

Late Works of Mou Zongsan

Modern Chinese Philosophy

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Late Works of Mou Zongsan

Selected Essays on Chinese Philosophy

Translated and edited by

Jason Clower



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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

*For John Breuker,
Herbert Garelick,
and Rupert Spira*



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Note on Pronunciation of Chinese Words and Names

Chinese sounds are not difficult for an English-speaking mouth to learn to pronounce, but spelling them is necessarily somewhat deceptive. We cannot expect general readers to enjoy reading and talking about Chinese philosophy, with its many Chinese proper names and technical words, if they do not feel comfortable and confident saying those words aloud by demystifying the (really quite approachable) subject of pronunciation. To that end, I offer six simple pointers.

- q* like the 'ch' in 'cheat' (Smile broadly and tightly and then say the English 'chese'. You will produce the Chinese sound *qi* perfectly.)
- x* like the 'sh' in 'she' (Smile broadly and tightly and then say the the English 'she'. You will produce the Chinese sound *xi* perfectly.)
- zh* like the 'j' in 'jam' (Thus the name of Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi sounds roughly like the English words "Jew she.")
- z* like the end of the English word 'adds'
- c* like the end of the English word 'hits'
- ou* like the 'o' in 'go' (Thus the name of the ancient Zhou dynasty sounds roughly like the English name "Joe," and Mou Zongsan's surname sounds much like the English "Moe.")

Abbreviations

- Analects* Jin Liangnian 金良年, ed., *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 (*The Analects*, translated and annotated). Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2004. For ease of reference across multiple editions, citations are numbered by chapter and section rather than page number.
- Chuanxi lu* Chen Rongjie 陳榮捷 (Wing-tsit Chan). *Wang Yangming Chuanxi lu xiangzhujiping* 王陽明傳習錄詳注集評 (Collection of Commentaries on Wang Yangming's *Instructions for Practical Living*). Taipei: Xuesheng, 1983.
- FB* Mou Zongsan 牟宗三. *Foxing yu bore* 佛性與般若 (Buddha Nature and Prajñā). Taipei: Xuesheng, 1977.
- Mencius* Jin Liangnian 金良年, ed. *Mengzi yizhu* 孟子譯注 (Mencius, Translated and Annotated). Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2004. For ease of reference across multiple editions, citations are numbered according to the standard sectioning of book, part, and number.
- MRXA* Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲. *Mingru xue'an* 明儒學案 (Records of Ming scholars). In *Huang Zongxi quanji* 黃宗羲全集 (Complete works of Huang Zongxi), edited by Shen Shanhong 沈善洪, vols. 7 and 8. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji, 1985.
- MXQ* Mou Zongsan 牟宗三. *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji* 牟宗三先生全集 (The Complete Works of Mou Zongsan), vol. 27. Taipei: Lianjing, 2003.
- SJJ* Mou Zongsan 牟宗三. *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang* 中國哲學十九講 (Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy). Taipei: Xuesheng, 1983.
- SYXA* Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 and Quan Zuwang 全祖望. *Song-Yuan xue'an* 宋元學案 (Major Schools of Song and Yuan Confucians). Edited by Cheng Jinsheng 陳金生 and Liang Lianhua 梁蓮華. 4 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982.
- T* Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku 高楠順次郎, 渡邊海旭, ed. *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (New Taishō Compilation of the Tripitaka). Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–32. The first number given is generally the text number, followed by volume number and page number, followed by a letter denoting one of the three “registers” on the page, and also the line number if possible. Thus “T2061.50.797c29” refers to text 2061 (the *Guang hongming ji*), with the passage cited to be found in vol. 50 on p. 797, twenty-ninth line of the third or “c” register.

- YSL* Mou Zongsan 牟宗三. *Yuanshan lun* 圓善論 (Treatise on the Summum Bonum). Taipei: Xuesheng, 1985.
- Z* *Shinsan Dai Nihon Zoku Zōkyō* 新纂大日本統藏經 (Revised Edition of the Kyoto Supplement to the Manji Edition of the Buddhist Canon). Kawamura, Kōshō, ed. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975–89.
- Zhongyong* *Zhongyong* 中庸, in *Daxue Zhongyong* 大學中庸 (The Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean), edited by Wang Guoxuan 王國軒. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2006.

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Introduction

If twentieth-century China produced a philosopher of the first rank, it was Mou Zongsan. A native of rural Shandong, the young Mou began studying philosophy at Peking University beginning in 1929,¹ where he followed an eclectic and somewhat solitary path. Bertrand Russell was then a figure of very special interest in Chinese philosophical circles, having made an extended visit to China, and like many other students Mou made a close study of *Principia Mathematica*, as well as Whitehead's *Process and Reality*. But Mou also extended his interest in Whitehead's process thought and read deeply in traditional metaphysical writings on the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經). Mou had admired classical Chinese learning from boyhood, a taste he acquired from his autodidactic father, and his continued fascination was unfashionable in the vigorously modernist, progressive (and increasingly Marxist) intellectual climate at Peking University. However, in Mou's junior year he was introduced to Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885–1968), an apologist for traditional Chinese philosophy whose star was just beginning to rise and who mentored the young Mou for many years afterward.

Mou graduated from college in 1933—like many scholars of his generation, a bachelor's degree was the highest one he ever had the opportunity to earn—and his life for many years was one of what the Chinese language vividly calls “inner affliction and outer tumult” (*neihuan wailuan* 內患外亂). China's fractious Republic had already known years of regional militarism and strongman rule, and Mou happened to graduate just as things became worse. Japanese forces had been nibbling away at northeastern China and were now fortified within miles of the capital. A few years later Japan began total war, and this gave renewed life to the Chinese Red Army insurgency as well. Mou Zongsan thus found himself an itinerant teacher in a land fighting a three-way war of attrition that continued in various forms until the Communists took the whole mainland in 1949. Such was the “outer tumult,” but Mou's problems went deeper. He was a prickly man, as a few of the essays in this book show, and aside from a failed first marriage, he also repeatedly had sour workplace relationships with colleagues and superiors that made it even harder for him to

1 For the two years preceding, Mou also took college prep classes offered at Peking University before gaining admission to the bachelor's program in philosophy.

hold onto jobs.² However, none of this could prevent him from publishing plentifully on logic and epistemology and on the *Book of Changes*.

Even though Mou did not care for the KMT, he hated nothing so much as Communism (which is also impossible to miss in these essays), and in 1949 he chose to start over yet again in Taiwan. At this point Mou's writing came to focus on the history and future of Chinese political thought and culture, and though he later moved on to other themes after he left Taiwan, he never abandoned this concern and indeed we see him return to it in some of the essays here. In 1960 Mou made trouble for himself once more with his employer and the Taiwan authorities and was obliged to retreat once more, this time to an undesirable job in Hong Kong.³ Mou felt isolated in the Cantonese-speaking colony, but he sublimated his unhappiness in a new philosophical turn that yielded an incredible nine monographic volumes over the next twenty years, as well as an autobiography, two lecture series later published as books, and a multitude of essays. By the time Mou retired officially from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1974, his work was starting to make him a celebrity in Taiwan, and in his last two decades he enjoyed what was virtually a second career in which he lectured to packed halls and continued publishing at his superhuman pace, producing another monograph, more collections of lectures, and translations of all three of Kant's *Critiques*.

The very fact that the present volume of translations is being published and read is evidence that some of Mou's hopes and predictions are being fulfilled. China's stature in the world is growing, it is regaining its pride and faith in its native literature and philosophy, and the rest of the world is growing more interested too. Even before World War I, when colonial peoples lost much admiration and awe for Europe, culturally conservative intellectuals in China predicted that one day the master would become the student and it would be the West which came to China for instruction. In 1927, the year that the young Mou arrived in the capital, the intellectual atmosphere was still tinged by the great "science vs. metaphysics" debate which pitted modernist scientific popularizers against more traditionalist opponents, including men who would become Mou's mentors, who believed in a higher, more valuable kind of knowl-

2 It also has to be said that in the 1930s, all Eurasia was a treacherous environment for intellectuals. It is striking how much of the world's literature of period is about loyalty, envy, squabbling, and betrayal among frightened teachers and writers, from Olivia Manning's *Fortunes of War* cycle to Qian Zhongshu's *Weicheng* 圍城 (*Fortress Besieged*) to Verda Majo's Esperanto memoir *En Ĉinio Batalanta* (In Fighting China).

3 Li Shan 李山, *Mou Zongsan zhuan* 牟宗三傳 (Beijing: Zhongyang Minzu Daxue, 2002), 120–121.

edge of what we could call a “spiritual” type that was best learned from China’s own wisdom traditions and who maintained faith that one day the rest of the world would agree and regard China as, in its way, one of the world’s most *advanced* countries.⁴ In 1958 Mou Zongsan, now in middle age, helped to publish a “Declaration to the World on Behalf of Chinese Culture” that envisioned China and the West as the complementary contributors to a world culture of the future that could “jointly shoulder the burden of humanity’s hardships, sufferings, foibles, and faults” so as to “create a new road for humanity.”⁵ Mou and his fellow New Confucian “cultural preachers”⁶ addressed their “Declaration to the World” to a West which took no notice of it. But Mou’s faith in traditional Chinese culture’s prospects as a future teacher to the West held strong, and Mou did more than anyone to translate decades of vague *talk* about the majesty and unparalleled resources with which Chinese tradition might supplement the perceived shortcomings of Western modernity into *systematic details* about precisely what Chinese philosophy would contribute and how.⁷

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- 4 Hao Chang’s account of Liang Shuming’s and Zhang Junmai’s position in this debate makes visible just how much Mou Zongsan was indebted to this earlier generation for the basic conceptual premise of his metaphysics, viz. that in the totality of things there exist two distinct realms or spheres, a natural realm that lies within the ken of scientific reasoning and a second realm that can only be approached through “an intuitive and spiritual mind.” Chang Hao, “New Confucianism and the Intellectual Crisis of Contemporary China,” in *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 283–284.

The documents of the debate, to which most of China’s major intellectuals contributed, were anthologized in *Kexue yu renshengguan* 科學與人生觀 (Science and Metaphysics) (Shanghai: Yadong tushuguan, 1925).

