositions and outward behaviours.

Even though *li* has spontaneous goodness as the foundation, it still needs *tian* as that which is beyond humans' world to endorse the inward value. Chinese intellectuals try to seek the inward value rather than the transcendent value, because the inward goodness is the beginning, and to participate and interact with *tian* is the completion of self-cultivation.

The continuity of humans and *tian* does not deny the significant difference between either parties. The time of *tian* and the continuity between humans and *tian* give humans good reasons to follow the way of *li*, because *li* not only arises from our natural spontaneous goodness, but also, following the time of *tian* is essential. Hence *li* embodies the interaction between *tian* and humans. It is seen that using an organic and evolving method may not fit in the case of Chinese thought because there is not a process from the irrational to rational in Chinese thought.

The Emerged Order and Harmony

The structure of the cosmos is a narrative that can affect the structure of the human world: humans mimic structures internal to the cosmos in order to maintain the

continuity between humans and *tian*, and these structures can also be affected by humans' will.

Because of the separation of these fields in the process of modernization, it is a question worth asking whether the structure of continuity between humans and *tian* is more primordial than the structure of its contrasting tension. From the view of universalism such can be the case, because in ancient Europe there was a stage in which people believed in the continuity between humans and *tian*. In such a case, it would be a good idea to approach this issue from a universalist perspective. On the other hand, it seems that if one approaches this from the view of a specialism, it will lead to nihilism and relativism. To avoid these problems, it is much easier to focus on the modern values of this continuity and their possible contribution to the modern world.

This order of *tian* is not a fixed order or an order of organisms. Rather, it is an order that is based on the interpretation of Chinese thinkers. *Tian* can be indifferent if it is not against the whole order of narrative (the continuity between humans and *tian*), and it can also indirectly reward good and punish bad if it is necessary for keeping an ordered state. Hence, it is not important to ask whether there is a conflict between evil humans and a 'good' *tian*; rather, the most significant and meaningful thing we need to be concerned with is why and how *tian* can be both indifferent and 'good' in the same narrative in Chinese documents. Chinese scholars use the idea of either sacred or secular *tian* when they believe it will endorse their idea about order, and they also do not take *tian* as the only recourse to rely on. They also try to find meaning in our everyday life. For instance, the discovery and interpretation of the inward heart-mind not only gives the inward evidence of self-discipline, but it also bridges the gap between humans and *tian*. This heart-mind is based in each individual rather than an abstract notion of it; and also the idea of time in Chinese traditional thought is neither linear nor cyclic. Rather, it is changing and adapting to its concrete circumstances, and this idea not only solves the problem that fixed rites may confront (not suitable for changing time; out of date), but also puts each concrete person's existence in an important position. Hence, Chinese can also find value and meaning in history, and the Confucian interpretation of history instead

follows a cyclic view. With respect to this last point, one may consider, for instance, Mencius, Dong Zhongshu and Kang Youwei, because they take history as a socio-political fact and try to find order in this fact rather than a fact based on linear time.

The Order from Self-cultivation

Promoting the idea of order and harmony does not necessary lead to dismissing the idea of person-interests. Rather, the value of person in Confucianism is not conflict with maintain order and harmony, and the idea of order not only promotes harmony in the narrative of *tian*, but also, in the micro-sphere, this order begins from the order in person (balancing one's different kinds of desires). Self-cultivation relies on practicing different kinds of concrete *li*, this process of self-cultivation not only brings order to oneself (as body-mind), but also brings order in the community, because the person in the sphere of Confucianism is always involved in relationships with others, as it is a concrete person connected with others rather than an abstract person. Value and meaning is endorsed in person through both inward sincerity and outward practice, but this does not mean that there is a process of evolution (from outward/transcendent/irrational to inward/rational). Rather, the narrative still needs to maintain the continuity between humans and *tian*.

Tian, Humans and Political Order

This narrative of humans and *tian* shaped the Chinese way of thinking about political order: the narrative of ideal politics involved in 'all under *tian*' and 'great union'. This perspective of politics combined humans and *tian*, and put these two in the same narrative. In this way, the emperor is the son of *tian* and represents *tian* in ruling 'all under *tian*'. According to the interpretation of Confucianism, it is necessary to rely on a concrete conception of *li* to maintain ordered socio-politics until humans are able to follow the way of *li* naturally. Yet, it takes a long time and a great deal of repetition of action to achieve a spontaneous way of *li*.

It can be asked whether it is still meaningful to talk about the requirement of order in the Chinese socio-political narrative in modern China. The first question that needs to be clarified is what the foundation of *li* is. If we take filial piety as the foundation of *li*, it can be a problem to fit *li* with the practice of modernized and civilized citizenship. By examining more fundamental resources of *li*, however, it is seen that our natural dispositions, rather than filial piety, are the source of *li*. After reconstructing the foundation of *li*, this order of politics can fit the modern world. What is more essential for *li* is inward sincerity rather than following the fixed rites because rites are changeable.

Even though Jiang Qing's manner of reviving Confucianism can be extreme, it is a sufficient beginning to consider the modern political value of Confucianism and how to create political value based on our own tradition and narrative. Likewise, Zhao Tingyang gives a possible way of dealing with international relationships for different states, but he fails to clarify what all-under-*tian* really is, and whether it fundamentally only refers to China. The advantage of interweaving value and meaning in the traditional ideas is maintaining their authority and ease of acceptance, and the disadvantage for China is the potential danger of slipping into nationalism. (The Chinese may have an inferiority complex because they accepted Western values and believe that their own values are inferior, or else they may otherwise adopt a severe form of reactionary cultural arrogance).

As one cannot simply discard traditional Chinese thought along with the traditional political system, one has to examine the importance of China's own tradition, asking how to discover what is the most valuable part of that tradition, how to apply it, and how to inspire not only modern Chinese but also other people. Because of the interconnection between cosmos, philosophy of life and political thought in the Chinese tradition, one cannot analyse one question without incurring others. From examining person, community and *tian*, it becomes evident that the person not only plays an important role in bridging our world and *tian*, but also is essential to political order. After addressing certain misunderstandings concerning the person in Chinese thought, it is clear that the person is concrete and interconnected with others rather than being abstract. Because self is concrete, it can

always have its own form of free choice in each concrete circumstance, rather than remaining in fixed and potentially conflicting roles. Since the self is concrete and interconnected with others, the community naturally achieves order and harmony through each self that cultivates itself and follows appropriate timing. It is thus worthwhile asking, as part of an in-depth analysis, why and how one can be very different from others yet still share harmony and order in one unified model. This question is engaged by Zhu Xi and other Neo-Confucians in later Chinese thought.

The coherent order and harmony in socio-politics are the result of the interpretation of humans and *tian*. If one does not have good tendencies, or at least good behaviour (the outcome of good tendencies), it is fair to ask how people can have harmony and order naturally in a society in which punishments are not encouraged, and which mostly relies on concrete *li* (which can be practiced by people) and the *dao* of humaneness (which can be implemented by the ruler). Because Chinese scholars believe humans have the inward possibility to interact with *tian* and maintain an ordered state and society by their own will.

Confucianism also promotes sincerity, and that is because one cannot rely on fixed rites, and one cannot use the method of behaviourism to analyse the way of Confucianism. The essence of *li* lies not only in outside rites, but it also lies in inward sincerity, which cannot be observed by one's outward behaviours.

The final aim of Confucians is to achieve the ideal socio-political order represented by both the 'great union' and 'small tranquillity'. It is significant that the Communist party takes 'small tranquillity' as its aim as well, and this embodies the requirement of order among Chinese people that can go beyond a difference of beliefs (Marxism and Confucianism can be both applied to maintain order). In these two ideal models, each person can fit well in community, and there is no conflict between public and private interest. It is essential to notice that in both models, *li* is important, even though it seems *li* is not mentioned in the stage of 'great union'. *Li* is necessary for the state because it carries the *dao*, and it is the process towards order and harmony.

These two ideal models of socio-politics also play a role that critiques a political reality (For Confucius, his ideal politics is the model of Zhou rulership) that may not

bring order, which demonstrates the value of Confucianism: it is necessary to serve the *dao* rather than the ruler. From the structure of two ideal models of socio-politics, it can be seen that *dao* and people are those who are important and privileged for Confucians, rather than the ruler.

In order to support the claim that Confucianism is still valuable today, one needs to demonstrate that one can reconnect traditional China to modern China. In order to do so, as this research highlights, one has to approach this question by analysing the focus of order. Even today, order and harmony are promoted by the Communist Party, but if one wishes to say Confucianism can contribute to this question, one needs to confront the sceptical view that Confucianism belongs in a museum. It is valuable to consider how Confucianism can be revived. It can either proceed from top to bottom, as Jiang Qing proposes, or from bottom to top, as Zhang Xianglong and most Chinese scholars maintain. It is a significant task to revive Confucianism in China, not only for theoretical reasons, but also for fulfilling the potential minds of Chinese people (a potential now attracted to Christianity), and for providing cultural nutrition from the Chinese tradition. Confucianism not only cares about how to live a better life, but it also cares about how to have a better world (indeed, a care for the whole universe). Likewise, it is not only a school that ceases its function when it is satisfied with theory, but it also has the ambition to apply its ideas in the real social and political field.

The main achievement of this project, then, is its way of interpreting the continuity of *tian* and humans in the narrative of order. With respect to the future, it is worth finding out how to creatively adapt Chinese thought about order—which is very different from the Western thought about order—and make it work practically in the modern world; it is ultimately about practicing some reconstructive notion of *li* in modern China. Another question worth asking, for later research, is how this narrative of order can affect our worldview on issues such as environmental ethics and socio-politics. This specific continuity between human and *tian* provide a valuable world view that can contribute to environmental ethics, and also can weave an idea of ordered society under the narrative of continuity between human and *tian*.

Appendix: Tranalstion of Two Chapters of Zhang Xionglong, *Haidegeer yu zhongguotiandao*[164]

Chapter 11: Features of Ancient Chinese Thought

'Heaven' or '*tian*' is taken to communicate with the Chinese, and such a communication is considered to be exceptionally deep and wise. It is not a god or a physical substance; 'earth' or '*di*'地 is the mother of the thousand things. Human beings live between *tian* and *di*, which is the lived realm of 'heaven and earth' or '*tiandi*', the realm of life, the realm of the self-so (*ziran*). Many comparative philosophers assume that Chinese thought is practical, mundane, and lacks a dimension of metaphysics and divinity. It is correct that in the mainstream culture there is no supreme anthropomorphic god, and that Chinese thought lacks a system of concepts and logic. But if this assumption implies any negative consequences for Chinese thought, these implications are groundless. Fundamentally, Chinese thought moves in *one world*, but this is not a barrier for Chinese thought to establish an ultimate realm of thinking. Chinese thought has our lived world as its ultimate thinking horizon, which is different from Indian and Western thinking. In the age of the 'death' of God and the 'end' of metaphysics, Chinese thinkers are like 'Scholar-apprentices' who must be strong and resolved, for they bear a heavy charge and their way is long'(*Analects* 8.7).[234]

Among the three major systems of thought in the world, Indian and Greek use the alphabet system while China uses a non-alphabet system. China forms its philosophical thinking alone with its mysterious generative meaning. Chinese constitutive thinking of context has an opposite position to Western conceptual thought. Indian thought inhabits the middle ground, as its fundamental horizon is beyond concepts and its traditional expression is in the direct predicative. Hence, Indian thought distinguishes samsara, which is controlled by karma, and the beyond

[164] I translated this chapter and chapter 15 of Zhang Xionglong's *Heidegeer yu zhongguo tiandao* [Heidegger and Chinese *tiandao*], because these two discuss the problem of heaven. I also include the original Chinese pages and some Chinese words here for reference.

world of Brahman and Atman. It is common to intermingle logic and analysis in Indian thinking, but in the prajna study of Mahāyāna, especially the Madhyamaka of Nāgārjuna, the pursuit of ultimate meaning in interdependent arising 缘起 leads to the thinking of context, which is Nirvana as world. Hence, this key term has a significant affinity with Chinese mainstream thought. Through this sensitive communication, the mysteriousness of this foreign Buddhism may be understood by the Chinese. It is in this sense that the method of Indian thinking and expression, which appears as a disadvantage to transmission, turns out to be an advantage. Instead of being strange and unfamiliar, it is a stimulus for Chinese thought. This successful experience of accepting foreign thought is a very valuable model for our difficult process of digesting Western thought.

1 *Tian*: the original context of thinking in China

The terms 'emperor (*di* 帝)' and people in Yin appear in the divination words of oracle bone script. In the Song dynasty divination was practiced according to these words. The meaning of '*di*' is close to 'old grandfather of *tian*' (*laotianye* 老天爷) which is located in the sincere heart-mind of Chinese people. Emperor or *di* is a formless existence with many omens and an efficacy which can participate in the life of human beings, but is more powerful and deep than anything man-made.[235]

People in the Song dynasty who relied on the divination words of oracle bone script can be compared with people who looked for advice in ancient almanacs or worshipped memorial tablets. Oracle bone scripts only had divination words that were very short, so it is difficult to continue research of the essence of *di* except by looking into the *Book of Documents*, Chinese bronze inscriptions, and the folk customs of later ages. It is far-fetched to assume *di* as a 'supreme god', and to judge it as 'an anthropomorphic god with will' is far more groundless. Amun of Egypt and Jehovah of Judaism, for example, are anthropomorphic gods. These gods have names, the experience of creating earth or a pantheon, conventions to be followed, and their own dispositions. These gods have an underlying state or substance

(hypostasis). They are independent substances who have reasons and wills. With divination words, we know only that people in the Song dynasty believed this *di* could answer their questions, by interpreting the pattern of the cracks in the bones of oxen or the shells of tortoises. Hence, such an activity is only concerned with efficacy. According to the *Book of Documents* and Chinese bronze inscriptions between the Song and Zhou dynasties, we can deduce that *di* and *tian* are closely related. After this period, *tian* takes on the meaning of *di*, and *di* gradually refers only to the name of the living emperor in the mundane world.