- 5 Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, Zhang Junmai 張君勱, and Tang Junyi 唐君毅, “Wei Zhongguo wenhua jinggao shijie renshi xuanyan: women dui Zhongguo xueshu yanjiu ji Zhongguo wenhua yu shijie wenhua qiantu zhi gongtong renshi” 為中國文化敬告世界人士宣言—我們對中國學術研究及中國文化與世界文化前途之共同認識 (A Declaration to the World on Behalf of Chinese Culture: Our Joint Understanding of Chinese Scholarship and the Future of Chinese Culture and World Culture), in Feng Zusheng 封祖盛, ed., *Dangdai xin rujia* 當代新儒家 (New Confucianism) (Beijing: Sanlian, 1989), 52.
- 6 This apposite phrase belongs to Tomomi Asakura. See his “On Buddhistic Ontology: A Comparative Study of Mou Zongsan and Kyoto School Philosophy,” *Philosophy East and West* 61.4 (October 2011), 674 n4.
- 7 When Liang Shuming made his reputation in his 1921 book *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies*, his thesis that “Chinese culture was both on a higher spiritual level than Western culture and compatible with modernization” was already an old one, but in his biographer Guy Alitto’s opinion, Liang did not succeed at saying much more than that: “For the next three decades he would rework the same message through thousands of published

It is quite extraordinary that Mou persisted so stubbornly in this faith that people would one day acknowledge the pre-eminence of Chinese philosophy, for it received little encouragement from people outside his own small sub-culture of traditionalist eccentrics until his old age. It is easy to overlook this now, when more people than ever are studying the Chinese language and when, *mirabile dictu*, even the Communist Party of China is dedicated to propagating traditional Chinese culture at home and abroad. But as Mou's biographers note, Mou's years in Hong Kong, when he wrote most of his signature books, were a time of loneliness, depression, and frustration and a feeling of exile. Since Confucius' own lifetime, one of the classic experiences described in Confucian literature is the complicated emotional mixture of wounded pride, a sense of destiny obstructed, and a frustrated longing to be of service that afflicts a man of great ability who believes his talents have not received fitting employment. This was Mou Zongsan in Hong Kong, dedicated to his students—who in turn adored him—but consigned to a job of little prestige in a place where he did not speak the local language and which he regarded as a place without culture.⁸ It was only after his retirement that he began to enjoy the fame that he has today, and even then, the world at large was slow to upgrade its opinion of the importance of his cherished Confucian tradition. In the 1980s mainland China experienced its first wave of enthusiasm for “national studies” (*guoxue* 國學) since the Communist revolution, yet even then there remained widespread pessimism in both the intelligentsia and the Communist Party about Chinese tradition as a burden, a fetter, an impediment to the future, a feudal relic of an insular, inward-looking, and inbred culture. The classic expression of this in the popular culture of the 1980s was the television series *River Elegy* (*Heshang* 河殤), a historical documentary that contrasted traditional China's isolationism and stodginess unfavorably with the openness and exploratory daring of the West.⁹ Even today we see traces of this current of thought in some of the very mainland thinkers who nevertheless harbor hopes for a renewed, twenty-first century Confucianism.¹⁰

pages. . . . [But] underlying all his ratiocinations runs the unrelenting, unresolved contradiction: Chinese culture was truly human precisely for the same qualities that had prevented it from achieving what the Chinese people now needed” (*The Last Confucian*, 121–122).

- 8 See “The Chinese Idea of Settling Oneself and Establishing One's Destiny,” included in this volume.
- 9 Su Xiaokang 蘇曉康 and Wang Luxiang 王魯湘, *Heshang* 河殤 (River Elegy) (Beijing: China Central Television, 1988).
- 10 For one example see Wang Yuechuan 王岳川, “Taikong wenming shidai yu wenhua shouzheng chuanguxin 太空文明時代與文化守正創新,” *Dongyue luncong* 31.10 (Oct. 2010): 173–174.

It was only after the Tiananmen Square demonstrations of 1989 that the Party was sufficiently terrified by its close call with a “soft revolution” of the kind they had just watched on television in East Berlin and the intelligentsia felt both frightened and disappointed by the result of its flirtation with Western-style liberalism that a consensus emerged among political and cultural elites about Chinese traditionalism: anything that smacked of westernization or lack of patriotism was suspect, and the apparent opposite of both those things was a celebration of Chinese culture. *River Elegy* was out, the *Book of Odes* was in.

This was so long ago that for many of us it has been over half a lifetime, but we must remember that for Mou Zongsan, who was born a subject of the Qing empire, this vindication (if that is what we can call an endorsement of some of his views by the Communist Party that he spurned as “demonic”) came at the age of eighty, several years after he wrote his last book and not many more years before he died. For most of his life he truly was what Lin Chen-kuo called a “lonely New Confucian.”¹¹

Organization of This Volume

As the first principle for selecting essays for this volume, I have chosen works from Mou's late writings that were interesting to me and also significant for understanding Mou.¹² Though this collection as a whole will provide an accurate impression of Mou's philosophy, I have not tried to give representation to every province of his vast body of work. For example, there is little here of Mou's work on Daoism; other translators with more interest in and knowledge about those parts of his work will make themselves known soon enough, I hope. As with my previous work on Mou, my commentary here will reflect my particular interest in the Confucian-Buddhist relationship, which I think is still under-appreciated. However, the long shadow cast by Buddhism over this

11 Lin Chen-kuo (Lin Zhenguo) 林鎮國, “Jimo de xin rujia: dangdai Zhongguo de daode lixiangzhuyizhe 寂寞的新儒家: 當代中國的道德理想主義者 (The Lonely New Confucians: Contemporary China's Moral Idealists),” *Ehu xuekan* 34 (April 1978): 1–3. Lin's article was occasioned by the death of Tang Junyi, but he was speaking of the whole New Confucian movement.

12 All are collected in volume 27, the “Anthology of Late Writings of Mou Zongsan” (*Mou Zongsan xiansheng wanqi wenji* 牟宗三先生晚期文集) of Mou's Collected Works (*Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji* 牟宗三先生全集) (Taipei: Lianjing, 2007) (hereafter referred to as *MXQ*).

At time of this writing, all but two of the pieces translated here are readily available on the internet in their original Chinese.

collection is not just a function of my selections but also of its real importance in Mou's thought.

Next, I have selected essays where Mou is relatively clear and free of jargon. Among English speakers in particular, Mou is held back from potential readers not so much because he writes about unfamiliar Chinese philosophy but because he writes so much in the lexicon of Kant. Mou mixes Confucian, Daoist, Indian and Chinese Buddhist, British, and German philosophical idioms wantonly—who else could remark that “in the history of Western philosophy, only Kant came close to purifying the six sense-bases (*ṣaṣ-āyatana*)?”—but he pervades his *oeuvre* with the Kantian dialect more than any other. That has won him years of thoughtful attention from philosophers from the European Continent,¹³ but few anglophones have their ingrained and intimate familiarity with the *Critique of Pure Reason* (to use just one example), and for us Mou's reliance on the Kantian lexicon is more barrier than bridge. However, in Mou's final decade, whence most of these essays come, he developed a better knack for expressing his ideas to people who had not already made a study of them. Moreover, many of the present essays began as lectures addressed to the general public, and Mou seems to have been mindful of his audience and made more concessions to clarity than usual.

I have arranged the essays in three loosely topical groups, within which the essays are arranged chronologically according to the date when they were first published or, in the case of speeches, delivered in public. The first group consists of essays in which Mou dwells particularly on modern-day Chinese philosophy and its role in China's future. These also tend to be the essays in which Mou's nationalism and his normative beliefs about culture and politics come across most strongly. The next group contains essays centered on second-order formal or methodological concepts for talking about the characteristic *problematiques* and styles of reasoning in Chinese philosophy. The third group of essays is devoted to historical essays in which Mou interprets a particular stream of the Chinese philosophical past or narrates the story of the whole of Chinese philosophy in terms of the interactions of the Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist traditions with each other and other influences. These are the essays with the narrowest scope and the greatest difficulty for the newcomer, and whose contents have been best described in the existing Western literature about Mou's philosophy, and for these reasons I have placed them last.

Naturally, these are rough groupings only, and some essays could well have been placed elsewhere, for Mou seldom confines himself to only one of these

13 See the work of Sebastien Billioud, Fabian Heubel, François Jullien, Hans-Rudolf Kantor, Olf Lehmann, Jean-Claude Pastor, Antje Erhard Pioletti, Stefan Schmidt, and Joël Thoraval.

topics at a time. For example, I have included “Ten Great Doctrinal Disputes in the Development of Chinese Culture” in the second part, despite its historical mode of exposition, because I take Mou to have intended it not as a purposeless catalogue of influential moments but as a list of what he takes to be the most significant items on Chinese philosophy’s agenda, and also because it gives the best illustration of any of these essays of Mou’s use of the *panjiao* doxographic categories he borrowed from Chinese Buddhists. Conversely, Mou plainly means the essay on “The Rise of Buddhist Learning in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang” to be a historical narrative, but along the way he says so much about the destiny of the Chinese nation that the essay could almost have been included in the first group.

Without sacrificing scholarly details that will be important to other sinologists, I have made the book as transparent and “reader-friendly” as possible to a general audience. As one effect, I have included background notes about people and events that might seem elementary even to a student in a basic Chinese history course, such as the dates of various dynasties. Because this is not a book to be read from front to back, I have done my best to annotate each essay in such a way as to make it a free-standing entity. In a few cases this has meant duplicating footnotes in order not to break the reader’s concentration by sending her to flip back and forth through the book for cross-references.

Finally, readers who wish to read these translations alongside Mou’s Chinese originals will find almost all of them available online in several places through a simple internet search.

Themes That Emerge in These Essays

Mou Among His Contemporaries

In some of these essays Mou comments extremely candidly on some of his teachers and celebrated contemporaries. Mou felt keen rivalry with many other philosophers over matters of philosophical and scholarly principle and perhaps even from the occasional twinge of jealousy. Intellectuals in Mou’s age group had things harder than their immediate elders. Academics born a decade or two earlier, like Feng Youlan and Hu Shi, were able to train at the most eminent of foreign universities, receive prestigious doctorates, and come home to jobs at China’s best universities at young ages. Autodidacts like Liang Shuming and Xiong Shili were handed jobs at Peking University without even a college degree. All of them won far-reaching celebrity in China with books which, though praiseworthy as first steps toward a truly modern scholarship, did not

age well and nowadays look naïve. By contrast, Mou and his cohort were born just a few years too late. Their studies were interrupted by war; they were lucky to finish college (sometimes in makeshift refugee universities), to say nothing of going to Cornell or Columbia. They wrote books but potential readers were often too busy seeking safety and food. By his thirties Mou was a prolific researcher and publisher, even while moving frequently around the country, but he achieved neither fame nor even stability. And he for one came to feel that he had far outgrown his teachers' generation. At Peking University he had met most of the great names of his day up close—Feng Youlan, Hu Shi, Liang Shuming, Jin Yuelin, Xiong Shili—and in some of the present essays (especially “Objective Understanding and the Remaking of Chinese Culture”), he makes it clear that from early on he found them limited and in some cases contemptible. He was greatly impressed by the raw potency of Xiong Shili's character when he met him and had little but good to say about Xiong. But in these essays Mou's dispassionate appraisal of Xiong is that he was made of “the right stuff,” so to speak, but because of personal weaknesses and the lack of a solid education, Xiong was still a shallow thinker whose plentiful writings recapitulated the same handful of superficial ideas again and again.

As for other early intellectual stars, Mou is harsh to the point of bitterness: Liang Shuming was a provincial activist who wasted his life on feel-good projects that achieved nothing, and was underinformed, not having a fund of knowledge and ideas that would have allowed him to put his gifts to good use. Feng Youlan was an imposter who made an undeserved, early reputation that he could never live up to. Hu Shi did not concentrate on any particular thing enough to gain real expertise and hence was out of his depth. All were dilettantes who only enjoyed fame as philosophers because the reading public was too shallow to see through them.

What Philosophy Is

Partly by means of those negative examples, Mou displays in these essays his very particular convictions about what constitutes “philosophy” worthy of the name. The first thing to point out to an anglophone readership is that when Mou speaks of “scholarship” (*xuewen* 學問, *xueshu* 學術), he does not assume a distinction between fact and value and allows for a much greater quantum of speculation than is suggested by the English word, carrying as it does a stronger expectation of evidentiary reasoning.¹⁴ And for Mou, philosophy

14 On the “epistemological optimism” of the Chinese intellectual mainstream, see Thomas Metzger's monographic essay “Discourse #1 and Discourse #2: The Search for Political Rationality in China and the West Today and the Concept of Discourse.” Although

in particular should point to the “vertical” (*zongguan* 縱貫) or trans-empirical dimension of our existence. Put another way, it must be what Mou calls “existential learning,”¹⁵ interested in “how to regulate our lives, conduct our lives, and settle our lives.”¹⁶ Thus real philosophy is something far removed from what goes by the name of Anglo-American analytic philosophy, which Mou thinks is so obdurately uninterested in the existential matters that form the truest calling of real philosophy that “there is virtually no philosophy left” there.¹⁷

Instead, Mou speaks up for philosophy as a form of personal cultivation, much like his French contemporary Pierre Hadot, and in this respect he thinks Chinese philosophy excels particularly. It is, he writes, “a pointer to life-wisdom. If only you reflect on it, it can illuminate your life, inspire you, and manifest splendor in your thinking.” This is important first because it shows that, whatever Mou’s political commitments, his philosophy is more than just an ideological superstructure for his Chinese cultural conservatism and cultural nationalism. On the contrary, it forms the very solid and specific content toward which Mou’s cultural nationalist reverence is directed. When Mou says that “you have to . . . grasp the main artery of the cultural life-force of the Chinese nation” and enter step by step into a personal understanding of the wisdom of Confucius and Mencius,¹⁸ what he is describing is a virtually

Metzger declares his focus to be on what he calls “political theory,” in his use of the term he actively includes the metaphysical context of reasoning about political life. “[A] political theory,” as he explains it, “seeks to define (a) the goal of political life, (b) the nature of political knowledge or rationality, (c) agency as the means available to pursue this goal, and (d) all the other aspects of the given world relevant to this pursuit, whether the historical world and its ontological, cosmological underpinnings, including the universal nature of society and the individual, or contemporary cultural, political, etc. trends frustrating or facilitating this pursuit.” *A Cloud Across the Pacific: Essays on the Clash between Chinese and Western Political Theory Today* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2005), 4.

15 *shengming de xuewen* 生命的學問. A closer translation would probably be “*Lebensphilosophie*” or, more literally, “*Lebenswissenschaft*” (a term used by comparative literature scholar Ottmar Ette, not in Mou’s way of course but still in a spirit that would have pleased him). Interwar German *Lebensphilosophie* made a far-reaching impact on the Chinese intellectual scene, together with Bergsonian vitalism, and especially on the cultural conservatives who were one generation senior to Mou, men such as Zhang Junmai and Liang Shuming.

16 *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang* 中國哲學十九講 (Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy) (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1983), 15. Also see his article “Shengming de xuewen” in his eponymous anthology (Taipei: Sanmin, 1970).

17 “Philosophy and the Perfect Teaching.”

18 “Meeting at Goose Lake.”

religious process of formation and transformation, absent which Mou cannot accept that a person understands Chinese culture. This is not different from saying that a Chinese person who is not living the life of Chinese philosophy has not begun to be fully and authentically Chinese.

A typical complaint about Mou is that he retreats so far into metaphysical abstraction that he discards much of the historical Neo-Confucian ideal of knowledge for the sake of living and practice.¹⁹ But though he is undeniably preoccupied with metaphysics, his metaphysical agenda always has a discernible point of contact with questions of practice. In “Three Lineages of Song-Ming Confucianism,” for example, which focuses on some very grand abstractions indeed, namely heaven and reason, Mou manages to make unusually clear why these are not inconsequential points of theory but practical matters: they make the difference between two very different modes of self-cultivation. Depending on which theories you settle on, you will go about “doing Confucianism” in two completely different ways: remodeling or returning, “gradual polishing” or “sudden enlightenment.”²⁰ In the gradualist model, our minds suffer some objective affliction (either “ignorance” or “selfish desires”) and must be altered: the affliction is to be removed and the mind remodeled to conform to the sagely type. In the perfect, subitist (*yuandun* 圓頓) model, we need no such remodeling. The mind is basically sagely or enlightened (even if momentarily afflicted with imperfection) and is mostly self-correcting: it will enlighten itself. The most important thing for us to do, at a conscious level, is simply to remain sensitive to its stirrings.

It is true that Mou offers little specific instruction about how to cultivate oneself, but this is because Mou’s chosen role is not that of a preceptor but of a prophet and apologist. That is, his mission is to proclaim the importance of Chinese philosophy and try to show that it teaches truths even more basic and more important to living life than do modern discoveries and to gain intellectual respectability for it. Instead, as I will explain below, I believe the most successful version of this criticism is not that Mou does not *intend* his metaphysics to be relevant to living life but rather that he has no way to *demonstrate* that it is.

19 See Serina Chan, “What is Confucian and New About the Thought of Mou Zongsan?” in John Makeham, ed., *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 150.

20 See Sébastien Billioud, *Thinking Through Confucian Modernity: A Study of Mou Zongsan’s Moral Metaphysics* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 204–205.

Let us also address another common criticism of Mou's philosophy, that of "pan-moralist" (*fan daodezhuyi* 泛道德主義), reducing all to morality.²¹ Taken in a cool-headed way, this describes Mou aptly, because Mou's main metaphysical belief is in effect that morality is even-more-than-literally the center of the universe! But as Mou's remarks on Zhu Xi in "Ten Great Doctrinal Disputes" show, the criticism of Mou's "pan-moralism" is off-target if used with the implication that Mou's learning is a monomaniacal philosophy whose focus on morality leaves it stunted and insensitive to all other dimensions of real human life that have more flesh and blood in them than Kant's categorical imperative. Mou's criticism of Zhu's wish to dismiss the cosmopolitan Han and Tang dynasties on account of loose morals is a reminder that Mou's intent in famously hiving off "outer kingliness" from "inner sageliness" is precisely to stop that sort of moral reductionism. Consider how momentous it is, and surely how emotionally difficult, for Mou to indicate that "we [also] need another kind of judgment" than just moral judgment to think about "a monster like . . . Mao Zedong."

This brings us to a second characteristic of true "philosophy" as Mou understands it, which is that it must inform politics. For despite Mou's aloofness from the political scene, he does suppose that real philosophy must be engaged in the world to a sufficient extent that it can provide guidance to political judgment. It was wrong-headed philosophy and wishy-washy philosophy that laid China bare to the devilry of Communism, Mou believes, and it is good philosophy that will train up a high-minded generation who can deliver it.

To that end, true philosophy in Mou's opinion must seek to be morally committed. Mou thinks it is very well to move slowly to judgment and revise one's conclusions in due season, but he also thinks that before philosophy can bear fruit for a person or a nation, it must affirm the right kind of morality, in both individual conduct and great national affairs. When he calls for "objective understanding,"²² he refigures "objectivity" to mean what coheres with a "right view" of things, which is to say, with his moral metaphysics. To teach philosophy in a way that does not suppose a Mencian moral stance is to lack "standards" (*fadu* 法度). To favor Communism is to be "unobjective."

Note, then, that Mou's problem with Marxist scholarship is not that it is wedded to a grand narrative of the direction and meaning of all history. For Mou, scholarship cannot be much good if it does not directly underpin a grand

21 See Makeham, *Lost Soul: Confucianism in Contemporary Confucian Discourses* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 235–236.

22 See "Objective Understanding and the Remaking of Chinese Culture" in this volume.

vision of history that gives “definite direction for the mind.”²³ Rather, the problem is just that the Marxists have chosen a very *bad* grand vision, founded on bad assumptions. And conversely, the reason that Mou is so appalled by Hu Shi—execrating him only slightly less than the Communist fellow traveler Feng Youlan—is exactly because of Hu’s efforts at cool-headed *skepticism* about indemonstrable, metaphysically-laden, grandiose theory.²⁴

But we should not suppose from this that Mou is a naïve “frog in a well.” He understands perfectly well the kind of disinterested scholarship that is the standard model for modern history of philosophy. He simply thinks it pernicious. He fully supports approaching philosophical texts of the past with open-minded neutrality. But for Mou, a disinterested neutrality is only a preliminary posture from which to take the next step, namely to draw conclusions about the source of being and creation, the structure of the universe, the nature of morality, reason, and humanity, and finally the right future for the Chinese nation and the right course of political action. In this respect, Mou is no more naïve in his thinking about scholarly commitment than a sophisticated Talmudist or Islamic jurist.

History of Philosophy

It will be seen at once that Mou attaches an unusual meaning to the term “history of philosophy.” For Mou this does not entail a non-committed, value-neutral study of the philosophy of the past but rather an evaluative and more or less teleological study of how past philosophers have come progressively closer to (or strayed from) what Mou takes to be the fullness of the truth and how they have thereby advanced or retarded what he calls “the life of Chinese culture.”

First, Mou believes that ideas at the core of a given philosophical tradition may be ancient, but as centuries go by those ideas are elaborated in novel ways that (when correct) state the ancient, germinal ideas’ latent implications more

23 “Objective Understanding.”

24 Mou has a great deal to say about Hu (all of it vicious) in “Objective Understanding” and “Meeting at Goose Lake.” There was personal as well as philosophical antipathy between the two men, and according to one scholar it was because of Hu’s influence that Mou failed to win a teaching post at a top-tier institution until after Hu’s death. See Wang Xingguo 王興國, “Luomo er bu luomo: Mou Zongsan yu sansuo zhuming daxue—Beijing daxue, Xinan lianhe daxue, Taiwan daxue 落寞而不落寞——牟宗三與三所著名大學: 北京大學、西南聯合大學、台灣大學 (Alone and Not Alone: Mou Zongsan at Three Famous Universities—Peking University, Southwest Associated University, and Taiwan University),” *Huanan shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 1 (February 2011): 19–27.

expressly. A prime example is that of the essential Mencian insights. Mou thinks that they were rediscovered and “sliced open” (*shizi dakai* 十字打開) by Lu Xiangshan and then re-expressed in expanded form, with differing but valuable emphases, by Hu Wufeng, Wang Yangming, Wang Longxi, Liu Jishan, and ultimately by Mou himself. Second, he thinks of philosophy as progressing and becoming more refined over the millenia. Put another way, reason is working itself out over the course of history, though the process is not evenly spread among all people (some individuals and nations being ahead of others) and does not have any end in sight.

Third, Mou thinks of this unfolding of reason as historically “necessary” in the sense that it is inevitable. Progress can stall for centuries at a time, but it eventually resumes. However, we must not confuse Mou’s vision of history with Hegel’s. As noted, in Mou’s thinking, historical development never comes to an end. Furthermore, he steers far clear of reducing “ought” to “is.” He certainly believes that a historical event can occur but be genuinely and unequivocally bad, disastrous, and unnatural, foiling the natural course of things for centuries at a time.