People in the Zhou dynasty believed in the mandate of Heaven or *tianming* and divination words, but this *tian* was not an anthropomorphic god. There are clear records, for instance, in the 'Announcement to the Prince of Kang', 'Great Announcement' and 'Announcement of the Duke of Shao' in the *Book of Documents*; 'Decade of Wen Wang' and 'Decade of Dang' in the *Classic of Poetry*; zhōng bells and dǐng tripodal cauldrons, and so on, that suggest that people in the Zhou dynasty knew that '*tianming* was not unchangeable', it only accorded with people who had virtue or '*de*'. Religions that have an anthropomorphic god always take absolute faith, race, and rules rather than *de* as the primary measure of 'the candidacy of God', because it is only in this way that the substance {hypostasis} and the subjective will of such gods can be embodied. Hence, there is no equivalent general faith in a supreme anthropomorphic god in China, as evidenced by the clearly written Chinese records. There are some sacrificial ceremonies towards gods (including ancestors) recorded in the *Zuo Zhuan* and *Discourses of the States* or *Guoyu*, but, as I state in what follows, sacrificial ceremony did not always entail the worship of an anthropomorphic god, nor did it always mean faith in a supreme anthropomorphic god. For people in the Zhou dynasty, what was supreme was *tian*, and this *tian* is closely connected with our way of existence.[236]

'*Tian*' replacing '*di*' suggests that, as the fundamental dominant power, it became more and more contextual and natural for the ancient Chinese. When people looked skyward, it was *tian* they perceived: the great horizon of an unlimited realm. The character of '*tian*' resembles 'human' in both oracle bone script and Chinese bronze inscriptions. It has an additional stroke atop the symbol of 'great' to suggest its

supremacy. However, this *tian* is not only a natural sky including the stars and moon. It also has an important aspect of efficacious foretelling 灵验. People in the Zhou dynasty believed that *tian* was a 'moral' power that punished the bad and benefitted the good. While this may have been its assumed meaning for the Zhou people, *tian* also has various other original meanings besides establishing the distinction between good and bad. In fact, *tian* has many meanings which are subtler than the Western terms 'god', 'heaven' and 'existence', so its original meanings cannot be analysed clearly by traditional Western concepts. Its originality is analogous to the one (neither have nor have not) of Rigveda of the Indian Veda, but it is more contextual and mundane. In the everyday linguistic context, '*tian ah*', the Chinese experience and embody the meaning of *tian*. This *tian* is in-between form and formless, near and far, *wu* and *you*; 'I am looking at it in front of me, and suddenly it is behind me' (*Analects* 9.11). And 'what barrenness, what a desert! In their midst are the figures. What barrenness, what desert! In their midst are the things. What nebulosity, what obscurity! And what seminal energies in their midst! The seminal energies are genuine. Therein is trustworthiness'[165] (*Daodejing* 21). It is everywhere, but it is not fixed in any abstract concept. It is the ultimate notion that the Chinese want to understand. The ancient Greeks drew their questions from 'being', and they subsequently developed the questions of 'being itself' or 'existence itself.' For modern Westerners, subjectivity assumes the position of Being at the helm of thought. Ancient Indians tried to find the original source that lay beyond all the realms of names. Chinese people favoured *tian* in the pre-Qin dynasty, but this *tian* is not an ideal form. It does not take subjectivity as central, nor is it beyond the phenomenal world. Rather, it is the ultimate of the in-between that gives all meaning in the world and life.

People in the Zhou dynasty and later still performed sacrificial ceremonies towards ancestors, mountains, rivers, heaven and earth, and *tiandi*. However, this was not the worshipping of an anthropomorphic god in the Western sense. Rather, it was closer to the Confucian expression 'sacrifice as though present', taken to mean

165 Hans-Georg Moeller and Laozi, *Daodejing (Laozi): A Complete Translation and Commentary* (Chicago: Open Court, 2007), 53.

‘sacrifice to the spirits as though the spirits are present’ (*Analects* 3.12). That is, spirits are present through their perceived influence as a mutual stimulus or trigger of existence. Now we have a more complex situation. On the one hand, [237] the form and the content of sacrificial ceremony began to separate. The discussion of the mandate of heaven denounces the supernatural in claiming that ‘The country is going to flourish, the king follows the masses, and otherwise, the king follows the spirits’ (*Zuozhuan.zhuanggong*). ‘*Tian* has no preference, it only supports the king who has virtue’ (*Shangshu.Zhongcaizhiming*) and, ‘the *Dao* of *Tian* is far away, but the *Dao* of the human is near to us’. On the other hand, it is disputable for understanding the meaning of ‘masses (*min* 民)’, ‘*de*’and ‘the *Dao* of human or *rendao*’. People endeavoured to find the original power which could inhibit and empower, which meant finding a more pure and immanent *tian*. As the *Classic of Poetry* states: ‘Let me be reverent, let me be reverent, [in attending to my duties]; [The way of] Heaven is evident, and its appointment is not easily [preserved]. Let me not say that it is high aloft above me. It ascends and descends about our doings’.[166]

Because Chinese thought is fundamentally concerned with the meaning of perceivable *tian*, its ultimate pursuit is interconnected with ‘all under the Heaven or *tianxia*’ from the very beginning. It rejects those ideas which can imperil this context of *tiandi* (枭乱天下) or rigid transcendent ideas. The ‘conservative’ and immanent undogmatic ‘open’ in Chinese culture both emerge from here. But it is impossible to discard one to choose another. This *tianxia* means this world: it includes both the world of the human and nature. In another sense, it means that the world of the human includes the world of nature, and the world of nature includes the world of the human. As a poem says, ‘The spring is gone with running water and falling petals, the image is the world of human from Heaven’.[167] Hence, it is too narrow and cannot contain all meanings of the term if we use the Western categories of language and philosophy to discuss it. For instance, if one states that it is ‘mundane’,

[166] 敬之敬之、天维显思、命不易哉。无曰高高在上、陟降厥士、日监在兹[8].

[167] 流水落花春去 天上人间.

then one loses the meaning of the contexts of the ultimate and of depth; if one states that it is 'ethical' and 'social and political', then one neglects the meaning of its natural side. In fact, it has both the meaning of nature and to 'constantly abide in equilibrium' in 'ethics' and 'society ', which is very different from the ideas of Aristotle, Kant and Nietzsche. If one takes Chinese *tian* and *dao* as Western 'philosophy' it is an injustice. It is inappropriate to take it as 'metaphysics', 'ethics', 'political philosophy' and 'aesthetics'. To use the old Western tradition to approach Chinese culture, [238] medicine, history and economics is to approach nonlinear questions through linear means— an approach that is rarely successful.

In the *Discourses of Yue* (*Guoyu.Yueyuxia*), there is a record of the discussion of how Fanli assisted the king of Yue in obtaining Wu and Yue. From this we can discern the direct experience of *tian* among the people of the Spring and Autumn period, and we can also learn the difference between the *tian* of our lived context which can reveal and withdraw and *tian* as principle and concept. In the Spring and Autumn period, the feudal princes fought each other, and there was flourishing and decline among states. For Fanli, even though the *tian* or *tiandi* (*tiandi* is a more vivid expression of *tiandao*) itself has no determination or forms, it can determine the existence of human and state. Further, people not only can, but also must, be involved in the movement of *tianming*. This is not to say, as some scholars maintain, that Chinese thought has a tradition of 'humanism', but also, it is not 'tiandaoism' either. Rather, it is a co-dependence between *tian* and *ren* 人'*tian* that punishes or rewards people according to their behaviour, the sage acts according to the signs or omens of *tian*' [168] (*Guanzi*. 41). If the affairs of people cannot match with *tian*, it is only the affairs of people that are without ultimate meaning. Once the affairs of humans match *tian*, it is as though 'one wins the war and will not suffer revenge, and seizes the territory without repulsion from the masses' (*Guoyu*), and becomes the ultimate power to form the state of *tianxia* or *tianming*. Hence, it is the responsibility of the Son of Heaven (*tianzi*) to coalesce with the movement of *tian*; this is directly connected with the existence of the political state.

[168] 天因人，聖人因天.

However, this is not easy to achieve: it is neither a question of 'following the rule of movements of heaven and earth or *tiandi*', nor is it a question of moral self-discipline. This is because the match between the ultimate place of the movements of *tiandi* and the place needed to make one's decision is understood by insight rather than direct language. The perspective of Western traditional philosophy cannot penetrate further here. For Fanli and those who experienced great awakenings in that period, the most authentic embodiment of *tian* is 'time', or, as it can mean, 'appropriate time': it disrupts the category of objective presence and merges with the realm of pure embodied existence. As Fanli said, 'The *dao* of *Tian* is full but does not spill, flourishes but is not arrogant, contributes but does not take this as a merit. Hence, the sage's acts can follow the appropriate time, and that accords with the time'.[169] The ancient Chinese use the phrase '*A* but not *a*' to exemplify their perspective of non-objective presence. In this context, *A* is natural embodiment, and '*śūnyatā* and interdependent arising', while *a* is the objective presence of *A*. *Tian* is part of our existence, it is embodied anywhere, whereas all *a* are together, it is only part of *tian*. At the level of *a*, all endeavours are neither too late nor too early in seizing the appropriate time of *tian*; such endeavours cannot be on the level of perceiving the opportunity. Fanli tried to stop Goujian from beginning a war with the state of Wu, because he knew that the time of *tian* was not yet ripe, the affairs of humans were not yet ready; if one was eager to act in some way, it would be 'against Heaven and humans'.[170] Goujian did not accept this, and he lost the war against Wu. When Goujian began to listen to Fanli's instructions on how to survive in a tumultuous time, he began to believe that heaven, earth and humans (*tiandiren*) was not pedantic discussion, and rather, it was a reliable means of predicting the *Dao*. And then, when Goujian followed Fanli's idea that different situations of the appropriate time of *tian* (*tianshi*) should have different actions, he restrained his outward judgement. Fanli thus waited where the realm of 'The affairs of humans must match and communicate with heaven and earth, and then people can

[169] 天道盈而不溢，盛而不驕，勞而不矜其功。夫聖人隨時以行，是謂守時.

[170] 逆于天而不和于人.

succeed'.[171] When the opportunity of war was arising, one was to 'follow the appropriate time, [...] like firefighting and catching criminals.'[172] Once one seized that change, one was to follow the position of *tian*, follow *tianming*, and destroy the kingdom of Wu thoroughly. That is, 'once one seizes the appropriate time, one should respond immediately, because the appropriate time will not come again. When *tian* presents an opportunity, and one does not seize it, it may instead become dangerous for oneself' [173] (*Discourses of the States*). Such appropriate time is neither an inflexibly linear cosmological time nor the model-based calculation of chance. Rather, it is the time of pure constitution. It resonates with Heidegger's 'temporality' and 'temporalization', but it has less theoretical focus and is instead more directly vivid in Chinese historical life.

A major feature of Chinese culture and thought is that history has pure thinking constitution or 'the will of *tian*' (*tianyi*). History is not merely a material on which to record great events and the course of philosophy. There were almost no historical myths in Chinese culture, and there is no myth of creation in Chinese mainstream thought. There are only poems without punctuation and paragraphs, which recorded history and reveal the ethos in China. The scripts in the *Book of Documents* and *Classic of Poetry* can still communicate with the modern Chinese. It is a mysterious phenomenon. Why was it that, in all the different ancient cultures, only the Chinese were so conscientious and faithful in recording their history? [240]

There were historians in each dynasty, and all such historians used brushes to record dates and events on bamboo, although such information was 'purely descriptive'. Because of this, it is a subtleness help to the Chinese understanding of the appropriate time of *tian*. If there were no actual events referring to the historical background recorded by the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyu*, then the quotations of Fanli may be inflexible and analytical. However, many interpreters tend to read the *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi* and *Huineng* in an overt, explicit manner which

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[171] 夫人事必将与天地相参，然後乃可以成功.

172 This is a metaphor highlighting the quickness and aptness of action required that is typical of both scenarios. 从时者，犹救火、追亡人也.

[173] 得時無怠，時不再來，天予不取，反之为災 國語越語下.

loses the meaning of that subtleness. Mencius said: 'Confucius completed the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and struck terror into the hearts of of rebellious subjects and undutiful sons' (*Mencius* 3B9). He also said: 'Confucius was apprehensive and composed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*' (*Mencius* 3B9). Strictly speaking, this is the Emperor's prerogative. That is why Confucius said: 'those who understand me will do so through the *Spring and Autumn Annals*; those who condemn me will also do so because of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*' (*Mencius* 3B9). These sentences, though overstated (and the quotes may not originally come from Confucius), suggest the great power these historical texts have for Chinese thinkers. When Plato wrote the *Republic*, he directly stated his ideas about how to govern the state. The Indian sages who wrote the *Upanishads* took this world as broken shoes, and only pursued the realm of 'Brahman as his or her own true self' (梵我為一). In contrast, Confucius purposefully kept silent: 'but do not hear him discourse on subjects such as our natural disposition and the way of *tian*' (*Analects* 5.13) 'following the proper way, I do not forge new paths' (*Analects* 7.1). This was to let history itself speak (Confucius' composition of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* neither changed the facts nor made any commentaries). It is only in this way that our thinking can be set free from the frame of objective presence and conjecture. One can then understand that the proper time, simultaneously, is to reach such a level that '[one] could give [their] heart-and-mind free rein without overstepping the boundaries' (*Analects* 2.4) and the ultimate realm of '[giving] up their lives in order to achieve it (*ren*)' (*Analects* 15.9). We will discuss this again in the later section on Confucianism.