An excellent example of this last point is what we could call his “lost cause” theory of the Ming dynasty.²⁵ Mou believes that in the seventeenth century, “the life-force of Chinese culture” had developed to such a point that there were Chinese thinkers who were poised to lead the way to an indigenous Chinese modernity, replete with effective scientific, technological, and political systems, and they would have succeeded if only China had not been conquered by barbarians (*yidi* 夷狄) from Manchuria: “If there had been no three hundred years of Manchu rule, the natural course of the Chinese nation’s development would have been little different from the West’s. . . . Of itself, the cultural life-force of the Chinese nation was poised to open outward. It was only that it was repressed by the Manchus.”²⁶

Also, despite Mou’s plentiful talk of a unitary and coherent Chinese nation with an essence of its own, at a granular level he does indeed see Chinese history as contingent at least in its early stage, in the victory that enthroned Confucianism as the national orthodoxy for most of Chinese history. For although Mou presents ancient classics like the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Changes* as if they prefigured the later message of Confucius and Mencius, in this volume he also allows that Chinese history could still have turned in a very

25 See “The Chinese Idea of Settling Oneself and Establishing One’s Destiny” and “Meeting at Goose Lake.”

26 “Meeting at Goose Lake.” Also see “The Rise of Buddhist Learning in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang.”

different direction had it not been for the decisive intervention of the pre-Qin Confucians.²⁷ At one point he even says, “Had Confucius not introduced the concept of ‘humaneness’, the heaven described in the *Book of Documents* and *Book of Odes* might have turned into something like the Christian model, and so the fact that Chinese culture did not take a Christian-like form is also owing to Confucius.”²⁸

Nationalism and Boundary Discourse

Mou is a cultural nationalist, celebrating the Chinese nation or people (*minzu* 民族) for what he thinks is the unique and in some ways supreme value of its culture.²⁹ He believes that the Chinese nation is an enduring entity, with a “life-force” (*shengming* 生命) expressed as a unique and unified culture. He writes: “From the very beginning, Chinese culture was already a unified culture... As a unified and harmonious entity, Chinese culture is a single line pointing straight ahead; the mainland’s Marxism is a gross distortion.”³⁰ Even though Chinese culture evolves over time, underneath the relatively superficial fluctuations lies a stable, consistent essence (*benzhi* 本質) which, for Mou’s purposes, is more or less equivalent to China’s characteristic philosophy.³¹ And Mou thinks that Chinese people must tend to their philosophy very carefully, nurturing and strengthening it and guarding it against perversion, because he believes that a nation’s philosophy determines its political destiny. Hence philosophy is a real-world enterprise of great moment, because it trickles down into both consequential events of life-and-death and mundane bread-and-butter existence. For example, Mou habitually speaks of a particular dynasty’s being built by its intellectual trends, as when he explains that “[t]he classical studies of the two Han dynasties inherited the Confucian classics of the pre-Qin and coordinated it with *yin-yang* thought to build the great empire of

27 See “Ten Great Doctrinal Disputes.”

28 See “Confucian Moral Metaphysics.”

29 Serina Chan’s *Thought of Mou Zongsan* (Leiden: Brill, 2011) presents a new look at Mou’s entire philosophy that is not shy about acknowledging its culturally nationalist emotional motives, carrying forward the work of Hao Chang, Arif Dirlik, and John Makeham on the nationalist dimension of New Confucianism in general. I have presented my own analysis of frustrated national pride as one of the main emotional motors of the New Confucian movement in “Chinese *Ressentiment* and Why New Confucians Stopped Caring About *Yogācāra*,” in John Makeham, ed., *Transforming Consciousness: The Intellectual Reception of Yogācāra Thought in Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

30 “Philosophy and the Perfect Teaching.”

31 For an early example, see section four of the New Confucian “Declaration.”

the Han dynasty.”³² It follows, then, that philosophy has very high political stakes and bad philosophy must needs end in political calamity, which in China’s case was the evil of “the demonic Communist Party.”³³

Mou is a subtle and ecumenical thinker, but we will see in these essays that his world is also filled with surprisingly sharp lines. Mostly we find Mou drawing them to define “Chinese philosophy” and assert its uniqueness and primacy. Mou comes from a time when Chinese intellectuals felt even more anxiety than now over erecting a safe barrier between Chinese identity and the West. He may have came of age after the *fin-de-siècle* social Darwinism that had many Chinese thinkers genuinely worried about the biological extinction of the Chinese race, but he is old enough to have lived a miserable existence as a refugee during the war against Japan, when the phrase “death of the country” (*wang guo* 亡國) was more than a literary trope, and he was more than old enough to have lived in a climate when formidable public intellectuals were understood to advocate “wholesale westernization.”³⁴ And here too, the issue had serious, real-life consequences for Mou and was more than just a coffee-house debate; his biographer writes that Mou lost his job and had to leave Taiwan because he lined up on the wrong side of this issue.³⁵ Thus one of the founding concerns of the New Confucian movement was to defend the worth of Chinese tradition against Westerners and Chinese westernizers. To that end, one of essential planks of Mou’s cultural platform is to distinguish Chinese culture from Western culture as deeply as he is able and establish its irreducible difference.

In Mou’s selective depiction, “Chinese philosophy” is essentially typified by a belief in humankind’s “intellectual intuition” (which is to say, our capacity for sagehood) and by a greater or lesser understanding that ultimate reality not only transcends the world of mundane sense objects but is also present here too. On one hand, though this looks like a narrow definition of Chinese philosophy, Mou interprets most of China’s great thinkers in a way that makes them fit it comfortably enough. Chinese philosophy as Mou sees it is *best* exemplified by a select group of Confucian thinkers (whose most recent

32 “Rise of Buddhist Learning.”

33 “Objective Understanding.”

34 *Quanpan xihua* 全盤西化. The phrase was introduced by Hu Shi in 1929 and though Hu later explained that he meant nothing so dramatic as a root-and-branch purging of traditional Chinese culture, he was interpreted that way nevertheless and the phrase ignited a national debate that has flared up periodically ever since.

35 Li Shan, *Mou Zongsan zhuan*, 120–121.

member would be Mou himself),³⁶ but it also includes a great many others, including Daoists and Buddhists, as truly important and admirable dialectical precursors to those Confucian exemplars. Thus it is not only thinkers like Confucius, Mencius, Cheng Mingdao, and Wang Yangming whom Mou numbers among the greats but also Laozi, Zhuangzi, Guo Xiang, Wang Bi, Fazang, Zhiyi, Zhanran, and Zhili.³⁷ However, figures who cannot be aligned with the rudiments of Mou's system end up pushed to the margins of Mou's construction of "Chinese philosophy," or clear outside of its boundaries. This is the fate of almost all Qing dynasty scholarship, which Mou blames indirectly for China's modern ills. And in the 20th-century he discounts most of the philosophers in China from the rolls of real philosophy, and he rejects Chinese Marxist philosophy from consideration entirely.

Mou narrates the history of Chinese philosophy in dialectical terms, with Chinese philosophy as a continuous and mostly consistent flow that occasionally veers off from its main axis of travel and picks up new and important materials which, after some centuries, may be synthesized into the home tradition to enrich it. In some of his moods, Mou talks about the history of China's cultural relations in a jealous, adversarial way, in terms of conquests and crises and challenges to its self-sufficiency. The influence of a foreign kind of learning can eventually benefit and enrich the home culture, but until it is thoroughly assimilated it remains a sort of intruder and therefore both a humiliation and a threat to the home culture's integrity and survival.

The paradigmatic example for Mou is Buddhism. In the main he presents Buddhism's influence on Chinese history positively: Buddhist philosophy appeared from abroad to challenge China's native traditions, turned the attention of Chinese philosophy to new themes, and after being "digested" over a period of centuries it ultimately led to a great new chapter in the unfolding of Chinese culture. It was in its encounter with the Buddhist challenge, Mou

36 Mou does not say this aloud, but it is implied very clearly in his statements. In "Ten Great Doctrinal Disputes," for example, he shows what we might gently call extraordinary philosophical self-confidence when he says that "[i]n more than two thousand years, scarcely a handful of people have truly understood this great insight."

37 Mou is not the only one of his contemporaries to do this, for Chinese cultural conservatives since the late Qing have been rummaging through the Chinese past to rediscover and "classicize" as much of it as possible (cf. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993], Chapter Three). However, he is exceptional for the thoroughness and rigor of his explorations.

thinks, that Chinese philosophy found the words in which to articulate its Confucian “perfect teaching,” which was then still merely implicit.³⁸

But that is taking the long view. There is another respect in which Mou sometimes presents Buddhism as an unwelcome guest and a bitter cup of medicine. Without being entirely clear about it, Mou seems to propose that Buddhism was foisted onto Chinese people unwillingly by conquering steppe peoples. From the fifth to the tenth centuries, as the tradition of the foreign hegemony who dominated the Chinese cultural area, Buddhism held the prestige and cultural influence of a sort colonial religion and overshadowed China’s indigenous tradition, much as Mou feels Christianity and Western philosophy do in his own lifetime.³⁹ Thus as much as Mou appreciates Buddhist learning, it is also fair to say that he remains something of a “xenophobe” in the strict sense: foreignness makes him wary, for he sees it as destabilizing.

The West

Analogous to the great Buddhist irruption of medieval times, in modern times it is the West which challenges China.

Scholars nowadays shy away from using a “Western impact model” which would think about modern China only in terms of its response to the singular influence of the West.⁴⁰ Such a model can make it seem as though Chinese people have had no thoughts and plans of their own, bouncing from one outside force to another like so many billiard balls, and it also seems to diminish China’s relationships with other parts of the world. Japan, Southeast Asia, India, Africa—are these places not important too?

However, Mou does not shrink from defining China’s future in terms of the challenge and influence of the West. He does not represent China as just a passive recipient of Western influence, but he does focus intently on its relationship to the West, and in fact he explicitly reduces the part of the world which holds significance for philosophy to just China and the West. They are the *only* regions that matter philosophically:

38 Indeed, one of Mou’s main criticisms against the Song-Ming Neo-Confucians, namely that they were insular and small-minded when it came to recognizing the wisdom of Daoists and Buddhists. See “Ten Great Doctrinal Disputes in the Development of Chinese Culture.”

39 See “The Rise of Buddhist Learning.”

40 See for example Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), particularly his essays “The Problem with China’s Response to the West” and “Toward a China-Centered History of China.”

Chinese youth...should know that in the development of human wisdom thus far, there have been five great systems: the Platonic system, the Christian system, the Confucian system, the Daoist system, and the Buddhist system. Equipped with a fair understanding of these five systems, one can largely infer the rest about human culture of the past.⁴¹

If an important idea cannot be found in the West, Mou presumes that either it does not exist or is exclusively Chinese: "In the West, ideas are always regarded as objects, and... they are not themselves the mind. *Therefore* only China has thorough-going mind-only philosophy."⁴² This is a telling syllogism, for as far as Mou is concerned, the philosophically interesting *orbis terrarum* includes only China and the West. It does not include any Arab, Persian, Orthodox Christian, African, Southeast Asian, Inner Asian, Tibetan, Korean, or Japanese contenders.⁴³ Even India is reduced in Mou's view of the world to Indian *Buddhism*, which is subsumed into Chinese Buddhism, which for Mou supersedes the Indian tradition entirely and "is really the summit in the development of human wisdom."⁴⁴

Within the domain of the Western tradition, too, Mou is choosy about which influences will be healthy for Chinese culture and which might bend it off its proper course. Briefly put, it is Athens he wants, not Jerusalem. Although he wants to accept from the influence of Greek-derived science and philosophy and the modern liberal democratic tradition, he specifically wants to segregate the legacy of the Hebrew tradition, namely Christianity.⁴⁵ "[T]he second task

41 "Objective Understanding."