Hence, seizing the appropriate time of *tian* as the ultimate reality does not consist in another metaphysical principle. It means a way of thinking, speaking, and a realm of lived action that is different from what one finds in Indian and Western traditions. As such, this is a question of thorough study and perceiving the subtle, and thus knowing *tian*. Compared with Fanli, Goujian and Fuchai were laymen who only knew guesses, aims, and methods. But such a study is different from the study of mathematics, analytical logic, and yoga, because it does not seek a single skill, theory, or situation of consciousness. Rather, it is the 'ultimate ability' which can be seen in the context of existence (*shi* 時).[241]

This study of the time of *tian* has no fixed ‘object' that is pursued. Rather, what is pursued is the ability not to be restrained by the objects in objective presence, but to do so while remaining within the context of interconnected phenomena {interdependent arising}. Hence, this study is nonlinear: it is both gain and loss, ‘*A* but not *a*’. Outstanding scholars not only have the ability to use abstract concepts and deduction to follow moral rules, but they also have the ability to always remain sensitive to the appropriate time, and remain in the phenomenal context. Confucius, Laozi and Huineng all understood the meaning of ‘study’, although their expressions of it differed. Because of this, sages in the heart-mind of the Chinese are not philosophers in the Western sense (Plato, Aristotle), martyrs (such as Jesus, Socrates), or Indian philosophers who took the realm of ‘Brahman as their own true self’. Rather, Chinese sages were acting timely. Hence, Mencius takes Confucius as ‘the sage whose actions were timely’ (*Mencius* 4B1). Similarly, the followers of Zhuangzi praise him in claiming that: ‘his grasp of it was broad, expansive, and penetrating; profound, liberal, and unimpeded. Nevertheless, in responding to change and expounding on the world of things, he set forth principles that will never cease to be valid, an approach that can never be shuffled off’ (*Zhuangzi*.tianxia 9).

Thus, there is no fixed manner of knowing the timeliness of *tian*. Any possibility of stimulating and communicating with others, and achieving awakening, is to be found through right opportunity, by knowing *tian*. But these are all concrete, and mainstream Chinese thought has different opinions on the concrete expression of *tiandao* and the primary ways of practising it. In spite of this, ‘all the different ways can go to the same direction, and all the different considerations can have the same aim’.[174] *Zhouyi.xicixia* Furthermore, if such expression is closer to our daily life, there is a greater chance of recognizing the subtlety of *tianshi*. People have had a knowledge of this type of time since birth, but such a ‘knowledge’ is not an innate knowing of principle, nor a knowing of essence. Rather, it always appears in the appropriate actions that follow the time. Attaining the *dao* of *tiandi* is only to extend the inborn time known to our life and all things, that is, ‘extending this path to the

[174] 天下同归而殊途，一致而百虑 易系辞下

furthest quarters and exhausting its every detail, they reach to the highest and brightest limits'.[175] In our world, full of time and context as it is, what is crucial is whether we are capable of 'correlating one's conduct with those near at hand'[176] and then to 'make good [our] deficiencies' (*Mencius* 6B15). When Fanli discusses the art of war, it has the style of the military school and the school of *yinyang*. 'In ancient time people who good at military take four seasons as the principle' (*Discourses of the States. Yueyuxia*). [242]

When Westerners encounter Chinese medicine, which is based on *yinyang* and the five phases (*wuxing*), they may feel confused. It may also confuse people to state that heaven and earth (*tiandi*) and the four seasons (*sishi*) can be the natural law for the art of military strategy to follow. If we connect the former discussion about the traits of Chinese thinking with the important position of *tian*, however, considering that many Chinese applied it in their lives successfully for a long time, we then can deduce that it is a method that, when applied, uses admittedly phenomenal contextual methods (for example, set purposes, collect data, sacrificial ceremonies), but it still may still benefit our perception and help us go further. Hence, *yin* and *yang* are not two 'categories', nor do they arise from a reductivism of simplifying all kinds of things' double traits. Rather, they are the most comprehensible constitutive interdependence that can stimulate others in our pure phenomenal existence. In the ancient Chinese intellectual atmosphere, when one mentions *yin* or *yang*, there is a reflection of constitutive understanding or situation perception; when one mentions *yin* and *yang* intermingled, there will be another interesting realm of thinking. For Fanli, the jargon works as follows:

> When one tries to defend, one should use the *Dao* of *yin*, when one tries to attack, one should use the *Dao* of *yang*; when the enemy tries to advance close to one, one should use the *Dao* of the soft, when the enemy tries to retreat, one should use the Dao of the hard. But when one defends, one cannot be too

175 Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 109.
176 Ames and Jr, 110.

covert (*yin*), and when one attacks, one cannot be too overt (*yang*)[177] (*Discourses of the States.* 7).

This jargon has the meaning of a specific thinking pattern and effect of constitution. This is a 'category intuition' of the pre-Qin. However, there is no concrete way of telling what kind of defence and skills are following *yin* and *yang* and the concrete way of working in appropriate time.

2 The Original Tiandao of Confucius's Perspective

Following the discussion of the previous chapter and section, it will be easier to continue. Up to now, the original meaning of *tian* is still hidden. Those scholars who focus on Chinese history of philosophy tend to use Western concepts and principle to divide *tiandao* into different parts, [243] the *tian* of governing, the *tian* of nature, the *tian* of principle, the mandate of *tian*, and so on. They take the *tian* of governing as an anthropomorphic God that belongs to the religious tradition of the Shang dynasty. They also take Laozi and Confucius to be betraying this tradition, or the *dao* of the human. *Tian* will become an empty sign if it does not have an original meaning. If *tian* has lost its 'original happening', how is it possible for Chinese thinking that 'it is the unadorned that enhances colour' (*Analects* 3.8)?

When one says that one admires Chinese culture, which '*tian*' does one refer to? Is it the *tian* of governing, the *tian* of nature, the material *tian*, the *tian* of principle, or the *tian* of fate? If so, one does not need to find these specifically in Chinese culture: in the West and India a more systematic and supreme version can be found. Properly appreciated, *tian* is suffused with the Chinese intellectual atmosphere: 'what *tian* promotes-so profound and unceasing'.[178] It is what gives direction to Chinese culture, '[g]reat indeed is the sage's proper path. So vast and expansive, it propagates and nurtures all things; so towering, it reaches up to the skies'.[179]

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[177] 国语越语下：后则用阴，先则用阳；近则用柔，远则用刚。阴节不尽，柔而不可迫.

178 Ames and Hall, 108. 维天之命，於穆不已.

179 Ibid.，大哉聖人之道！洋洋乎，發育萬物，峻極于天 中庸 27.

> So broad, expansive, and profoundly deep, in a timely way they express these virtues. So broad and expansive like the heavens themselves; so profoundly deep like a bottomless abyss: they appear and all defer to them; they speak and all have confidence in what they say; they act and all find pleasure in what they do.
>
> It is for this reason that their fame spreads out over the central states, extending to the Man and Mo barbarians in the south and north. Everywhere that boats and carriages ply, everywhere that people's strength penetrates, everywhere that is sheltered by the heavens and is borne up by the earth, everywhere that is illumined by the sun and moon, everywhere that the frosts and dew settle—all creatures that have breath and blood revere and love them. Thus it is said that they are the complement of *tian*[180]

'[H]ow majestic! Only tian is truly great' (*Analects* 8.19). Confucius spent his life trying to explain this: 'from fifty I realized the propensities of *tian* (*tianming*); from seventy I could give my heart-and-mind free rein without overstepping the boundaries' (*Analects* 2.4). If one does not know the relevant natural origin and background of the text, it is difficult for one to discern the proper meaning of the analects of Confucius, and he or she may take it as 'ethics', 'politics', 'cultivation theory', or 'education theory', as Hegel did. They may then undermine Confucius's aim as a mere concern with the 'training of morals' and 'poetic wisdom'. Rather, Confucius takes inheriting the culture and *li* of the Zhou dynasty as his responsibility, based on its resonance with *tian* and understanding of *tian*.

> When the Master was surrounded in Kuang, he said, 'with King Wen long dead, does not our cultural heritage reside here in us? If *tian* was going to destroy [244] this legacy, we latecomers would not have had access to it. If *tian* is not going to destroy this culture, what can the people of Kuang do to me?' (*Analects* 9.5)

Fundamentally, the culture of the Zhou dynasty understood the will of *tian* and *tianming*. People in the Zhou dynasty had the sense that '[t]he destiny of *Tian* is changeable' (which is similar with the idea that 'all actions are changeable 诸行无常

180 Ibid., 112–113.

'in Buddhism). They did not, however, conclude that there was an anthropomorphic god who required worship, nor that the mandate of heaven or *tianming* could be disregarded to do as one wished. Rather, they developed a perspective of 'following the middle way,'[181] which was to use the existence of human life to match *tian.* The will of *tian* in our living world was thus maintained in the Zhou dynasty through *li*, music and ceremonies. This is a very rare occurrence in the world's history of culture; Confucius understood this and greatly admired it.

'Rituals must be based on *tian*, be complete in our world, and become our concrete everyday life, the rituals change according to the appropriate time'[182] (*the Book of Rites*.9). *Li* is not only records and stipulations of social systems, ceremonies, and ethical relationships among human beings, they also have the meaning of direct experience of present constitution when we practice these *li*. For Confucius, *li* is one kind of art, that is, an art to improve life, to reveal a new realm of understanding and subtle profundity. Hence, a person's participation in *li* is very important: 'if I myself do not participate in the sacrifice, it is as though I have not sacrificed at all' (*Analects* 3.12). Because of this, the expression 'sacrifice as though present' is taken to mean 'sacrifice to the spirits as though the spirits are present' (*Analects* 3.12). As such, it does not conflict with the claim that 'to show respect for the ghosts and spirits while keeping them at a distance can be called wisdom' (*Analects* 6.22). Rather, they connect with each other in one sense. The former speaks of the spirits of presence (Heidegger's *Anwesen*) in ritual ceremonies, the latter one is in the meaning of objective presence. Spirits are taken as objects of praying and sacrifice, so we need to maintain a distance with them. And, because we keep such a distance and respect spirits, they are transposed as spirits in the realm of constitutive context. In the process of having to 'sacrifice to the spirits as though the spirits are present', the fundamentally existential idea of Confucius is revealed: the encounter of existence in the process of action and engaging (the original meaning of Middle Way), the way of thinking of perceiving

[181] 惟精惟一，允執厥中.

[182] 夫礼必本于天，动而之地，列而之事，变而从时.

real knowledge (the original meaning of Middle Way). This '*ru* 如' is not 'like', rather, it is 'sacrifice to the spirits as though the spirits are present' means 'being in the time of sacrifice to the spirits, being in the meaning of the will of spirits' or 'when sacrificing, being with the spirits'. Confucius does not hold a special attitude towards spirits or ghosts, as most people assume. In his horizon, there are no dominant 'strange happenings, the use of force, disorder, or the spirits' (*Analects* 7.21) outside of our experience of lives (for instance sacrifice). Rather, he has [245] a sincere attitude and is engaged with the ghosts that are revealed in the process of sacrifice.

> The virtue (*de*) of the gods and spirits is profound. Looking, we do not see them; listening, we do not hear them, and yet they inform events (*wu*) to the extent that nothing can be what it is without them. Because of them, the people of the world fast, purify themselves, and put on their finest clothes in carrying out the sacrifices to them. It is as though the air above our head is suffused with them, and as though they are all around. The book of song says: the descent of the gods, cannot be fathomed— how much less can it be ignored. Such is the way that the inchoate becomes manifest and creativity is irrepressible.[183]

This paragraph accords with Heidegger's hermeneutic context, and the perspective of interrelated arising. There must be distance between human and spirits, '[l]ooking, we do not see them; listening, we do not hear them'. Hence, it is inappropriate to worship spirits as anthropomorphic gods. We can only have an attitude of 'being there' in which it is appropriate to 'sacrifice to the spirits as though the spirits are present'. Having this attitude, we will then have a consistent and continually happening place (*yuanfadi* 缘发地), having a sincere context which is 'as though the air above our head is suffused with them, and as though they are all around'. This will be to subtly reveal the virtue of spirits. Hence, it is not a *de* of objective presence in *tian*, which cannot be attained by following social rules and the wisdom of our ancestors; this virtue is a natural constitution of rituals and education.

183 Ames and Hall, 96.

The reason why Confucius maintains this attitude of sincerity of present constitution is closely related with the attitude of the ancient Chinese, who took the time of tian as the ultimate reality. For the ancient wise Chinese, there was no present reality and sincere situation that could be separated from 'happening' and 'opportunity/time'. Hence, to understand the ultimate reality is not to analyse concepts in order to grasp the idea of substance, nor is it to experience an inward spiritual situation through yoga practice. Rather, it should be understood as seizing the time of *tian* through appropriate 'art' action to be taken in the constitution of stimulus-- as though the spirits are present. Based on the movements of moon and sun, *yin* and *yang*, and the atmosphere of the situation(*xingshi* 形势) of human affairs, Fan Li had the insight of *tianshi*; Confucius acquired an appreciation of sacrificing 'as though the spirits are present' through complex rituals. This spirit is not a blind object. Rather, it is a stimulus through rituals, it is a wisdom beyond homiletic ethics and ultimate sincerity. Confucius praised the rituals of the Zhou dynasty which did not aim at knowing some specific *tianshi* in a situation. Instead, he wanted to embody the sincere situation of communicating *tian* and *di* in the middle way. [246]

He could thereby communicate with everything, and finally, know *tian* and *ming*.

> 'Creativity is the way of *tian*; creating is the proper way of becoming human. Creativity is achieving equilibrium and focus (*zhong* 中) without coercion; it is succeeding without reflection. Freely and easily traveling the centre of the way-- that is the sage'.[184]

The supreme realm of the *Ru* school is the original pure constitution of matching goodness, which is beyond general virtues. That is, it is the original meaning of benevolence (*ren*). For Confucius, if one knows the sacrificial rites (*di* 禘), it is easy for her or him to govern a state (*Analects* 3.11). This is because rituals can guide people to the ultimate sincere *tiandao*. Hence, Confucius could not tolerate those who ruined rituals or those who used rituals to serve themselves. Ritual, for Confucius, is the art that can communicate with *tian* and attain the ultimate realm of

184 Ames and Hall, 104.

life: the peaceful *tianxia*, the welfare of humanity. As such, the rituals were not merely unnecessary practices used to maintain the old system. Of course, rituals were only one way for Confucius to stimulate students to a state of constitutive situation, and for them to maintain this state for a long period of time. *The Classic of Poetry*, *The Book of Documents*, music, and the six arts were the other ways that could open the doors of wisdom and were part of the subtlety (几微) of the Middle Way. For Confucius, *tiandao* is the Middle Way. This middle is not the objective presence of a mean between two extremes, rather, it means to get rid of all thoughts of objective presence, and to stay in the realm of constitution. Likewise, this is not obstinacy, but to always remain in the middle of the Ultimate. That is, 'targeting the aim in the proper time' (*shizhong* 时中四声), which means that '[c]reativity is achieving equilibrium and focus without coercion', 'Once the emotions have arisen, that they are all brought into proper focus is called harmony'.[185] Take Confucius as 'the sage whose actions were timely', whose actions properly target it. 'I am looking at it in front of me, and suddenly it is behind me' (*Analects* 9.11). This flexible atmosphere permeates the *Analects* of Confucius, it derives from the natural tendency of targeting the aim at the proper time of pure constitution. When we read it, we can only admire and sigh, for 'that it is a rare among the people is an old story' (*Analects* 6.29).

'We can learn from the Master's cultural refinements, but not hear him discourse on subjects such as our 'natural disposition' and 'the way of *tian*' (*Analects* 5.13). The Master only rarely spoke about personal advantage, the propensity of circumstances, or authoritative conduct (*Analects* 9.1). The students of Confucius noticed this fact, and this suggests that ancient scholars generally care about and discuss natural tendency or *xing*, mandate or *ming* and the *dao* of heaven. The *Classic of Poetry*, the *Book of Documents* and the *Zuozhuang* have many records about natural tendency, the mandate and *dao* of heaven. However, Confucius avoided these topics during his lecturing. This is a point of confusion for later neo-

185 Ibid., 89.

Confucians, but they still provide an explanation for this. Zhu Xi's commentary gives one possible explanation of this unusual issue. [247]

Zhu Xi argues that Confucius would not normally tell his students about natural tendency and *tiandao*. Hence, when Zigong heard Confucius speak of *tiandao*, he praised his luck in hearing Confucius. Alternatively, it may be supposed that there were some secret mental cultivation methods that Confucius would not normally tell his students.[186] Actually, on the contrary, the master said: 'My young friends, you think that I have something hidden away, but I do not' (*Analects* 7.24). Confucius shared his actions with his students; there were no such secrets. To not have spoken of *tiandao* and natural tendency does not mean that Confucius did not care about these questions. In fact, these questions were all-too important for Confucius, who is the sage whose actions were timely. *Tian* is great, hence it was necessary to reveal the ultimate meaning of such actions through present constitution or targeting the aim on proper time, and he could not use the objective present manner to enunciate it. This is also represented in his attitude towards spirits and the world after death.

> Zilu asked how to serve the spirits and the gods. The master replied, 'not yet being able to serve people, how would you be able to serve the spirits?' Zilu said, 'may I ask about death?' the master replied, 'not yet understanding life, how could you understand death?' (*Analects* 11.12)

From the foregoing discussion, Confucius was indeed concerned with spirits and death; he merely couldn't 'serve' spirits or have an objective present attitude towards spirits and death. He is only willing to engage with constitutive, present and insightful spirits through vivid and opening sacrifice and other appropriate times, rather than talking about some substantial spirits and the situation of another world. 'Do not look at anything that violates the observance of ritual propriety; do not speak about anything that violates the observance of ritual propriety; do not do anything that violates the observance of ritual propriety' (*Analects* 12.1). It is not only suggested that we should restrain our desires, but also that we cannot know the meaning of the mandate of heaven, spirits and death without vital rituals. Ritual

[186] 朱熹注解性与天道不可得而闻之，子贡至是始得而闻之，而叹其美也 79 四书集注.

propriety is neither empty form, nor the objective presence which can be separated from context. ‘What has a person who is not authoritative got to do with observing ritual propriety? What has a person who is not authoritative got to do with the playing of music’ (*Analects* 3.3).

Mainly, *ren* is not one single virtue for Confucius. Hence, one who has other virtues does not neccessary have *ren* but people who have *ren* must all have goodness. For Confucius, *ren* is the fundamental way of thinking or the appropriate attitude towards ultimate reality. ‘Correlating one’s conduct with those near at hand can be said to be the method of becoming an authoritative person’ (*Analects* 6.30). ‘Correlating one’s conduct with those near at hand’ suggests that there is no ready natural tendency of *ren*, but *ren* is not totally decided by the outward world, it can be constructed by ‘ correlating one’s conduct’ {communicative reflection}. Only one ‘correlating one’s conduct’ which can reflect {as near} our natural tendency – *ren*; that is the meaning of ‘human beings are similar in their natural tendencies, but vary greatly by virtue of their habits’(*Analects* 17.2). Hence, ‘authoritative persons establish others in seeking to establish themselves and promote others in seeking to get there themselves’ (*Analects* 6.30).[248]

From the other side, that is, ‘do not impose on others what you yourself do not want’ (*Analects* 15.24). This is not equivalent to dictating to people what to do and what not to, as with the dictum to ‘love your enemy’ or that ‘one cannot lie’. Also, it is not only an expansion to others: because this self or self-desire is not settled, it has to be constituted in the process of establishing people and promoting people. Hence, *ren* is only the constitutive principle of mutual encounters and mutual establishment, and the principle of the middle way, and is one way to approach the pure context of our natural tendency. For Confucius, this is the notion that makes his ideas ‘bound together with one continuous strand’ (*Analects* 4.15), such that they can ‘be acted upon until the end of one’s day’ (*Analects* 15.24).

Hence, the *Dao* of *ren* and *tiandao* both participate in communicating the meaning of ‘[grasping] it sincerely and without deviation’ (*Analects* 20.1). Attain *ren* know *tian*, practice the *dao* of *ren* in order to know the *dao* of *tian*, Cultivate your body first and then cultivate a family and then one can govern a state, these

descend in one continuous line. However, if one wants to cultivate oneself, one has to straighten one's heart-mind first; if one wants to straighten one's heart-mind, one has to make his or her will sincere; if one wants to make his or her will sincere, one has to get knowledge; if one wants to get knowledge, one has to observe things. Zhu Xi used *zhi* (至) to explain *ge* (格), *shi* (事)to explain *wu* (物), so '格物致知' for Zhu Xi the meaning is 'seeking the principle of events, then one can have all the knowledge'.[187] This is quite general. In contrast, Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming claimed that '*ge* is straight and sincere, so one can straighten that which is not'. They therefore questioned the criteria for the 'straight'. If our innate goodness has already been effaced by selfish desires. If someone already knows that which is 'straight', but has not acted accordingly, then we cannot say that the person truly knows what is 'straight'. This is so because Wang Yangming maintains the importance of continuity of knowledge and practice. Following the meaning of our context, we know that this *ge wu* is neither seeking the principle of things, nor using the objective presence of the 'straight'to get rid of what is 'not straight'. Rather, it is a communicative way with *wu* through art/skill, in order to stimulate the knowledge of *tian* of constitutive situation. Doing so, the sincere will may be attained. The knowledge of experimental observation and the knowledge of the natural tendency of the heart which already has such a framework (for example, the pattern of *tian*, 'straight heart') are different, and cannot attain the 'ultimate sincerity'. Later *Ru* scholars generally underestimate the skills or arts which seem irrelevant to virtue and reading texts, because they do not understand the subtle meaning of *ge wu*. Actually, one trait of Confucius' ideas is '*ge wu zhizhi*' being there through six arts/skills. Fundamentally, the six classical texts are also a kind of skill or art of literature rather than some conceptual or theoretical texts.

The childhood experience of Confucius here contributes to his way of thinking. [249] Confucius said, 'we were poor when I was young, so I learned many a menial skill.' (*Analects* 9.6) and 'it is because I have never been appointed to office that I have learned these many arts' (*Analects* 9.7). These experiences show that

[187] 窮盡事物之理 慾其極處無不到也.

Confucius could not have held any primarily conceptual way of thinking, or non-artistic/skill-based way of thinking. ‘There were four things the Master abstained from entirely: he did not speculate, he did not claim or demand certainty, he was not inflexible, and he was not self-absorbed’ (*Analects* 9.4). For Confucius, it is not that the more skills one has the better, the essential thing is to understand the realm of thinking of non-objective presence.

> The Master said, ‘Zigong, do you take me to be someone who has learned a great deal and who can remember it all?’ Zigong replied, ‘I do indeed. Is it not so?’ ‘No, it is not,’ said the Master, ‘I just pull it together in one continuous strand’ (*Analects* 15.3).

Hence, the essence of the study of Confucius and the ‘instruction’ (*hui* 诲) inspiring his students is in the way of thinking (*ren*) which was transformed from the realm of art/skill and the way of action of ‘appropriate timing’. Confucius mentions the six arts, but Confucius focuses more on the first three arts. ‘I find inspiration by intoning the songs, I learn where to stand from observing ritual propriety, and I find fulfilment in playing music’ (*Analects* 8.8). Confucius does not need to mention *li* because his affection towards poems and music and the inward resonance with them are rare in the history of thought. ‘The Master said of the Shao music that it is both superbly beautiful and superbly felicitous. Of the Wu music he said that it is superbly beautiful but not superbly felicitous’ (*Analects* 3.25). ‘When the Master was in the state of Qi he heard the Shao music, and for several months he did not know the taste of meat. He said, “I had no idea that music could achieve such heights”’ (*Analects* 7.14). It is not difficult to attain the ‘superbly beautiful’ realm, if one attains the superbly felicitous, it is unavoidable to weave it together in one continuous strand. Hence, Confucius had an inquiring attitude towards the meaning of the *Classic of Poetry* which is always linked with music. Regarding this, Confucius claimed that ‘if you do not study the songs, you will be at a loss as to what to say’ (*Analects* 16.13). This attitude suggests an artistic constitution of language, and that Confucius gave his sincere praise to those of his students who could transform the realm of songs/poems to other contexts, especially the realm of thinking.

> Zigong said: "what do you think of the saying: 'poor but not inferior; rich but not superior'?" The Master replied: "Not bad, but not as good as: 'Poor but enjoying the way; rich but loving ritual propriety.'" Zigong said: "The Book of Songs states: Like bone carved and polished, like jade cut and ground. Is this not what you have in mind?" The Master said: "Zigong, it is only with the likes of you then that I can discuss the Songs! On the basis of what has been said, you know what is yet to come" (*Analects* 1.15).

This beautiful dialogue is the outcome of traditional, classical Chinese culture. Confucius maintains that being 'Poor but enjoying the way; rich but loving ritual propriety' is better than 'poor but not inferior; rich but not superior', because the former has more traits of art or skill. This dialogue originates from the poetic thinking of Zigong: 'Like bone carved and polished, like jade cut and ground'. This not only means to keep improving, it also has more significance in transforming the rigid meaning of poor and rich, [250] thereby making them sublime. This echoes with the reply of Confucius, like the echo of music. Hence, Confucius praises Zigong because he properly understands the meaning of the *Songs*; 'On the basis of what has been said, you know what is yet to come'. This is the trait of wise timing which originates from art or skill. Another vivid exchange with Zixia (*Analects* 3.8) concerning the S*ongs* is also about using the artistic realm as a means of explanation. Hence, Confucius considered as superbly great and superbly pure 'the songs [that] are three hundred in number, they can be covered in one expression: "Go vigorously without swerving"' (*Analects* 2.2). If one wants to understand this without force, one needs to perceive the songs as an art or skill of pure constitution, like music. If one perceives the context of constitution of the songs rather than the speaking of objective presence, there is no swerving. Some people think it is too forceful to put what Confucius said after the song, but they do not realize that it is connected with the way of his thinking.

In contrast to later Neo-Confucianism, Confucius does not focus on the pattern of *tian* which is counter to the desires of human beings. Rather, he focuses on the realm of pure constitution. 'I have yet to meet the person who is fonder of excellence than of physical beauty, and I am afraid I never will' (*Analects* 15.13). He wishes to

transform the realm of pure natural constitution of fondness for physical beauty to the realm of fondness for excellence. That is to say, being fonder of excellence needs to be as vivid as the fondness for physical beauty. We can do this by 'achieving equilibrium and focus without coercion; it is succeeding without reflection. Freely and easily traveling the center of the way' (*Zhongyong* 20). "'The cry of the Osprey' is pleasing without being excessive, is mournful without being injurious" (*Analects* 3.20). This makes sense because the fondness for physical beauty includes in itself a part that is fondness for excellence. Hence, Confucius always believed that to "truly love it is better than just to understand it, and to enjoy it is better than simply to love it" (*Analect*s 6.20). 'Happy joy' (*le* 樂) is inwardly communicable with 'music'(*yue* 樂), if one can take *de* as happiness (*le*), one can then be in the musical realm of *de*. 'When they are troubled, they certainly turn to it, as they do in facing difficulties' (*Analects* 4.5) adequately describes this *de*.