42 "Meeting at Goose Lake." Emphasis mine.

43 Grace Ai-ling Chou points out that at New Asia College, where Mou taught, the undergraduate curriculum was a strangely bipolar one, a "lopsided equation" which reduced the world deserving of study to China and the West:

"[I]t was their homeland China that was really at the core of their concern. Thus, not only was there no evident effort to teach about Asia as a whole but very minimal attention given to any area or aspect of Asia other than China. In this framework, China was most significant or most representative of 'Asia' or 'the East' while 'the West' served as the counterpart to which China was relating and could be compared.... For this reason, the two entities in the world most deserving of study were China, on the one hand, and the West on the other.... The primary global relationship of concern was not between the East and the West but between China and the West." ("Confucian Cultural Education on the Chinese Periphery: Hong Kong's New Asia College, 1949–1976," Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Hawai'i at Manoa [2003], 74–75.)

44 "Objective Understanding."

45 "Meeting at Goose Lake."

facing us [after destroying Communism] is distinguishing ourselves from Christianity," he writes. "[A]s people whose standpoint is that of Chinese culture and who want to take responsibility for Chinese culture, we can and should differentiate like from unlike."⁴⁶

In one way, it is strange that Mou should be so eager to distance himself from the biblical tradition, since it comes much nearer to giving primacy to ethics in something like the way of Mou's Confucianism than the Greek and Roman tradition or even the Buddhist and Daoist traditions. Part of the reason is purely philosophical: the biblical tradition acknowledges no intellectual intuition for human beings, and hence in Mou's terms it can offer no parallel to the perfect teaching and no true *summum bonum*. For Mou's purposes, then, it can offer nothing on a par even with Daoism or Buddhism. But he is motivated by another reason: part of Mou's chosen mission is expressly to prevent China from giving itself over to Christianity. Nor was this a greatly exaggerated fear in Mou's day. In Hong Kong his New Asia College shared a campus with the intellectually vibrant Chung Chi College, which is one of the Christian institutions that has made Hong Kong the center of the astonishingly erudite world of Chinese Protestant theology. And in Taiwan every president had been Christian, from the Methodist Chiang Kai-shek to then-president Lee Teng-hui, and from the mainland there was anecdotal evidence, since confirmed, of a huge appetite for Christianity.

Kant

For Mou the challenge and promise of Western influence is personified by Immanuel Kant. In the latter half of Mou's life, Kant is so omnipresent in Mou's thoughts that Joël Thoraval does not exaggerate when he speaks of Mou's fixation on Kant as "almost obsessive."⁴⁷ Serina Chan describes Mou's relationship as one of mixed "admiration and competitiveness,"⁴⁸ and this aptly captures the twofold way that Mou sees Kant: as a model from whom to learn and a rival to surpass.

If Marx was stimulated by Feuerbach to take Hegel and stand him on his head, then Mou was stimulated by Heidegger to do the same with Kant. It is from Kant that Mou appropriates the *problematique* and the lexicon with which to enunciate systematically what he thinks of as the essentially

46 "Ten Great Doctrinal Disputes."

47 "Idéal du sage, stratégie du philosophe, Introduction à la pensée de Mou Zongsan (1909–1995)," 35, in Ivan Kamenarovic and Jean-Claude Pastor, trs., *Spécificités de la philosophie chinoise* (Paris, Editions du Cerf, 2003).

48 *Thought of Mou Zongsan* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 217.

Confucian doctrine that human beings' "moral knowing" is a cosmogonic force and the realest form of knowledge that exists. Kant understood correctly, in Mou's opinion, that what constitutes things-in-themselves—what makes them things-in-themselves rather than something less real—is that intellectual intuition intuits them. Speaking very broadly, then, we could say that Mou thinks that Kant had almost everything right except his most fundamental orienting premise, that human beings lack intellectual intuition.

Kant thus represents for Mou the best of Western philosophy, whom modern Chinese philosophy will incorporate into itself in the "great synthesis" that will make it greater than ever before. Mou sees the absorption of Western culture as embodied in Kant's system as the way to "remint" Chinese philosophy in such a way that it revives its old specialty in spiritual matters (what he would call the "noumenal" realm) and also develops and joins to it a new, Western-like aptitude with government and economy. In that case Western philosophy and Kant are at least as important to Mou as Buddhist philosophy and Zhiyi—which is high praise—and maybe even more so; for whereas Buddhism made China better at what it already did well (namely theorizing humans' innate capacity for sagehood), the example of Western science and democracy will stimulate China to build skills in an area where Mou thinks it has never been very successful.

But more than just as a teacher, Mou also sees Kant as a locus of prestige, the reigning champion whom Chinese philosophy must surpass in order to establish its world prominence.

Whenever we wish to explain Mou's position on a given question, the most important answer that we can give will be to interpret the more or less purely philosophical arguments he would give on behalf of that position. However, since Mou openly states that his philosophy also has a larger, extra-academic, political mission, namely to find "direction for the historical development of Chinese culture and how to bring forth outer kingliness from inner sageliness,"⁴⁹ we are also entitled to ask about the political motivations for a given choice. For even supposing that Mou was so rigorous a thinker that he could exclude his nationalist feelings, for example, from his philosophical judgments entirely and arrive at his conclusions based on nothing more than a completely dispassionate weighing of evidence and arguments, he still had to allocate his time. That is, even the Stakhanovite Mou, who wrote a new ground-breaking volume every couple of years clear into his seventies, could only afford the time to read, think, and write about questions which were important to him and his mission, and he makes it clear that he planned his research agenda decades

49 "Meeting at Goose Lake."

ahead of time with terrific deliberation. Thus, when we search for a *Verstehen* of Mou's major convictions and intellectual choices, we should be able to give two kinds of answers, one a "philosophical" explanation of how a certain belief or interpretation is entailed by Mou's other beliefs and interpretations, and the other a cultural-political explanation of how it fits into the context of Mou's cultural program for the Chinese nation.

For example, an intriguing puzzle about Mou's thought has to do with his famous claim that Western philosophy simply denies that humans can have the God-like, enlightened knowing that he calls "intellectual intuition." Building on work by Thoraval, Sébastien Billioud has shown that Mou was exaggerating—not wildly, but he was exaggerating—and he knew it. Billioud adduces counter-examples among patristic theology and even clearer refutation in post-Kantian German Idealism, which is replete with such theories. Since we know from a letter that Mou wrote to student Liu Shuxian that he was aware of these theories, Billioud wonders about the reason for Mou's "deliberate silence" about these dispositive examples in his published work.⁵⁰ He hypothesizes that Mou did not find the post-Kantians' thinking about intellectual intuition close enough in substance to his own to warrant a closer examination, but he also points out how strange and how "highly problematic" the omission remains because Mou's work and his claims about the uniqueness and primacy of Chinese philosophy rest so very heavily on the assertion that Western philosophy (outside of Christian "mysticism") is a complete stranger to beliefs about intellectual intuition in humans. Mou emphasizes everywhere that this supposed vacuum is *the* watershed difference from Chinese philosophy and Chinese philosophy's main opportunity to complete and transcend Western philosophy and become a world leader in philosophy.

Coming partly to Mou's defense, Billioud observes that even though the resemblances between Mou's notion of intellectual intuition and Schelling's, for example, can be "striking," they are not closely aligned with Mou's interest in the cultivation of sagehood. However, in my opinion there is still a reasonable doubt about whether the resemblances are much closer and the tolerances tighter when Mou assimilates the *prajñā* of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā prajñā-pāramitā sūtra* to Kant's *intellektuelle Anschauung* and then to Wang Yangming's voidful, perspicacious awareness (*xuling mingjue* 虛靈明覺). I do not mean to call the comparison bogus, for I think it succeeds within the limits of Mou's intended purpose. I mean only that I cannot fully dissolve the mystery of Mou's silence about Western theories of intellectual intuition *only* by acknowledging that the similarities between those theories and Mou's may not

50 *Thinking Through Confucian Modernity*, 81–89.

have run far beyond their admittedly striking parallels in formal structure. After all, Mou himself has been able to convincingly telescope together concepts that were embedded in equally disparate times and places and which, in my opinion, originally resembled each other even less. It is fair to suppose that he could have made some kind of interesting observation about the relationship of Confucian or Buddhist theories of intellectual intuition to Fichte's or Schelling's *if he had wanted to*. And it is certainly fair to expect him to address such a patent (even if only apparent) refutation of his central factual claim.

For my part, I think that the most important factor in making sense of Mou's decision (though not the only one, as Billioud shows) is that, given Mou's real-world agenda as a public intellectual, it would have been a poor use of his time. What I mean is that one of Mou's most cherished aims, as he tells us in these essays, was to raise the standing of Chinese philosophy in the world's opinion. To do that, he had to engage with the major thinkers, not peripheral figures from the footnotes of the history of philosophy, and for Mou's purposes that is what most post-Kantians (excepting Hegel) were. Mou would have been wasting his efforts if he expended years of his "heart's blood" (*xinxue* 心血) on a B-list philosopher such as Schelling. Mou wanted to surpass Kant, as he himself acknowledged, which is to say that he wanted to learn from Kant's accomplishments, incorporate or sublate Kant's achievements into his new iteration of Chinese philosophy to supplement the traditional deficiencies in "outer kingliness," and then transcend Kant and establish his own distinctly Chinese philosophy's reputation as a new world leader. And he knew that that mammoth job would occupy as many years as he had left.

Mou's Nationalism in Today's World

Since Mou's death, China's position in the world has changed enough that reading Mou, whose career was animated by a nationalist mission, is a different experience now than when he died in the mid-1990s. For now, more than a century of ardent Chinese nationalism is at last crowned with enough wealth and power to make its will felt in world politics. The aspiration for China that motivated Mou's philosophy is no longer just a curious biographical detail or an item of historical context; it now might actually be fulfilled.

In modern times the Confucian tradition has often been criticized in the same way that Christianity has, by charging that it was co-opted by governments. Like early Christianity, runs this criticism, early Confucianism started out suspicious of rulers' motives and ambivalent about compromising its high-minded ideals in order to succeed in politics, but when it was adopted as an

imperial ideology, it slowly corrupted itself with the business of legitimating regimes and excusing their abuses.⁵¹ Mou himself was hardly deaf to this complaint. But in Mou's lifetime there was little serious danger that Confucianism, which had only lost political credibility a generation or two before, would once again be misappropriated in this way. Chiang Kai-shek's socially conservative government did lean on many traditional Confucian tropes in its propaganda, but it was not taken very seriously by the public. Then toward the end of Mou's life the Communist Party began to show interest in Confucian thought, and Mou responded cynically but nevertheless hoped that the mainland would be re-Confucianized one day and liberated from Communism. Decades later, half of Mou's dream is coming true: nationalism has nourished the mainland government's and intelligentsia's growing interest in the on-going Confucian tradition, but it has also helped preserve the Communist Party's rule. It has also led China to aspire not only to economic development but also an assertive role in the front row of world politics and conceive of itself as a once and future world leader. It is an open question as to how happily this fact will play out for various peoples of the world—I do not believe that anyone on the planet has enough information to do more than guess about this, but it is fair to say that, for all we know, anything *could* happen, from widespread tragedy to a great *pax sinica*—but it means that the “third-wave Confucianism” that Mou Zongsan put on the map has begun to be credible a political force in a way that was not yet true twenty or thirty years ago.