The fondness for learning of Confucius resembles neither the curiosity of Greece, from which science originated, nor is it derived from the need to be erudite. Rather, it is for attaining the realm of happiness and the superbly happy. 'As a person, Confucius is driven by such eagerness to teach and learn that he forgets to eat, he enjoys himself so much that he forgets to worry, and does not even realize that old age is on its way' (*Analects* 7.19). In the *Analects*, there are troubles, worries and a happiness that cannot be separated from life experience, and cannot be manipulated by the objective present situation. [251]

It is touching to read it. 'The Master said, "To eat coarse food, drink plain water, and pillow oneself on a bent arm—there is pleasure to be found in these things. But wealth and position gained through inappropriate means—these are to me like floating clouds"' (*Analects* 7.16). Confucius aimed to apply his ideas through his whole life; he failed, but he still always felt pleasure in his efforts. One cannot have this if one does not have a realm of thinking of pure constitution which continually interweaves one's life. 'It is only *tian* who appreciates me' (*Analects* 14.35). In the *Analects*, when there is a realm of 'pleasure/enjoyment', there is realm of 'ultimate context'. 'Other people would not be able to endure his hardships, yet for Hui it has

no effect on his enjoyment. A person of character is this Yan Hui' (*Analects* 6.11). It is not enough to say it is a virtue, because one cannot have this enjoyment without the realisation of one's ultimate natural tendency.

The *dao* of governing a state according to Confucius, 'giving peace to all under heaven' is non-objective presence.

> Ji Kangzi asked Confucius about governing effectively, saying, "What if I kill those who have abandoned the way to attract those who are on it?" "If you govern effectively," Confucius replied, "what need is there for killing? If you want to be truly adept, the people will also be adept. The excellence of the exemplary person is the wind, while that of the petty person is the grass. As the wind blows, the grass is sure to bend (*Analects* 12.19).

It initially makes sense to 'kill those who have abandoned the way to attract those who are on it', but this is merely to take *dao* as an objective presence and objective criterion. This criterion of *Dao* will then be decided by potentate. The real *dao* of governing is constitutive art/skill, and it employs ritual, music and education to purify our realm of existence. For Confucius, this is to have 'effected proper order while remaining nonassertive' (*Analects* 15.5). Because rituals, music, rightness and humaneness are not, and should not be, forcefully added to *tianxia*, it is how all-under-heaven can be *tianxia* as it is not forceful. Hence, Confucius does not approve of *zuoxingding*[188](鑄刑鼎), because this will lead to a loss of the art of governing.

Confucius opposes using an objective present way—the will of potentate, articles of law-- to divide the *tianxia* represented in the statement 'And yet the four seasons turn and the myriad things are born and grow within it' (*Analects* 17.19); Also, Confucius approves, or at least is not against, any art as a constitutive way of governing. He not only approves that 'if *Dao* is here, the king uses *wuwei* to govern his or her state' but he also would not be against a realm of 'effected proper order while remaining non-assertive' that artistically combined democracy and laws. That

188 An ancient ceremonial pot used for storing legal documents for display to the public. Confucius gives two different judgements on the use of this instrument: for Zichang in the kingdom of Zheng, Confucius approves such an action, but for kingdom of Jin, Confucius disproves, as the masses will doubt the royal authority, and that is dangerous.

is why Confucius said 'As for Yu, I can find no fault with him at all' (*Analects* 8.21). However, Confucius would not agree with a representative system that was based on individualism and surface appearance, because this system is a place for exchanging and judging interests [252] rather than a place of constitutive art. 'When the way prevails in the world' fundamentally means the *dao* of artistic constitution, although it accompanies the situation of 'ritual propriety, musics, and punitive campaigns [that] are initiated by the emperor' (*Analects* 16.2). It is not always as such; 'if the way does not prevail in the world' means the concealment of the existing situation of constitution, and *tianxia* is controlled by the objective present power (mainly appearing as a massacre) and unchangeable presence. The effective governing of Confucius was greatly influenced by the culture of Zhou, but fundamentally, it is an open and purely active model rather than persisting in an objective present way of governing.

> Yan Hui, with a deep sigh, said: "The more I look up at it, the higher it soars; the more I penetrate into it, the harder it becomes. I am looking at it in front of me, and suddenly it is behind me. The Master is good at drawing me forward a step at a time; he broadens me with culture and disciplines my behaviour through the observance of ritual propriety. If if I wanted to quit, I could not. And then I have exhausted my abilities, it is as though something rises up right in front of me, and even though I want to follow it, there is no road to take. (*Analects* 9.11)

This vivid description can only come from Yan Hui, who 'chose the path of focusing the familiar affairs of the day (*zhongyong*), and on gaining something worthwhile from doing so, would clasp it tightly to his breast and not lose it' (*Zhongyong* 8). That explains why 'yet for Hui it has no effect on his enjoyment'. *The Analects* is the most pure work of the *Ru* school.

After Confucius, although in *The Doctrine of Mean (Zhongyong*) natural tendency and *tiandao* are discussed, using the centre still maintains the Confucian meaning. The ultimate sincerity and the *Dao* of the middle are the realm of the art of coming to things or *gewu*; hence the Song *Ru* School put it after *Great Learning* (*Daxue*), which makes sense as such. This is inherited from Confucius, 'The dullest

of ordinary men and women can know something of it, and yet even the sages in trying to penetrate to its furthest limits do not know it all. The most unworthy of common men and women are able to travel a distance along it, yet even the sages in trying to penetrate to its furthest limits are not able to travel it all' (*Zhongyong* 12). Up to Mencius, this is not purely Confucian thought, but the framework still remains. 'Benevolence, dutifulness, observance of the rites, and wisdom do not give me a lustre from the outside; they are in me originally. Only this has never dawned on me' (*Mencius* 6A6). When Mencius states 'wisdom does not give me a lustre from the outside; they are in me originally' he already goes against Confucius' ideas. From here, innate goodness, the same pattern and setting the heart-mind indicated a new means of approach for neo-Confucianism. According to this, heart-mind, pattern and rightness seem more like a prior substance, that which has come from *tian* which is only obscured by our desires. Hence, 'The sole concern of learning is to go after this strayed heart. That is all' (*Mencius* 6A11). This, then, is a waxing and waning relationship between prior objective presence and later objective presence, [253] distanced from the Confucian pure constitutive thought of ritual or *li*, music or *yue*, *ren* and *yi*. However, cultivating *qi*, the heart-mind of empathy and the innate goodness of Mencius's philosophy all have subtle meaning, the novelty of which earlier philosophers did not address. Further, in the age of taking war and conflict as beneficent, he still attempted to popularize the ideas of Confucius, in order to follow the innate goodness of human beings, since this is contributing to the sage. But it is certainly an over-estimation to say that Mencius's thought is 'pure'.

Chapter 15: Communication between Heidegger's Thought and the Chinese Idea of *tiandao*

Hitherto we discussed the different characteristics of Heidegger's early and later thinking, the ultimate questions of West and East, Indian orthodox schools, Pratītyasamutpāda, and the Chinese idea of *tiandao.* In these discussions some inter-cultural comparisons were made, but huge challenges remain when we begin our comparison of Heidegger's thinking and *tiandao*. Communication between Western and Eastern thought began early. Nevertheless, the circumstances of the twentieth century have made such communication unavoidable rather than the result of mere curiosity or reciprocity. When our pioneers of modern Chinese philosophy encountered the decay of Chinese thinking they were expelled – exiled/forced into 'isms' which intermingled West and East. Today some shallow and provocative commentaries have to be tolerated under the guise of the main situational comparisons and communications. Especially in the beginning of comparative philosophy, 'comparative' translations were actually expedient means of importing foreign ideas rather than responsible and reliable comparisons. Western scholars and Chinese scholars who learned Western philosophy value the Western spirit of rationality and the methodology of concepts as universal truth. Using Western philosophy as a standard for their 'comparison', they constructed Chinese philosophy to meet Western requirements by deciding which parts were essential and which parts were irrational and redundant in the twentieth century. [341] This is how 'Chinese philosophy' was constructed.

This kind of thinking cannot satisfy us, since it is rooted in the immature presumption that Western philosophy is the standard. At last, it seems that historical and textual research have come to be as the only sound scholarship. Recently, because of the great popularity of Richard Rorty's language-centrism or ethnocentrism, there is an argument that Chinese philosophy is 'untranslatable', 'incommensurable' and 'cannot have dialogue' with the West. On this basis, one can reduce one's dissatisfactions about the methodology of comparative concepts, which prompts us to reflect on our own cultural characteristics. However, if one attempts to

understand Eastern culture from a standpoint that avoids the clumsy comparisons mentioned above, it is also premature, because the root and situation of the culture are formed by the 'time of *Tian*' of comparisons and communications (that is the main situation). As long as we fail to be aware of this danger, we may begin our dialogue on the wrong footing. The only meaningful comparison and communication of philosophy is to realize the capability of constitution among different languages and the existence of humans; that is, a dialogue between India, the West and China that does not elide the respective contexts of their thinking. Furthermore, once we attain the ultimate realm, the pure thinking situation will be revealed without the restraint of systems or structures, and meaningful dialogue between the two cultures becomes possible.

Fundamentally, Heidegger's thinking and the idea of *tiandao* are purely situational. Keeping this in mind, the dialogue between these two will not remain with a mere comparison of concepts, but will afford the possibility of revealing the Mysterious interdependent in their thinking. Such an understanding of *tiandao* should resonate with our experience of reading Lao-Zhuang, Confucius and Sunzi in that it reflects the agreement in our heart-mind and stimulates other ideas which our heart-minds have not touched yet, but it also has to be within the background of the phenomenology of existentialism. It is the same when we grasp Heidegger's thinking. In this dialogue, the phenomenology of existentialism will fuse with the Chinese natural perspective. But this fusion should deepen our sincerity of 'Zurück zu den Sachen selbst' rather than impede it. [342]

1 Non-vorhanden Attitude

Two Ways to Think the Ultimate Questions (China and the West)

Western philosophy and the idea of *tiandao* emerged when we began to investigate questions thoroughly through pure thinking rather than other forms of intellectual inquiry. Although our life experiences may appear different, there are in fact similarities. Namely, that they are fundamentally inconstant and full of surprises, even though 'constancy' and 'intention' appear close at hand in our life. This confusion can spur the thinker's curiosity in the ultimate. In addition, different

people have different ways of ‘thinking until there is nothing left to be thought’, which refers to the different methodological approaches to thought. For some specific questions, for instance ‘the meaning of happiness’, we have different answers. Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Kant, Confucius, Yangzhu and Zhuangzi have different opinions about happiness, thus there are different positions (this is called ‘isms’ in the Western world). However, the more important and fundamental difference is the contrary understanding of ways (Weg, Dao) of thinking. That is to say, to the question of ‘what is the ultimate of thinking, which means thinking thoroughly or leaving nothing left that is thinkable’, people naturally have very different opinions, whether they are aware of this or not. These (usually unaware and on the edge of horizon) opinions, which are ‘ways of thinking about ultimate meaning’, strongly determine the directions of philosophy and pure thinking.

We could have two distinctive ways of thinking about ultimate meaning. The thinkers who adopt the first method of thinking maintain that if thinking can find the source of ultimate meaning or the ultimate understanding of ‘what’, that is the end of thought: there is nothing left for us to consider. With regard to what is this ‘what’, there are different explanations in different periods of time, leading to the formation of different ‘isms’. People who subscribe to the second kind of thinking maintain that we have not yet reached the end of thinking, or the ultimate of ‘nothing left for us to be thought’ [343] because ‘what’ is connected with ‘how’, that is to say, how to be understood and embodied. According to the second view, the ultimate questions are the questions of ‘how is that possible’ rather than ‘what is that’ or the related ‘how to reach the aim’. This ‘how is that possible’ means how to be understood directly to reach the clarity of ‘nothing left to be thought’. Therefore, revealing the subtlety {techne} of constitutive meaning, as opposed to the source of meaning, will help us to reach this clarity.

This opinion towards ultimate thinking is inconceivable for traditional philosophers. For them, the pure meaning which cannot be reached by any carriers of meaning (expression forms, grammar forms, objects of forms and physical objects), the pure possibility of something prior in all stipulate situations (including active situations) and the pure ‘in-between’ among divarication, are mysterious and

irrationally transcendental. However, for someone who has the ultimate thinking of pure constitution, there is nothing more natural and inescapable than contextual constitution of meaning and understanding. The basic lived experience is full of these extension realms which are formed by the pure constitution.

Hitherto, pure thinking peruses this understanding of the ultimate, it appears as the original source of the universe, meaning of life and death, or the vital elements for 'the decline and flourishing of all under heaven'. We cannot claim that there is no attempt to understand the ultimate after Plato. Scepticism and the critiques of different schools of thought, especially with the popularity of phenomenology and the analytical philosophy of Wittgenstein, have embodied the sensibility of an original pursuit from different perspectives. However, up to Heidegger, the main trend of philosophy attempts to grasp 'what'. We cannot say that Chinese thinkers do not also have this kind of understanding, since many ideas from the Warring State and after the pre-Qin periods incorporate aspects of cosmology, morality and metaphysics, but it is these aspects that prevent these ideas from attaining ultimate thinking. Nevertheless, the idea of *tiandao* penetrates different perspectives in Chinese culture after the West Zhou period, through the constitutive understanding and popularization of Confucius, Laozi, Fanli, Sunzi, Zhuangzi and so on. [344] Although this '*Dao*' has eroded, changed and lost its splendour, the whole great image is still outstanding.

By this token, thinking which can deeply embody these two approaches, and that has the self-awareness to expand upon them, is really rare. Heidegger's Being and the Chinese idea of *tiandao* are outstanding among these ideas. Besides these, ancient Indian thinking, especially the middle way of Mahayana Buddhism, Tiantai, Huayan, Chan Buddhism in China, and the thinking of Wittgenstein in Western philosophy, all attempt to understand the ultimate meaning of pure constitution and exclude objective presence.

Therefore, Heidegger's thinking concerns not only a kind of idea belonging to some schools, rather, it should be understood as a self-awareness of the original mission of Western philosophy, and the rectification of a deviation in the past paths of thinking. Because of this self-awareness and the resulting turn in philosophy, the

ultimate meaning of thought is revealed. On the other hand, the idea of *tiandao* in Chinese thinking is not a ready-made heritage, which can be picked up randomly in order to make comparisons. On the contrary, the idea conceals itself in many inappropriate explanations and discussions. It needs to be clarified, and then we can see the meaning of *Tian* or the ultimate meaning. Only if the two main ways of thinking revive their original vitality can the possibility of a dialogue between Heidegger and Dao take place.

The Attitude of non-objective Presence in Heidegger's Thinking and the Idea of Chinese *Tiandao*

The main commonality between Heidegger's Being and *tiandao* in Chinese thinking is that we cannot attain the ultimate in our life and thinking through the concepts of objective presence. This kind of opinion is not only difficult to reach but also difficult to totally convey theoretically. In both Western and Eastern culture, or in the whole of history, the reification and institutionalization of thinking is an especially stubborn trend. It seems as though thinking has to be grounded in the 'what', otherwise it will lose its foundation. Therefore, both Heidegger [345] and Chinese thinkers, who focus on the pursuit of the *Dao*, have to confront the problem of how to get rid of this reified thinking, and to make their ultimate understanding more vivid.

As a philosopher in the twentieth century, Heidegger perceives the concealment of essence in the Western tradition's thought. It first appears in the understanding of being. In the ancient Greek philosophies of the pre-Platonic period, being (eon) and logos shared meanings, which referred to the openness and revealing of presence and holding, which is pure constitution in phenomenology. This is where the charm of Greek culture comes from. The pure constitutive opinion in Parmenides' being is revealed by Zeno's paradoxes, 'logos' in Heraclitus gets rid of the reification or objective presence in time and fire. He critiques those who exist in the constitution of logos, but only see objective presence: 'they are against logos, which they cannot separate with, and which give all directions to things'. Heraclitus addresses the pure consciousness of constitution in Western wisdom. Before Heidegger, scholars either could not understand Heraclitus, viewed him as a mystic who disdained human

beings, or thought of him as a metaphysician who appealed to change, the opposite of Parmenides. We already know that Heidegger could not agree with this historical judgement of Heraclitus's philosophy.

Socrates still has the mind-set of constitution. He seldom gives judgements, because such judgements always refer to a specific 'what'. He values himself as a gadfly who was sent by the gods to help the Greeks to get rid of their objective presence. Unfortunately, the unwelcomed revealer was trampled by the horse, because the horse preferred to live in chaos rather than awakening. More ironically, it is Plato, a student of Socrates, who raises the question of 'what'—the theory of forms—the biggest 'what' in Western philosophy, [346] which conceals the spirit of doubt and the perspective of phenomenology. The reason Heidegger deconstructs the history of Being in the West is because history forgot the ultimate reason for thinking as thinking. Instead, the focus on beings and 'what' predominated, leading to a 'dizzy and hazy' life, nonetheless thinking that a rational spirit was retained.

The Western preference for adventure or creativeness arises from a fundamentally false situation. Independent thinkers will not accept the objective presence that has been found by others. As successors, however, they may be said to exist in more convenient circumstances to search for objective presence; it seems that there is a higher possibility for them to find the origin of the world and the meaning of life. Therefore, we have the so-called 'development of the categories of philosophy', which knit these dreams into the layers of thinking. Every new philosophy has the tendency to critique others and open a new beginning. 'I have nothing to say about philosophy, I know philosophy has been discussed for a thousand years by intellectuals, but nothing is agreeable for all intellectuals, so nothing is undoubtable'. Descartes' insightful remark describes the inevitable destiny (to be doubted) of metaphysical concepts and his own philosophy. Every philosopher has pursued the ultimate of thought as well, but such philosophers can always deny other theories in a rational way, and then they may put forward their own 'what', which will be denied by others in turn. After 'aufhebung' (sublating) and having been 'aufgehoben' (sublated), is there any specific 'what' that has come out on top? No, there is only thinking which is, like a ghost, still haunting philosophy.

The pursuit of Kant's discussion of 'how is that possible' and Husserl's 'intuitive self-awareness constitution' allows for the possible overturning of a hopeless intellectual climate. However, until Heidegger, there is only a relative self-awareness of the pure constitutive mission of thought in an existential meaning. Anyone who absorbs and digests this will have a different opinion to former philosophers.

In China, from the Western Zhou period, ancient thinkers began to realize the meaning of heaven, which is the ultimate pure constitution. [347] The expression 'the destiny of *tian* is changeable' means that all objective presences are unable to comphrehend the meaning of *Tian*, no matter how esteemed they may be. 'Matching *Tian* with *de* (virtue)' means that it is only the situation of the life of human beings that can communicate with *tian*. Also, it is only the *De*, which can embody the constitutive meaning of a lived situation that can match *Tian*. This should not be restrained in a situation of objective presence because we can adapt (changeability) our understanding of the meaning of *Tian*. This way of understanding *Tian* in its pure constitution is called *Dao*. If we go further, *Tian* is not superior to human beings. Rather, it is more profound than any objective presence or situation of objective presence. *Tiandao* means the pure constitutive original situation in Chinese traditional wisdom. Nevertheless, later Daoists and the Legalists (*Fajia*) take *ren* (human being) and *renzhi* (the rule by man) as the objective presence which is opposite to *Dao* and *wuwei*.

The idea of *tiandao* has profound meaning and has rarely been sufficiently realised. It is amazing how the constitutive opinion in China suffuses mainstream Chinese culture, compared with how constitutive opinion embodies a specific philosophy or system of self-cultivation in other cultures. Further, *tiandao*'s subtleness can compete with religious tendencies or the trend of anthropomorphising ultimate concern. This serves to explain why the Chinese have never theologised, but they still have sufficient ultimate lived experience. This is the '*tiandao*' of pure Ereignis-formed Chinese culture. 'Zhou observes the example set by two dynasties, so how splendid is its culture! And we take Zhou as our model' (*Analects* 3.14). Although there are unworthy descendants in both the West and China, the culture of

Tian Dao (through the mingling of the thought of Confucius, Laozi and Zhuangzi) differs greatly with the cultural situation formed by Christianity, Plato and Aristotle.

At this point, it is necessary to address the assertion that Lao-Zhuang has fundamentally different opinions with Confucius, who seldom discusses *tiandao*, since Lao-Zhuang mentions the *Dao* directly and forms a metaphysics, epistemology and methodology in accordance with it. This assertion has failed to note that, on the one hand, Lao-Zhuang's *tiandao* of non-objective presence is in conflict with the metaphysics of concepts, and on the other hand, that Lao-Zhuang has a connection with Confucius regarding the pure constitutive way of thinking. The critiques of Ren and Li reveal that Lao-Zhuang and Confucius have different styles of pursuing thought. The two thinkers [348] take the natural constitutive context of life as the ultimate, and hold a suspicious attitude towards any institutionalization. As such, Confucius believes that *Ren*, *yi*, ritual propriety and *zhi* can rid us of the restraint of institutionalization and become the art/skill by which to experience and reveal *tiandao*. While they are suspicious of institutionalization, both Confucius and Lao-Zhuang also dislike the abstract object in metaphysics. Confucius's 'verification of names, *zhengming*' is a 'return to ritual propriety' without giving objective concepts to names (*ming*). Therefore, from the whole picture of Chinese culture, *tiandao* is thoroughly ultimate *Ereignis*. It is not, therefore, a contingency that would catch Heidegger's specific attention.

2 Lived Experience is the Foundation for us to Understand

The nature of human beings will never be satisfied by any lived situation of objective presence. When human beings are restrained in institutions and a wicked environment, they will fall into chaos. Once there is a rift in the institution, this provides a gap (*Riss*) for the nature of human beings to develop. People will get rid of things that restrain their lives in objective presence, and they can then pursue meaning and the real in an ambiguous and nebulous way. This is called the pursuit of freedom in Western thinking. According to such thought, freedom is considered to be the nature of human beings. Human beings are born free, but they lost their

freedom in identification with a specific country, legal systems, ideology, religion, ethics, economic and social relations. The essential problem does not concern one specific country, religion or relationship, nor is it found in one specific 'what'. The nature of human beings cannot be restrained by one specific 'what'. To flee from all kinds of forces and pressure is what is ultimately pure and real. However, it is difficult to find a real home for human beings' freedom. It is only "shining its happy light in the suffering night". [349] Once we have freedom, it is not attractive any more. Actually, this is not freedom, and it seems that the realized present is not the real present. In the name of freedom, people can do many ridiculous things.

Western thinkers pursue freedom through many methods. They attempt to find the natural quality that matches with freedom in human beings. Real freedom means to reveal this kind of quality or release of freedom in our body. For most thinkers, it is only reason which can be matched with freedom, or it is reason that can benefit from freedom without suffering its ill effects. The whole of modern Western culture pursues the rational mechanism of freedom. Science, industrial technology, democracy and rationalism are all different embodiments of this trend. The reason of experience, the reason of self-discipline; the reason of combined divinity and nature; the reason of combined 'authenticity kindness and beauty', and the dialectical reason which appears as both opposite and complementary, all explore the possibility of happiness in the life of human beings. However, there is a difference between the reason of opinion and that of freedom which could reach the extremities of human beings' nature. Therefore, for reason, which is derived in its current form from the Enlightenment, people have the feeling of disappointment and being un-free in their lived situation, the situation of a country and the situation of a culture, as formed by reason. This is not because they are hypercritical, without understanding that freedom means to set laws for oneself, rather, it is that this rational opinion of freedom that cannot match the nature of human beings. Therefore, romanticism, intuitionalism, mysticism, historicism and the theory of will and so on, formed a storm that shook the very structure of rationalism; they pursue freedom in different ways. Nonetheless, it that like rational opinion is the main structure in this age, all kinds of anti-rationalisms form complementary ideas to rationalism. The destiny of

the age could be revealed through the choice of personal life style. If one has the experience of freedom for a while under the discipline of Western rationalism, he or she will not return to the simple, natural and un-Western life style, no matter how strong their feelings of emotional dependence towards that culture and life style. [350]

This (freedom of rational opinion) is not perfect, but safe and transparent. Nevertheless, that (natural freedom) is unstable. We can be enchanted by its goodness, and also shocked with its brutality and arbitrariness. The best strategy of life, therefore, is actually to live according to rational freedom, but appear as living in natural freedom. That is the mainstream situation in the modern world.

Since the twentieth century, people began to break the dominant position of the rational concept. Phenomenology and analytical philosophy attempt to find an inevitable beginning of non-objective presence, which is a thinking projection of lived situation. These discussions replaced the traditional concept of reason in the path of thinking rather than merely presenting another complementary idea. They exposed an un-clarified and confused rational situation. Because of insufficient self-clarification they have not, however, been digested by Western culture and are never mentioned in terms of rebuilding economics, ethics, the state and other kinds of lived situations. In twentieth century philosophy, Heidegger has a special position as a critic of Western philosophy and introspection. He pursues freedom per se (being) rather than freedom which is framed by some concepts (beings). He maintains the spirit of freedom and also has the awareness of the pure constitution of freedom per se. Therefore, he can precisely maintain a non-objective presence that seems like it could never be meaningfully thought. It is not a negative thing to say that our freedom is limited (*endlich*). It seems like our freedom has always been restrained by external necessity and environment. The real meaning of this is that human freedom has to maintain itself as self-freedom in order to exist in this world, and to take this world as the realized ultimate (*Ende*). If one takes freedom to be Omnipotence (god, the superman) or random (the lucky man), it will lose all its intense original meaning. If one understands it as the setting and following of one's laws, it is a great step towards freedom, but one has not understood the rough, non-

objective presence and situational freedom. [351] According to Heidegger, former metaphysics and theologies do not really confront the possibility of the free being of human beings.

Therefore, 'being per se' is not a question of conceptual meaning, rather, it is a question brought forth from {*Da-sein*}'s *Da* and *sein*. It is how *Da-sein*'s {*ereignend*} freedom (*Da*) can be constituted and how it maintains being in the world. If one separates the questions which are the closest to our life meaning (freedom, happiness), our mortality or ultimate world context, being will become an empty concept. This is a fundamental question of pure thinking, as opposed to using ethical problems or religious problems to replace the questions of epistemology and ontology. Heidegger clarifies this in *Kant and the Problems of Metaphysics* after realizing the public's misunderstanding of his *Being and Time*. All rational fundamental questions and questions of synthetic a priori Judgments are, after all, 'prior imagination' and time, which works as pure constitution, while the {*Da-sein*} of human beings and freedom (authentic situation of being) in the world highlights the pure constitutive meaning of time and prior imagination.

Heidegger helps reveal the traits of the ultimate questions of being and freedom rather than offering new questions. The questions of freedom and being cannot be solved by concepts or the appearances of 'what'. It is just like how we are unable to solve the questions of religious beliefs through 'the proof of an ontological god' in our thinking, the meaning of life through the use of ethical principles, or the issues of recognition through a subject/object epistemology. Heidegger clarifies that these questions, which lie beyond the methods of traditional metaphysics and theology, have a strong connection with pure thinking, and can be explained meaningfully through other ways of thinking. What is more important is that Heidegger clarifies these ultimate questions as inseparable from how human beings totally contextualize the constituted self in lived experience. The real ultimate question [352] is the meaning of human beings in the world, or the lived meaning of constitutive being per se. It has authentic and inauthentic situations which can communicate with each other.

Until Heidegger, Western philosophy had the basic attitude of ‘an ultimate context that cannot be separated from our living world’ which can resonate with the ancient Chinese thought. That the ultimate exists in our living world is the natural outcome of the non-objective presence of *tiandao*, rather than because of insufficient thinking or insufficient imagination of the transcendent in China, as some Western scholars have argued. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain the extensional realm of ‘mysterious and mysterious’.