As Mou is aware, in his presentation of Chinese culture and Chinese philosophy (which for him are virtually the same thing), he is creating a tension between the universal and the local, *Zivilization* and *Kultur*. To put it plainly, he gives his readers two very different reasons why they ought to undertake the discipline of learning Chinese philosophy: first, because Chinese philosophy is universally important because its teachings are uniquely true and important for all rational beings as such, be they of any nation; and second, because Chinese philosophy is Chinese culture, *their* culture. “[Chinese] people who stand outside of it are standing outside their own cultural tradition,” he admonishes, with the unspoken but clear implication that that is a very bad thing.⁵²

Although this two-pronged argument for the importance of Chinese culture is not incoherent—a thing can indeed be good for two distinct reasons—the

51 The Chinese shorthand for this sort of criticism is “*ru biao fa li* 儒表法裡,” or “Confucian on the surface but Legalist on the inside,” referring to the machiavellian Legalist school of statecraft which was one of the competitors to early Confucianism.

52 “Meeting at Goose Lake.” Also see “The Rise of Buddhist Learning in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang.”

fact that he has to rely on nationalism to help “sell” his philosophy marks a weakness in it. For any kind of philosophy, it is a very powerful recommendation to say that it teaches the highest kind of truth and confers the highest sort of benefit on the life of anyone who practices it. In principle that should be enough, and any other sort of praise, such as an invocation of in-group pride, must seem paltry by comparison. Mou sees himself operating in the same league of world historical, epoch-making philosopher-teachers as Plato, Paul, the Epicureans and Stoics, the great Mahāyāna Buddhists and Neo-Confucians, and Kant, and to play in that league one must offer a doctrine of universal scope.⁵³ If Mou too could convince his audience that the teachings he offers them are *simpliciter* true and good for them as human beings, then he could dispense with the appeals to cultural nationalism.

In Mou’s case, however, that is not a reliable strategy because he nowhere attempts to *demonstrate* the unique truth of his metaphysical teachings or argue for them against determined unbelievers. What he does do is to articulate a detailed Confucian system in modern terms and attempt to reconcile it enough with a scientific worldview to make it *plausible*. But he offers no positive argument for it. That is, he attempts no arguments designed either to *demonstrate* persuasively to a determined doubter that his view of things is uniquely true or at least to raise it from “plausible” to “credible.” In this respect

53 Mou comes close to speaking on this point in the fifth of his famous *Nineteen Lectures* (*Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang* 中國哲學十九講) (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1983) (hereafter abbreviated *SJJ*), in his response to Christian missionaries’ claims that Chinese should not think of Christianity as a foreign religion on the grounds that God is universal. There he distinguishes between truths, which by definition are universal, and particular bodies of teaching intended to express it, such as Christianity and Confucianism, which are historically conditioned and not suitable in all places. But the point remains that, as Mou sees it, such teachings are intended and evaluated as expressions of universal truth rather than as totemic symbols for group identity. That is why their diffusion from one cultural region to another (or even one countryman to another) can constitute the apprehension of truth rather than just the appropriation of symbols and also why one expression can surpass another in its adequacy. Both of these things are what Mou believed occurred when Buddhist philosophy, for example, moved from India to China and was improved upon there. They are also what Mou thinks is happening in his own reception of Kant’s philosophy. Finally, they are also necessary for Mou’s project of saving China by correctly reclaiming its traditional philosophy and for the future leavening of foreign philosophy by the improved Confucian philosophy that he believes is coming into being under his direction and encouragement. As Mou himself says to the Christian missionaries, “If Jesus’ teachings on the Way were not just directed to Jews, then our own Confucius’ teachings about the truth are not just for people in Shandong! They can be for the whole of humanity” (*SJJ*, 320).

he has not yet gotten as far as Christian epistemologists who aim to demonstrate that a belief in God is not only plausible and self-consistent but also positively reasonable.⁵⁴ This is no great fault in a scholar of such manifold accomplishments as Mou, and he could have left those further, difficult problems to his many capable followers without any dishonor. After all, philosophy is a cumulative enterprise, as Mou acknowledges. But instead, because Mou is impatient to persuade but lacks arguments to establish his own credibility, all that is left for him is to state his teachings with an air of unshakeable certitude and invoke their antiquity and Chineseness.

But falling back on a nationalist argument—the claim that China cannot be “healthy” unless it embraces indigenous Chinese culture⁵⁵—involves Mou in new problems. One is that it commits Mou to actively police the fences that he has erected around Chinese-ness in order to define the undesirables out of it. Without that, Mao Zedong Thought, for example, would have to be hailed as an indelibly Chinese kind of philosophy. Any such effort at essentialism and segregation is doomed to be messy and inconsistent, arbitrary, or both. Mou chooses an approach which is arbitrary but tidy—he measures the candidate by how closely he approximates the Confucian “perfect teaching,” that is, by his fidelity to truth as Mou conceives of it—but it still makes for some queer-seeming outliers. For example, the person who emerges as the paradigm for the second most advanced and signally Chinese kind of philosophy is Paramārtha, an Indian who did not come to China until his late forties and was only dissuaded from quitting it again by storms that he interpreted forlornly as omens that he was fated to remain in China. Add to that Mou’s famous verdict that Zhu Xi, the official arbiter of almost six hundred years of Neo-Confucian philosophy, was basically heterogenous to “Chinese philosophy” and it becomes clear that what Mou presents as “historically” Chinese is not really guided by descriptive history.⁵⁶

54 For example, William Alston, Alvin Plantinga, and Nicholas Wolterstorff.

55 See Mou’s analysis of the cause of the defeat of the Taiping rebellion in “The Rise of Buddhist Learning.”

56 This is only to say that Mou’s construction of Chinese history is reductionist in the sense that it is deeply partial to his philosophical positions, not that it is simplistic. For example, in “Ten Great Doctrinal Disputes” when Mou refers to three great waves of development in the Confucian tradition (in the pre-Qin, in the Song through Ming, and once more under the Republic), it is easy to suppose that he is thinking ahistorically and naively weaving together very different events separated by giant historical gaps into a false unity. But whatever one may ultimately think of “Confucianism” as a historical construct, the essay makes clear that Mou is at least historically conscious enough that he has not just cherry-picked his favorite periods of history and left out those centuries or millennia

Second, when Mou came of age, social thought in China was still deeply indebted to vintage ideas from nineteenth-century philosophy of history about peoples and states as unitary organisms, with natural, teleological courses of development, and it is easy to discern their lingering influence in Mou's statements about the Chinese nation. His idea of China as a harmonious unity with a "cultural life-force" and an essence spanning millennia is intellectually suspect and at the least needs a good deal of clarification and defense. It also makes itself available for political misuse. Gloria Davies remarks about Chinese intellectuals' calls for a "genuine historicization," of which Mou's claim to an "objective understanding" of China's needs would be an example, that "[a]n ur-language imagined to bind everyone to the one true cause, the cause of China—as if people could be taught to distinguish the real China from its counterfeit versions—is always a dangerous assumption for it sharpens distinctions between true and false, as did the language of Maoism."⁵⁷ Mou has no interest in helping to create a new compulsory national ideology, of course, but an author who achieves celebrity posthumously loses control of his message when it is replayed in a later age and a different land. An appeal to Chinese nationalism in the Taiwan of the mid-1980s, for example, calls up different associations and carries different political overtones twenty-five or thirty years later in the PRC.

Furthermore, it evokes still different overtones in Southeast Asia, or Japan, or North America or Europe, where Chinese feelings about the Chinese nation and its destiny are no longer just the subject of a distant and rarefied cultural interest but also something that influences the morning headlines, and this also makes Mou's resort to the easy persuasive power of nationalist emotion more ticklish. For it promotes one of Mou's public relations goals—to increase Chinese people's interest in and loyalty to their native intellectual and spiritual traditions—by jeopardizing another goal—to convince foreigners of the

which do not fit his pet theory. In Mou's list of ten great disputes, at every point in history beginning with the pre-Qin there is *something* noteworthy and consequential happening. I do grant that some of it happens "off-stage" (for example, the Sui and Tang do not form the setting for any of Mou's ten disputes), but they are the indispensable first and second acts for Mou's sixth dispute, between the Tiantai *shanjia* and *shanwai* factions in the Song, and Mou covered them with punishing thoroughness in his writings on Buddhism. I think the most that can be said about Mou neglecting any of Chinese civilization's twenty-five centuries since the axial age is that he has little to say about the Yuan.

For very detailed critiques of Mou's highly constructive approach to the history of Chinese philosophy, see the work of Du Baorui 杜保瑞.

57 Gloria Davies, *Worrying About China: The Language of Chinese Critical Inquiry* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007), 40.

unique and universal value of China's traditions. The foreign audience will not be so stirred by appeals to a national "in-group" identity which does not include them, and to the extent that they come to fear or jeer at Chinese nationalism (now or in the future), a close association of contemporary Confucianism with Chinese nationalism will bring it into disrepute.

Of course, these were just distant possibilities when Mou wrote the words and delivered the lectures that now find their way into this book and could hardly have been at the front of Mou's mind, for although he could probably have anticipated that one day in the twenty-first century people would be reading them in English—he certainly hoped so, at any rate—he had more immediate concerns, such as building a Chinese following. But the more that nationalism continues to inspire the growth of New Confucianism, the harder it becomes for it to disentangle itself and inspire people who are not Chinese nationalists. I only fear that the sizable nationalist component of his thought that is on display in these essays may ultimately detract from the prestige and appeal of Mou's philosophy, attracting some of the wrong friends and forfeiting some more reliable ones, and thereby endanger his ultimate goal of bringing to the world's attention the very real splendor and majesty of Chinese philosophy.

PART 1

The Future of Chinese Philosophy



Objective Understanding and the Remaking of Chinese Culture¹

Awhile back, the *United Daily News* carried an interview with me,² at the end of which I said the following: “What we need most today is right, objective understanding. First comes right understanding, then comes right action.” These terms, “right understanding” (*zhengjie* 正解) and “right action” (*zhengxing* 正行), are imitations of the wording of Buddhism’s eightfold path. Buddhism teaches people that there are eight right ways for cultivation, also called the “eightfold sagely way,” namely: right views, right intention, right speech, right livelihood, right action, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The notions of “right understanding” and “right action” are encompassed therein. Put simply, right understanding refers to a right and proper understanding of things, and right action is right and proper application. Why in this age particularly do we need right understanding and right action? I have a few impressions that I think would be exactly right to bring up at this “International Conference on New Confucianism.”