At least from the West Zhou period, *Tian* has been the ultimate concept for Chinese people. However, for those who dominate Chinese thinking, this *Tian* is not something that is beyond life (as is God in the Christian tradition) as a meaning of substance, or the representation of human’s desire, will and thinking of concepts, but rather, as in the case of the Greek gods, it means the context of the living world and the meaning of the living world. A characteristic of ancient Chinese culture is the ability of introspection. Theology is not the most appropriate way to embody the meaning of life, the most authentic meaning of *Tian* only manifests itself in fulfilled being in the world (omission). A lived situation is the mingling of *Tian* and the human, as well as the mutual influence of the dreaming world and the awakened world, rather than a ‘real world’ of desires and the confliction of subject and object. The authentic *tiandao* for ancient Chinese thinkers is the in-between situation of the original life. The extremes of too ‘high’ or ‘low’ and too ‘early’ or ‘late’ are unable to fulfil it. Western philosophies of concepts and religions of personalized divinity cannot attain the ultimate opinion. It does not matter which kind of ‘ism’ or theology it appears as. It is only Heidegger’s interpretation of human nature, freedom and religions, which can fulfil Er-eignis’s context and contribute to the Chinese idea of *tiandao*. [353]

3 ‘Ultimate’ as Constitutive Context

The ultimate is something that exists vividly in our lives rather than as an objective presence. Therefore, the real ultimate is the happening context of the mutual constitution of humans and the world. In what sense is the world an ultimate world?

Is it the family, schools, social networks, provinces, countries or the international world with which we engage every day? Why are there so many people who have not awakened to this ultimate? The answer is that we only have this one world in which we live, there is no other place for us to find the root of meaning and understanding. Nevertheless, to 'live in this world' and 'to understand living in this world' is not the same thing, because one does not necessarily understand what makes the world as world even if one lives in all-under-heaven. For Heidegger, Being per se makes the world as a world, and for Pre-Qin thinkers, it is 'the will of heaven' which means the will of *tian*. People (*das man*) tend to take beings as reality rather than as the context per se in the world. They do not understand that the context precedes things and gives possibility to these things. Different groups, organizations, societies and countries are manifestations of the world, but it is a world without real freedom, since it is mingled with social structures and ideology.

After distinguishing between to 'live in the world' and 'to understand living in the world', is there any meaning in saying that the ultimate is the world? Will what Heidegger called existential difference trigger unlimited regression in the concept of the 'world itself'? From the former analysis, we know that, even with this distinction, it is still meaningful to take the ultimate as the world, since it changes our ways of understanding and the status of ultimate reality. The ultimate is the [354] revealing place of *Ereignis* context rather than some specific thing. Therefore, we would not need to be trapped in an infinite regression of always seeking another higher being. The world context and beings in the world distinguish each other in accordance with the mainstream and non-mainstream, rather than in terms of the lower and the higher. This way of distinguishing is very different from the distinction between phenomenon and essence, specificity and generality, material and spirit, human and divinity. The more important ultimate context counters the ultimate of an abstract 'what' (essence, substance, God, universal), and is very near to us compared with things in the world, this nearness leads to an undistinguished self and others. Our action, thinking and speaking are *Ereignis* context if we analyse them deeply enough. Therefore, the exhaustion of beings converges with the self rather than leading to an unlimited self-awakening and self-revealing. Confucius

said that ‘correlating one’s conduct with those near at hand can be said to be the method of becoming an authoritative person’ (*Analects* 6.30). This is the way to approach the sincere context. Therefore, the ultimate of lived context is a sincere approach to the self {*eigentlich*}, ending in thorough understanding.

This ‘self’ is not a subjective self. It means the ultimate intersection and *Ereignis* context of self. We should perceive Hui Neng’s talking of ‘*Tathatā Svabhava*’ and ‘original heart’ in the context of *Ereiginis* happening and constitution, rather than some self-controlled heart, or *Svabhava* (*zixing*) which is supposed to counter *Pratītyasamutpāda Śūnyatā* (*Yuanqixingkong*). According to *the Dharmic Treasure Altar-Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*:

> Thence he proceeded to expound The Diamond Sutra for me. When he came to the Text of ‘One should not reside in anything while generating the Heart’, all of a sudden, I became profoundly enlightened on the Tenet that ‘all the Dharmas are actually not dissociated from the Original Nature’. Forthwith I addressed deferentially to the Patriarch, How unexpectantly wondrous it is that the Original Nature has always been pure in itself! How unexpectantly wondrous it is that the Original Nature has always been unbegotten and unperishing in itself! How unexpectantly wondrous it is that the Original Nature has been self-sufficient! How unexpectantly wondrous it is that the Original Nature has always been impregnable in itself! How unexpectantly wondrous it is that the Original Nature can generate all the Dharmas! (*The Dharmic Treasure Altar-Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, Fahai version* 1)

When Hui Neng heard

> One should not reside in anything while generating the Heart’, he woke up, it is the Buddhist nature, it can also address that Heart and Svabhava (zixing 自性) are the ultimate of Pratītyasamutpāda Śūnyatā and generate all the Dharmas, there is no presence that can reside in. ‘Not reside’ is addressed again in ‘Non-deliberation signifies to be detached from any Notions while contemplating on the Dharma. (*The Dharmic Treasure Altar-Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, Fahai version* 4)

In this quote, there is a Chinese word '*shizhong*' which suggests that this Buddhist text may have been influenced by the notions of the time of *tian* (*tianshi*) and appropriate time (*shizhong*). The *Ereignis Svabhava* (*zixing*) of 'non-residing' and 'appropriate time' or *Shizhong* is the context of the world itself. [355]

This is expressed in the following passage: 'Wisdom of Bodhian Prajna has been in the possession of all people from the origin' (*The Dharmic Treasure Altar-Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, Fahai version* 2). 'Good Mentors, when in your Mind you take Refuge under your own Original Nature, it means taking Refuge under the Truthful Buddha' (*The Dharmic Treasure Altar-Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, Fahai version 6*). In this context, Buddha, awakening and Nirvana are not beings like an incarnation of *Shakyamuni* or *Sukhavati*, a different world to the one in which we live. Rather, they are the *Ereignis* context of the lived world and *Svabhava* (*zixing*).

> The Original Nature is the Buddha; apart from the Original Nature, there would be no other Buddha. "What is meant by the word 'Maha'? Maha means Great. It signifies that the capacity of the Mind is as immensely vast as the Ethereal Space, which is without borders or frontiers…All the Buddhaic Universes are exactly like this Ethereal Space, and the worldly people's Wondrous Essence is also thus vacuous originally; therefore there is never an iota of Dharma to be obtained anywhere, and the Veracious Vacuity of the Innate Essence is also the same as this. (*The Dharmic Treasure Altar-Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, Fahai version* 2.2)

The interdependent arising/*Pratītyasamutpāda* of Buddhism and the ultimate perspective of Chinese *tiandao* penetrate these texts. *Maha* means 'big' in Sanskrit. Hui Neng's saying, 'Mind is as immensely vast as the Ethereal Space', also has the meaning of *Da* or great which has come from Lao-Zhuang. For example, as used in the big tree, Great Dao, big image, great language. In the previous discussions, this Great means to have been in the original happening context, which is beyond all limits. Hui Neng uses the *sunya* of the middle way/*mādhyamaka*, but he adds the meaning of 'void' which is the context in Daoism. He also clarifies that the void is not ready to hand, we cannot become affixed to it. Hui Neng perceives the subtle essence of the non-objective presence in both Indian and Chinese traditions without

rigidly adhering to the Buddhist texts, then he can see the possible communication between these two ideas. Hui Neng then develops the idea of Nāgārjuna's *pratītya-samutpāda*, and discards all presences which are respected by other Buddhists. For instance, the necessity of sitting, reciting sutras, respecting Buddha, and so on. He maintains 'if within and without you are deluded then you are apart from duality…if you awaken to this Dharma, in one instant of thought your mind will open and you will go forth in the world'.[189] From this, it is clear that the thoroughly non-present ultimate ideas have to 'go forth in the world', and it also includes the middle way, constitution 'apart from duality' and contextual reality. Even through Nāgārjuna's *majjhimā paṭipadā* or middle way and the Chinese middle way have very different backgrounds and connotations, their ultimate perspectives resonate with each other. Chan Buddhism appeared as an amalgamation of these two ideas when at their peak, and shows the ultimate constitutive context [356] in a vivid way. 'I remarked: 'Deliberate not on the Good, nor on the Evil—and right at that very instant, that which is manifested is just Elder Ming's Original Visage' (*Altar Sutra Fa Hai version* 1.13). There is no dualistic separation, or separation of life experience or *pratītya-samutpāda* experience, neither the forceful or unnatural prescription; there is a transformation from presence to the possible constitutional situation which makes presence possible, and the transformation from random different categories to *Ereignis* happening situation of awakening thorough communication. This context can make us 'enlightened directly, and…able to perceive the Original Nature of Veracious Thusness instantaneously' (*Altar Sutra Fa Hai version* 2.7). This is because pure constitutional context situation is no more than ourselves and the thousand things. Even in our dreams or some situations which we were deceived by, there is still a constitutional context situation which makes these possible. The *Ereignis* context and the *pratītya-samutpāda* in the context are always mingled together which the traditional dual relationship cannot compete with. Therefore,

189 Hui-neng, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*. Translated by Philip Yampolsky (New York City: Columbia University Press, 1978), 166. 内外不迷 即离两边 若悟此法 一念心开，出现于世 坛经惠昕本 41

Nāgārjuna gets rid of all presences, Lao-Zhuang always holds the opinion of subduction, and reveals thorough awakening and the realm of *wuwei* and *wu buwei*.

Heidegger and Chinese *Tian Dao* (Including Chan) share the same opinions in this key point, that is, no matter whether the ultimate reality is called Being per se, *Tian* or *Dao*, it can be understood as pure constitutive context. It is called '*jing*' and '*yu*'域 (these two words together mean context, both of them mean place), because the ultimate present is vivid, but not any specific presence, it can help us perceive all possibilities that we encounter. Therefore, on the one hand, this understanding of the ultimate is very different from the ultimate of entity, it does not need to set any higher, one ultimate beyond the meaning of constitutive context; on the other hand, the ultimate of constitutive context is different from pragmatism and any post-isms, because it penetrates the deepest ultimate understanding of life rather than using relativisms against the absolute or using 'ramblings' to escape entities, even though it is not an entity per se. These relativisms are the different pieces from disruptive entities, with these quasi traits of presence, these cannot thoroughly transform into the realm of pure constitutive perception. Once involved in this disruptive free thought, people will for a short time experience thinking afresh but then sink into meaninglessness. [357]

The relationship between this relativistic way of thinking and the fixed, metaphysical way of thinking is analogous with the 'centre' and the 'edge'. They need each other, but they do not form a mutual constitutive happening context. Since the twentieth century, especially in the time of 'post-industrialism', 'post-cold war' and 'post-philosophy', anti-metaphysics is a fashion, the real problem has been to dispel metaphysics, which includes an ultimate metaphysics to increase our understanding of lived existence.

Therefore, this ultimate constitutive context cannot have any objective presence, for instance, fixed notions of 'place', 'environment', 'historicity' and 'textual explanation' and so on. These are embodiments or manifestations of context. This ultimate context only means Clearing (Lichtung) of all ultimate of presences, it is the original realm of understanding.

Hence, '[a]ccording to Advaita, a liberated human being (jivanmukta) has realised Brahman as his or her own true self' in the Indian Upanishads reveals the original realm without the distinguishing of subject and object, but this does clearly realise the original position of lived（maya, illusion）existence, and it still seeks transcendent lived existence and to achieve the high ultimate realm in the practice of yoga. Heidegger and Chinese Tiandao cannot agree with this. That explains why Hui Neng adjusts the tranditional understanding of the meaning of 'Chan', when he wants to turn Chan to the real 'Chinese style'. He no longer maintains that Dhyāna of sitting can achieve awakening in the ultimate realm. For him, the opportunity of Chan which happens anywhere can help people reach the 'real Chan'. If there is still distinguishing, then there is no ultimate realm. Then, 'if you have passed the Mumonkan (gateless gate), you can make a fool of Mumon. If not, you are betraying yourself'.[190] So, then, make your whole body a mass of doubt, and with your three hundred and sixty bones and joints and your eighty-four thousand hair follicles concentrate on this one word 'Mu'. Day and night, keep digging into it. Don't consider it to be nothingness. Don't think in terms of 'has' and 'has not'; it is like swallowing a red-hot iron ball. You try to vomit it out, but you cannot. Gradually you purify yourself, eliminating mistaken knowledge and attitudes you have held from the past. Inside and outside become one. [358]

You're like a mute person who has had a dream-you know it for yourself alone. Suddenly Mu breaks open. The heavens are astonished, the earth is shaken. It is as though you have snatched the great sword of General Kuan. When you meet the Buddha, you kill the Buddha. When you meet Bodhidharma, you kill Bodhidharma. At the very cliff edge of birth-and-death, you find the Great Freedom. In the Six Worlds and the Four Modes of Birth, you enjoy a samadhi of frolicking and play'.[191] Those who can achieve the ultimate context and gain the 'Great Freedom' must dissolve non-interdependent happening and the stubborn. 'Concentrate on 'Mu''

190 Katsuki Sekida, trans. *Two Zen Classics: Mumonkan and Hekiganroku* (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 137. 透得无门关，透不得无门关，亦乃辜负自己' 无门关·乾峰.

191 Robert Aitken, *The Gateless Barrier: The Wu-Men Kuan (Mumonkan)* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990), 7-9.

without ‘considering it to be nothingness’ or ‘think in terms of ‘has’ and ‘has not’’, but one will be like someone swallowing a red-hot iron ball who cannot vomit, in this between right and left, has and has not, all the presences are dissolved in a self-happening context. So ‘inside and outside become one’, ‘at the very cliff edge of birth-and-death (the ultimate point), you find the Great Freedom’. In this awakening realm, one is in Samahdi. But it isn’t a 定 of sitting, rather, it is a 缘定 maintaining of constitutive context of ‘samadhi of frolic and play’.