A few years ago on the mainland, in Hubei, there was a commemorative meeting to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Xiong Shili.³ They published a commemorative volume, in which they seem to have collected relevant articles from around the mainland, though very few were

- 1 “Keguan de liaojie yu Zhongguo wenhua zhi zaizao 客關的瞭解與中國文化之再造.” Given as the keynote address at the first International Conference on New Confucianism at the Taipei Central Library on December 29, 1990 (though *MXQ* vol. 32: 80 gives the date as Dec. 27) and edited by Wang Caigui. Originally published in *Ehu yuekan* 16.11 (May 1991). Reprinted in *MXQ*, 419–438.
- 2 *Lianhe bao* 聯合報. One of Taiwan’s major news dailies. The interview was conducted on December 17 and ran on December under the title “Dangdai xin rujia: wenda lu 當代新儒家—問答錄.”
- 3 熊十力 (1885–1968). Mou’s teacher and, before Mou, the most prominent Confucian philosopher in modern China. Originally schooled in Yogācāra Buddhist philosophy, which saw a revival of interest in China around the turn of the twentieth century, Xiong famously went on to reject Yogācāra in favor of a more Confucian-flavored philosophy he created under the inspiration of the *Book of Changes*. See John Makeham, “Xiong Shili’s Critique of Yogācāra Thought in the Context of His Constructive Philosophy,” in John Makeham, ed., *Transforming Consciousness: The Intellectual Reception of Yogācāra Thought in Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 242–284.

from overseas.⁴ The articles covered three generational cohorts,⁵ the first being Xiong's, in which they included people slightly older, those his same age, and some slightly later, such as Cai Yuanpei, Ma Yifu, Liang Shuming, He Lin, and Feng Youlan.⁶ There were many of this older generation and many articles about them. The middle cohort comprised people my age, and the last consisted of people who are now still young or middle-aged. Few such figures were covered and the articles were not written well. Only the one by Zhu Baochang was written relatively well, and the worst was by Ren Jiyu.⁷ The others were largely irrelevant, simply reporting a few facts. After reading the whole volume, which was fairly representative of the world of Chinese philosophy over the last hundred years, I immediately had a sad thought: that China's tradition of learning was broken off after the death of the Ming dynasty. "Learning ended and the Way was dead and buried," as the saying goes. Right through to the late Qing and the early Republic, society's most impressive high-level intellectuals generally had real character and, in certain ways, real wisdom and aspirations. But why did they not accomplish anything? All their character, wisdom, and aspirations were virtually wasted! I always wondered what in the world the problem was.

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- 4 The conference was held in Huangzhou 黃州 in December, 1986. The papers are published in *Xuanpu lunxue ji: Xiong Shili shengping yu xueshu* 玄圃論學集: 熊十力生平與學術 (Collected papers from the sagely garden: the life and learning of Xiong Shili) (Beijing: Shenghuo Dushu Xinzhi sanlian shudian, 1990) and more recently in Guo Qiyong 郭齊勇 ed., *Cunzhai lunxue ji* 存齋論學集 (Collected Essays on Xiong Shili) (Beijing: Shenghuo Dushu Xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2008).
 - 5 It is common to hear such phrases as "third generation" New Confucians" or "the fourth generation of Communist Party leaders." But being spaced only about a decade apart, the "generations" (*dai* 代) in question are actually what the bland but precise language of social science calls "generational cohorts," demographic blocks whose members experienced major events, such as the Communist takeover, at about the same stage in life. This is why Mou is considered to be one "generation" younger than He Lin (1902–1992) even though he was born only seven years later.
 - 6 Most of these men are the subjects of chapters in Umberto Bresciani's *Reinventing Confucianism: The New Confucian Movement* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies, 2001). The exception is Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940), chancellor of Peking University from 1916 to 1926.
 - 7 Zhu Baochang 朱寶昌 (1909–1991) was a scholar of pre-Qin and Han thought and letters. Ren Jiyu 任繼愈 (1916–2009) was a professor at Peking University and was both the leading figure in launching religious studies as a distinct field of scholarship in the PRC in the 1980s and also perhaps the leading academic authority in the PRC on New Confucianism at the time.

As I eventually found, their problem was that something was missing in their lives, namely the “learning” (*xue* 學) that Confucius talked about when he mentioned “learning and having occasion to practice what you have learned.”⁸ Real character, wisdom, and determination in one’s life rely on “cultivation through learning” (*xueyang* 學養) to strengthen them (*chongshi* 充實), for that is the only way to hold them up. But the old gentlemen of that generation lacked sufficient cultivation through learning. People in society need to care about the times and care about the consequential matters of the world and the country.⁹ But people are limited, and there are so many and such great things to care about. How can we deal with them all if we rely on just a little bit of inborn natural ability and do not have learning and knowledge to strengthen and nourish them? Especially in these perilous times, the sufficiency or insufficiency of cultivation through learning becomes an extremely serious problem. Frankly speaking, “cultivation through learning” is “objective understanding.” It calls for right knowledge, not mistaken or context-less (*long-tong* 籠統) understanding.

What do I mean by “context-less?” Let me give an example. In the final years of the Ming dynasty, when the Chongzhen emperor reigned, the realm was in terrible chaos. At home there was “the Roaming King,”¹⁰ abroad there were the Manchus, and the whole country was in flames. Things were as described in the *Peach Blossom Fan*:¹¹ “For seventeen years the country [the emperor]

8 A reference to the opening line of the *Analects*: “子曰學而時習之不亦悅乎”: “The Master said, ‘To learn and then have occasion to practice what you have learned—is this not satisfying?’” Edward Slingerland, *Confucius—Analects* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003), 1.

9 關心天下家國大事 Mou’s wording calls to mind the famous words of Ming Confucian Gu Xiancheng 顧憲成 (1550–1612) which were hung in the Donglin Academy: “風聲雨聲讀書聲，聲聲入耳。家事國事天下事，事事關心” “The sound of wind, the sound of rain, the sound of words read aloud—all these sounds enter the ear. So too the affairs of the family, the affairs of the country, the affairs of the world—let them all be of concern to the heart.”

10 *Chuang wang* 闖王. In 1628, a rebellion whose leaders claimed the title “the Roaming King” broke out in north China and, led by Li Zicheng 李自成 (1606–1645), it eventually took the capital and managed to topple the Ming dynasty, leaving a vacuum of power which was promptly filled by the Manchus. In the twentieth century, many nationalist and Communist historians praised it as a popular rebellion against the dead hand of the Confucian imperial system. But not surprisingly, Mou, who has a better opinion of the Ming dynasty, views this rebellion with opprobrium.

11 *Taohua shan* 桃花扇. A historical romantic opera by Kong Shangren 孔尚任 (1648–1718) which is set in the dying days of the Ming dynasty. Translated into English by Cyril Birch, Harold Acton, and Chen Shih-hsiang (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

worried over his kingdom, calling without response to the spirits of heaven and his ancestors, helpless to summon soldiers to the rescue. Pitiless strips of white silk have put an end to his majesty's life. Wounded at heart, he walked by himself up Coal Mountain and died alone for the country and its people."¹² Finally, after killing the royal household [to spare them from the invaders], the Chongzhen emperor went off to Coal Hill and hanged himself. At that critical juncture, while the emperor was consulting in court with his assembled ministers, Liu Jishan¹³ memorialized to the emperor, saying, "If Your Highness' mind is at peace, the realm will be at peace."¹⁴ Of course there is supreme truth to this maxim, so we cannot say that Liu spoke wrongly. In the same way, in logic there are analytic propositions and synthetic propositions, and analytic propositions can never be wrong, but because they are not synthetic propositions, they offer no help for empirical knowledge. Likewise, it was of course true that "His Highness' mind being at peace" was a necessary condition of "the realm being at peace," but it was not a sufficient condition. At the point of a national catastrophe, someone needed to come up with solutions. "Knowledge" and "cultivation through learning" were crucial requirements; it was not enough for someone to quote from the *Great Learning* about how a right mind and cultivation would allow one to rule the country and bring peace to the realm. So, we could say, for someone to propose "His Highness' mind being at peace" as a policy for restoring peace to the land was twaddle. No wonder that the emperor heard this and sighed, "Pedantry!" and sent Liu Jishan back to his village to retire. The reason Liu said something so vague and impractical was precisely that he had no objective understanding of what makes politics politics.

Handling practical matters is complicated, of course, and requires learning. It is likewise with political and social matters. This truth is extremely easy to understand, so I will set that aside for the moment. I will only look at what pertains to the work of propagating traditional Chinese wisdom and what the decisive effect of lacking right, objective learning is on scholarly culture (*xueshu wenhua* 學術文化) and even the entire future of the country and the

12 Part of a song sung by general Zuo Liangyu on receiving news of the Chongzhen emperor's suicide in Beijing.

13 劉戴山 (Zongzhou 宗周) (1578–1645). Liu is honored by Mou as the last of the great Neo-Confucian masters in imperial times. Although his dismissal from court is traditionally attributed to his courageous candor, here Mou blames it on his own shortcomings.

14 An allusion to *Guanzi* 管子. See Li Xiangfeng 黎翔鳳, *Guanzi jiaozhu* 管子校注 (An Annotated *Guanzi*), vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2004), 781.

nation.¹⁵ Compared to political and social activities, the influence of scholarly culture is an influence on a virtual level (*xuceng* 虛層), but “the virtual governs the solid” (*xu yi kong shi* 虛以控實) and its influence is wide and far-reaching, which is why I call it a “decisive influence.” We should not take it lightly and think that it is not an urgent matter. But matters of scholarship are so slender and subtle that ordinary people do not discern them easily unless they are pointed out, so I will give concrete examples one by one.

Since the founding of the Republic, the most famous person in scholarly circles has been Mr. Hu Shi.¹⁶ Judging by his *Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy*,¹⁷ he may have started out as a teacher of Chinese philosophy, but in actuality he did not understand a thing about Chinese philosophy and did not get even one sentence right, and that is why he finished only the first volume and never completed the work as a whole. When he moved on to textual scholarship, studying the Chan tradition, he also did it as an outsider to the field and went about it blindly. He had no understanding of the central questions of Chan and just worked on a few peripheral issues, such as evaluating the authenticity of various editions. What essential bearing does that have on Chan? Moreover, on what basis did he claim that the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* was written by Shenhui?¹⁸ Without even doing any evidentiary

15 *minzu* 民族. The ethnic group which peoples a particular land. Concerning the nuances of this difficult term, see Zhang Haiyang, “Wrestling With the Connotation of Chinese ‘Minzu,’” *Economic and Political Weekly* 32, no. 30 (July 26–August 1, 1997): 74–84.

16 Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), also called Hu Shizhi 胡適之. Hu was indeed mid-century China’s leading public intellectual and served as the Chinese ambassador to the United States and then, immediately thereafter, as chancellor of Peking University. A rewarding English study of Hu’s career is Jerome Grieder’s *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance: Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution, 1917–1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

17 *Zhongguo zhhexueshi dagang* 中國哲學史大綱 (Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy) (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1919). Umberto Bressiani describes it as dealing “almost entirely . . . with historical questions, such as the dating of authors’ lives, ascertaining which books were authentic or spurious, and the like” (*Reinventing Confucianism*, 190). From Mou’s point of view, this is almost the opposite of real philosophy.