It is amazing to read these words! But it is difficult to reach the ultimate context, ‘one goes deep-deep to the bottom of the sea-and winnows the mud and pumps up the sand. The other goes high-high to the top of the mountain-and raises foaming waves that spead over the entire sky’.[192] At the same time, it seems near and simple to get, that is ‘ordinary mind is the *dao*’[193]. The following case (the discussion between the master and the students) has the connotive meaning of the discussion of easy and difficult.

> Chao-chou asked Nan-chuan, ’what is the Tao?’ Nan-chuan said, ‘ordinary mind is the Tao.’ Chao-chou asked, ‘should I try to direct myself toward it?’ Nan-chuan said ‘if you try to direct yourself you betray your own practice.’ Chao-chou asked, ‘how can I know Tao if I don’t direct myself?’ Nan-chuan said, ‘The Tao is not subject to knowing or not knowing. Knowing is delusion; not knowing is blankness. If you truly reach the genuine Tao, you will find it as vast and boundless as outer space. How can this be discussed at the level of affirmation and negation?’ with these words, chao-chou had sudden realization.[194]

This ‘ordinary mind is the Tao’ mingled classical Chinese style and the perspective of ‘Nirvana is lived world’ in Madhyamaka. If one does not understand the un-present situation of ultimate reality, one can only gain confusion rather than great awakening. This ordinary heart-mind is the original understanding of life. If we want to distinguish it as Paramārtha-satya or samvritha -sattva, and take Paramārtha-satya

192 *The Gateless Barrier*, 283. 无门关 乾峰一路.

193 *The Gateless Barrier*, 20. 无门关 平常是道.

194 *The Gateless Barrier*, 126.

as the direction, it will betray our fundamental nature of Dao, it only make things got worse. [359]

Hence, the ordinary heart-mind is easy to get, because it is part of our life existence, which seems like Heidegger's 'lived experience'; the ordinary heart-mind is difficult to get, because in the frame of systems, people distinguish things and choose complexity rather than simplicity. This ordinary heart-mind is analogous to the sincerity of The Mean, *wei wuwei* in Lao-Zhuang. Nevertheless, in Indian and Chinese cultures, Chan seems more sensitive towards the non-presence of original understanding. The desires and pursuits of humans are not the ordinary heart-mind of original situation, regardless of the desires towards spirits or materials. The life situation of ascetics suggests that there must be some things to be pursued, 'how can I know Tao if I don't direct myself', so Nan-chuan breaks the obsessiveness of 'Dao', 'Buddha', 'reading sutras', 'sitting' or any persistence of elite situation. 'The Tao is not subject to knowing or not knowing'. Ordinary heart-mind is the pure constitution of the in-between, 'ordinary' includes the pure real situation of 'cliffs rise thousand feet sheer', 'no more no less, no one feather can add, no one fly can stand in'[6]. In the situation of neither this nor that, we can only use the language of context or the thinking of context of that which is 'as vast and boundless as outer space' to perceive it. Because when we reach the ultimate, we have to transform it, in this book, we discuss 'constitution' and 'context', that is 'constitutive context'. For this, ordinary heart-mind is the pure heart-mind of context. It is difficult to have the ordinary heart-mind, it is not because of the limitation of the ability of human beings, rather, it is because the ability is divided into sensation, intellectuality, desire, will, and keeps us blind to the nearest and the spontaneous situation. We all live in pure constitutive in-between context, we dissolve all these paradoxes in 'neither have nor does not have'. 'Ordinary heart-mind' is not only the undoubtable 'common sense' which is immune to scepticism, but also the original understanding which crosses from many dilemmas, and then begins to understand that there is no depth, no happening, there is only the fighting which is far away from the original spring in the framework of presence. Hence we have the thorough awakening of

'stop in goodness', we can make this decision of changing: this is the ultimate, this is the original meaning of existence. [360]

4 The Information of Context Itself

We cannot limit ourselves to analysing norms and concepts in order to understand and experience the speciality of Chinese *tiandao* and Heidegger's Being, because this analysis cannot reveal the way of thinking that is beyond norms and concepts, and it subsequently cannot be distinguished from the anti-substantialism of Western philosophy. The ultimate context which constitutes our existence, call it 'existence itself', '*tian*', '*dao*' or 'the nature of Buddha', has to reveal itself originally before subjective consciousness, to be 'heard', 'seen' and 'understood', and it constitutes itself in this 'seeing', 'hearing' and 'understanding'.

> As for this proper way, we cannot relinquish it even for an instant. Were it even possible to relinquish it, it would not be the proper way… creativity is self-consummating, and its way is self-directing. Creativity is a process taken from its beginning to its end, and without this creativity, there are no events. It is thus that, for exemplary persons, it is creativity that is prized. But creativity is not simply the self-consummating of one's own person; it is what consummates events…Thus, whenever one applies this excellence, it is fitting.[195]

The embodiment of ultimate context is not abstract in both everyday life and poems. This embodiment does not give us any information about specific presence, but it includes the process of changing context according to the time. One follows this context, even if '[one does] not speculate, [one does] not claim or demand certainty, [one is] not inflexible, and [one is] not self-absorbed' (*Analects* 9.4), nonetheless one will complete one's natural tendency and set up one's fate. 'As a person, Confucius is driven by such eagerness to teach and learn that he forgets to eat, he enjoys himself so much that he forgets to worry, and does not even realize that old

195 Ames and Hall, 106.

age is on its way' (*Analects* 7.19). Hence, the context itself has the original form which is not different from emptiness. It has color and sound, and can be heard and seen; but it is not only the one to be seen and heard, it is the one that lets people see and hear. 'Lighting' has the meaning of opening the door of truth. [361]

That is because the thoroughness of the ultimate question makes it so. The specific perspective of Heidegger and Chinese thinkers realises that this 'lighting' does not come from some higher substance, rather, it is generated from the existence of constitutive human being. This 'great lighting', 'sounds of sea waves', is not distinguished from either human beings or things, it is the reason people are people, and why the world is the world. It cannot be heard, seen and spoken, because it is not any specific or fixed object. In this sense, both Heidegger and Lao-Zhuang are aware that 'lighting' cannot be separated with 'dark', it is 'the light full of dark'. The belief in anthropomorphic gods and the intellect of ideas requires different spiritual abilities: Western philosophy, in spite of recognizing the possibility of mutual transformation in dark and light, nonetheless maintain that light (truth, goodness, beautiful, existence, useful) and dark (fake, evil, ugly, nonexistence, useless) are fundamentally different. Heidegger and Chinese sages are aware that ultimate place cannot tolerate this dualism, rather, it should be a fulfilled *Ereignis*. 'Things in existence carries within them both yin and yang, and attain harmony by blending together with qi'. (*Daodejing*.24) The real fulfilled life cannot reach its ultimate in 'happiness' (even the happiness of thinking) or the traditional ideas of ethics, because it is fundamentally not a question of finding some fixed 'what', rather, it is a question of constitutive context of happening. We cannot assume one is happy once one gains a fixed thing, or that one can flee from pain because one gets rid of a fixed thing. In this sense, Nirvana and Tian do not have a fundamental difference with the lived world. Interdependent happening is an unavoidable ultimate for all divinities. The fulfilled place of 'sounds of world', the touched place is 'sea wave sounds', the nearest or the most subtle place of Dao of human is *tiandao*. The light of stars and candles in the dark is the real light in the context of time. Is it possible for us to have persistent happiness and reach the *dao*? We will discuss this in the next chapter, section three. Here, if happiness and Great Freedom are real, then they must be

constituted by pure and happening context. [362] Vivid ethics and beliefs have to have this existential foundation.

But our sense organs cannot receive the information of this ultimate context, we think we are in a time-space without constitutive context. This information is neither good nor bad, neither 'have' nor 'have not', but it can enlighten or serve as a heuristic for people. Poems and music (music of earth or *dilai*, music of heaven *tianlai*) are created for us to sense the information of context, to let us 'open' {Offen}, to reach the level of going vigorously without swerving. That is why Heidegger takes Hölderlin (the poet of poets) as the pure thinker. The vivid understanding we get from poems and music are neither rational nor irrational, it is a more real original understanding compared with rationality or irrationality. All the purposes of thinking and practice are completely submerged in the constitutive context and the understanding of the context. Heidegger reveals the traits of ultimate context and information in 'fear', 'care', 'the sound of good tendency' of *Being and Time*. In his later works, he turns to the context of language, the context of poems and the context of the self-interdependent. He always thinks that Dasein is creative by the context of happening of being, hence Dasein can perceive the non-present information of context naturally. This is neither category apriorism, nor experimental perception, rather, it is a theory of constitutive context. It is meaningless to distinguish that which is apriori and experience in this sense. Chinese sages perceive '*tian*' and '*dao*' as sincere like a divinity that has position and natural tendency, they assume there is a context of a *dao* of chaos, and the good tendency and tendency of *dao* which belongs to the context of Dao naturally before the distinction. Some schools without this understanding, such as the Mohist, cannot exist in the Chinese cultural atmosphere permanently. Tian has the meaning of Tian, the sincere can know the subtle and has the information to know oneself and the mandate of heaven. Mozi takes Confucius's mandate of heaven as a fate, modern people take *tianming* as following the will of *tian*, [363] which all betray the original meaning of Confucius. This is one of the biggest obstacles for us to understand Heidegger and Chinese tiandao. Both slip from the original happening place freely, and change the topic.

Just like ‘information of *yin* and *yang*’, the information of ultimate context can have waxing and waning, embodied as the lived situation of human being. The Ultimate is not a substance which waits to be understood. It always communicates with our lived understanding, and has its growths and declines. The later Heidegger mentions ‘the human protects being’, ‘language is the house of being’ which takes great situation of context itself as presupposition. The master said, ‘As for Ning Wuzi, when the way prevailed in the land, he was wise; when it was without the way, he was stupid’ (*Analects* 5.21). Confucius said, ‘When the way prevails in the world, ritual propriety, music, and punitive campaigns are initiated by the emperor. If the way does not prevail in the world, then they are initiated by the various nobles’ (*Analects* 16.2). Laozi said that if all-under-heaven has *dao*, horses live in the field (*Daodejing* 46).

Hence, Being itself and Dao itself can grow and decline, they are not the origin and fundamental rules of cosmology and ontology. The growth and decline of Being and Dao are the changing of time and lived situation, they are not only related with our understanding and use of rules. Humans as subjects cannot deny or change the growth and decline of ultimate context, because lived situation forms the reason of humans as human. But, different to the Western thinking pattern of either this or that, this a priori context does not mean it can control the fate of human beings monomial, because it is a constitutive context of existence of human beings. Human beings can participate in this constitutive context in the way of ‘forgetting self’. It is the fulfilled ultimate swinging of the ‘middle’ in ‘between’. In 1966, Heidegger states that ‘there is only one god that can save us’, ‘thoughts are involved in the dialogue with our age, rather than doing nothing’ ‘thoughts and poems are prepared for the coming of god’,[196] this means human beings participate in the constitution of context in the way of stimulating Ereignis rather than through changing and conquering. It cannot be pragmatism, because there are no purposes and outcomes ready at hand. Confucius ‘realized the propensities of tian’ (*Analects* 2.4) at the

[196] 思想並非無作為，出自其本性，它就卷入了與這個世界的時代對話, 海德格爾 60 通過思想和詩化 為神的來臨做好準備 或者在我們的沉淪中為神的缺席做好準備海 57

same time, he believes that 'it is the person who is able to broaden the way' (*Analects* 15.29). [364]

Laozi said 'act in the context of non-acting' and that ancient people who are good act according to *dao*, this is the specific way of thinking of heaven or tian and human. It is neither 'adopting the mandate of heaven and making use of it' (*Xunzi* 17.15), nor 'dominant by *tianming* ', rather, it is to stay in the middle and melt within it.

For Heidegger and Confucius, Poems open the gate of communication for the human and the ultimate context. In this sense, Heidegger and Confucius are 'near'. Writing poems and reading poems are the most outstanding traits of constitute context. It opens a new realm which fulfils rhythm and makes situation understandable, it is more abundant and understandable than our subjective ideas, it seems to communicate with divinity, and makes '*li*' have the ability to reveal presence. But this poetic context of rhythm has growth and decline which follows the lived situation of human beings. Fundamentally, it belongs to the lived situation of the human itself. There are no rituals, no bureaucracy or ecclesiastical institutions that can maintain this. The consistent exposing of this context means the flourishing of a person, a group, a school or a culture; the decline of this context means their withering away. The king in the Zhou dynasty observed all-under-heaven through enjoying wind and reading poems. This communicated with the will of tian, and resonated with the will of people, as a wise innovation in the history of human beings totally different to astrology and divination, combined with the mystical beliefs (*chenwei* 讖緯) of Han Ru. Further, it is very different with modern forecast techniques which rely on science and demonstration. Confucian culture cannot be separated from music and poems. Confucius's affection for music and poems and his insightful appreciation of music and poems have shaped the two thousand year-old culture. For Heidegger, 'What poetry, as clearing projection, unfolds of unconcealment and projects into the rift within the figure is the open'.[197] The poets who work towards opening the ultimate existence are pure and genuine, and they

197 Martin Heidegger, *Heidegger: Off the Beaten Track* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 45.

have *tianming* which goes beyond their own fate or *ming*, just like Holderlin. The ages and the context of time form an uncontrollable tide in Holderlin's language; language for him, becomes 'the most dangerous wealth'. In this language, 'The all-governing expanse of these open relations is the world of this historical people'.[198] [365]

198 Heidegger, 21.

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