18 An extremely popular text in the Chan tradition, the Platform Sutra (*Liuzu tan jing* 六祖壇經) (T. 2008) is that rare latter-day Chinese sutra which openly admits that it did not originate in India. Beginning in 1930, Hu Shi wrote a series of articles arguing on the basis of archaeological discoveries at Dunhuang that the text had been written not by the “patriarch” Huineng himself but by his student Heze Shenhui 荷澤神會 (670–762). This launched a spirited debate, occurring over more than 30 years in several languages, in which Hu’s most prominent opponent was D.T. Suzuki. A partial bibliography of the

research, I can take one look at the sutra and know that Shenhui could not have written it because Shenhui's way of thinking was completely different. Shenhui's Chan was "*tathāgata* Chan," whereas the Platform Sutra's is "patriarchal Chan," the true Chan, which is something Shenhui was incapable of grasping.¹⁹ Hu Shi did not understand even that much and still insisted on arguing about it. No wonder D.T. Suzuki dismissed him to his face as an amateur, for he truly was. To have such a person for a scholarly leader and celebrity is naturally no happy thing for scholarship in our country. So he may have started out in philosophy, but later not only did he not teach philosophy, he actually opposed it. He trumpeted as loudly as he could about science and higher textual criticism, and there is nothing wrong with that, but textual criticism is work for historians, whereas Hu Shi studied neither history nor philosophy nor science. He just did textual work on *Dream of the Red Chamber*.²⁰ Can you really find science in the *Dream of the Red Chamber*? All of his learning was like this—wasted effort, with nothing to show for it. So Feng Youlan's history of philosophy surpassed his.

Feng's *History of Chinese Philosophy*²¹ did go a step beyond Hu Shi, and at least superficially the book was alright. Even now, Westerners think Feng Youlan's history of Chinese philosophy is the best, and even Yü Ying-shih²² has said so. But actually Feng's appeal is superficial, because his book takes a shortcut which most people are not in a position to see. He takes the "selected quotations" (*xuanlu* 選錄) approach, whereas Westerners writing histories of philosophy generally use an explanatory style.²³ It is not that one cannot employ that style, but his book is very cunning or, to put it more politely, very *careful*, and so it maintains an air of scholarly rigor. For very seldom does Feng

many contributions to the debate may be found in Chaucer T.H. Hu, "On Authorship of *The Platform Sutra*," *Dongya xuebao* 29 (June 2009): 355–364.

- 19 As a tradition, Chan is defined by its lineage wars and competing claims to authenticity and has a long history of taxonomic systems for rating various people's grasp of the truth. The distinction Mou is making here, between "*tathāgata* Chan" (*rulai Chan* 如來禪) and "patriarchal Chan" (*zushi Chan* 祖師禪) makes its first appearance in the *Records of the Transmission of the Lamp* (*Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄) (T2076.51.283b5).
- 20 *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢, the great novel of late imperial China. "Red Chamber studies" (*hongxue* 紅學) was also one of Mou's pastimes.
- 21 Feng Youlan 馮友蘭. *Zhongguo zhexueshi* 中國哲學史 (History of Chinese Philosophy) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1947).
- 22 余英時 (b. 1930), professor emeritus of Chinese history at Princeton University and noted public intellectual in Taiwan.
- 23 Feng tried to answer this charge in the methodological introduction to his work. *Zhongguo zhexueshi*, 22.

add any explanation of the texts he quotes. He avoids speaking in his own right and making judgments as much as possible, making it very difficult for the reader to figure out whether Feng understands the texts. When he comes to a point where he ought to say something, he adds a few perfunctory sentences. And when he really does pass some great judgment, everything he says is wrong. From this we can see that he really and truly does not understand what he is talking about. That is why, very early on, I said that Feng's book is "pustulous philosophy" (*nongbao zhexue* 膿包哲學). The thing about a pustule is that, on the outside, it is shiny and bright but impenetrable, and when you do pick through it, it is all a bunch of pus. I have never cared for that kind of book. The first volume is alright, mostly because he uses his knowledge of logic to sort out the School of Names²⁴ and does fairly well at that. But everything else he says about the Confucians and Daoists is no good. He does a bad job of the whole pre-Qin period. The Wei-Jin Daoists and Sui-Tang Buddhists who follow are even harder, and he is a complete layman there; and on Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism he is a layman among laymen. He thinks he understands Master Zhu, but he does not seem to understand that Zhu is a Neo-Confucian and not a Western neo-realist, for he uses neo-realism to explain Master Zhu, which of course is wrong. Later he even presents a "new rational philosophy" in the Cheng-Zhu mould.²⁵ All of this makes him an ignorant man spouting nonsense. On the surface his *History of Chinese Philosophy* is written so seriously, and it was published with such solemn fanfare, with Feng asking Jin Yuelin and Chen Yinke to review it.²⁶ But actually Jin Yuelin's expertise lay elsewhere, and though Chen Yinke was a historian, he did not deal with philosophy. Still, he was much better informed than Feng and did manage to point out some defects

24 *mingjia* 名家. A loose category for various philosophers of the Warring States period (479–221 BCE). Two of the figures most frequently given this label, Hui Shi 惠施 and Gongsun Long 公孫龍, make famous appearances as foils in the *Zhuangzi* and the *Mengzi* respectively.

25 Unlike other Confucians of his generation, Feng rejected the Wang Yangming tradition, centered on a transcendent moral mind, for a system based on Zhu Xi. Bresciani writes, "He purposely ignored the 'moral mind' issue, thinking it either obsolete in our modern age, or not grounded in science and logic" (*Reinventing Confucianism*, 208). "New Rational Philosophy" (*xin lixue* 心理學) is the title of his 1939 monograph (Changsha: Shangwu).

26 Jin Yuelin 金岳霖 (1895–1984) received a Ph.D. in political science at Columbia and taught philosophy in Beijing when Mou studied there. He is remembered chiefly for his work in logic and epistemology. Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890–1969), ethnically a Hakka, was a historian of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Tang, and Song who also taught at Tsinghua. He stayed on the mainland after 1949 and died during the Cultural Revolution after suffering persecution.

in the work, but Feng refused to acknowledge them. Chen Yinke certainly was extraordinary, and he certainly was within his expertise in doing critical historical research, but he also had his shortcomings. I call him a “princely type” (*gongzi xing* 公子型) of historian, for in his demeanor as a person and a scholar he had a princely air. There is nothing wrong with having a princely air; we won’t go into that just now. Scholars of Chinese history in modern times have been fairly accomplished. For Shang and Zhou history, Wang Guowei²⁷ is the best; for the Qin and Han history it is Qian Mu;²⁸ and for Sui and Tang history it is Chen Yinke. For Song history no one is outstanding, and for Ming and Qing history, Meng Sen²⁹ is the best. All of this is acknowledged by everyone. The reason for the historians’ accomplishments is that they were on the right track (*shang le guidao* 上了軌道) and had the objective understanding that made them experts. But modern Chinese people’s discussions of Chinese philosophy have not gotten on track. Feng’s *History of Chinese Philosophy*, for example, does not even touch on the core questions of the successive periods in the development of Chinese philosophy,³⁰ much less say anything of value. The existence of such a book, not to mention its being universally recognized by East and West as a representative work, shows that Chinese people of this era are so lame that they are a disgrace to our ancestors and a disgrace to the whole world. It is a humiliation for all the people of China.

How else can we tell that Feng Youlan did not understand Chinese philosophy? In the commemorative volume for Xiong Shili, there was also an article by Feng Youlan. Writing at the advanced age of more than 90 and having authored so many books, he really ought to have had some kind of insights to share. So who would have guessed that he would say that the dispute in Xiong’s

27 王國維 (1877–1927), Qing loyalist, professor at Tsinghua University, and luminary of the “national studies” (*guoxue* 國學) movement. Wang was one of the first of a generation that had classical educations early in life but in young adulthood turned to Western learning mediated through Japanese translations. Wang ended his own life in Kunming Lake at the Summer Palace.

28 錢穆 (1895–1990). Eminent historian who taught at Peking University during Mou’s time there and later founded New Asia College in Hong Kong, where Mou taught beginning in the early 1960s. Qian also taught historian Yü Ying-shih, mentioned above. Mou refers to Qian by his courtesy name, Qian Binsi 錢賓四.

29 孟森 (1868–1937) was a professor of history at Peking University during Mou’s time there. Mou uses his literary name, Meng Xinshi 孟心史.

30 Mou explains what he believes these core questions or in “Ten Great Doctrinal Disputes” and “The Rise of Buddhist Learning in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang,” which appear in this volume.

*New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*³¹ with the old Yogācāra was the revival of an age-old question? He was saying that the ancients had already discussed these problems and now they were merely bringing them up again! I was stunned to read that. I looked closer to see what these old questions were which had been revived, and it turned out that Feng was referring to the discussion on the Northern and Southern Dynasties about whether the spirit dies or not. I feel that is utterest rubbish. How could anyone think that the difference between Xiong's *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness* and Xuanzang's *Treatise Establishing Consciousness-Only*³² has anything to do with whether the spirit dies or not? What side did he suppose that Xiong was taking, that the spirit is destroyed or not destroyed? And what about Xuanzang's *Treatise*? Did Feng suppose that it was arguing for destruction or non-destruction? I cannot find any connection there. This kind of deliberately shocking claim is simply pathetic. Feng did not even have any grasp on where the crux of the debate over whether the spirit is destroyed or not is, and he had even less hope of understanding those much higher developments in Buddhism, so there is not much credibility to his self-assured proclamations.

And as for Liang Shuming, Ma Yifu, and my teacher Xiong Shili,³³ in what I am calling “objective understanding” they were all deficient. Liang was an amazing man who dared to oppose Mao Zedong and Jiang Qing's Gang of Four.³⁴ That was amazing. But he was eventually stifled by Mao, so that when

31 Xiong Shili 熊十力, *Xin weishi lun: wenyanywen ben* 新唯識論: 文言文本 (New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness: Classical Edition), in *Xiong Shili quanji* 熊十力全集 (Complete Works of Xiong Shili), vol. 2 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu, 2001). See translation by John Makeham (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

32 *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論 (Skt. **Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi-śāstra*) (T1585), considered in the Chinese tradition to be the definitive work on Yogācāra. Xiong gave his own book the title he did to show that it was a response to this work.

33 Wang Ruhua 王汝華 has written a formidably detailed prosopography of the three men in *Xiandai rujia san sheng (shang): Liang Shuming, Xiong Shili, Ma Yifu de jiaoyi jishi* 現代儒家三聖: 梁漱溟、熊十力、馬一浮的交誼紀實 (Three Sages of Modern Confucianism, Part I: A Record of the Friendship of Liang Shuming, Xiong Shili, and Ma Yifu) (Taipei: Xinrui wenchuang, 2012).

34 The “Gang of Four” (*si ren bang* 四人幫), which included Mou's wife Jiang Qing 江青, were a radical Communist Party faction which was politically ascendant during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and is officially blamed for its abuses. After their downfall in 1976, the four were given a show trial and convicted.

Guy Alitto gives a memorable account of Liang standing firm in the face of Mao's “unprecedented public tantrum” and “technicolor invective” against him session of the Central People's Government Council as Liang remonstrated against Mao (Alitto, *Last Confucian*, 1–3).

Mao finally died, Liang even said that even though Mao's later years were spent licentiously, in any case he was an extraordinary (*feifan* 非凡) man. When I read that Liang had said this, I was very sad for a time. Why would a man who aspired to sagehood like Liang say something so inappropriate? Why would he admire Mao Zedong? Actually Liang's learning and knowledge of China and his cultural consciousness were scant, and it is only because of this that he could make such a judgment. He was different from Xiong Shili. Xiong sometimes made mistakes when he was teaching, but he was very strong in his national cultural consciousness and his consciousness of vertical continuity,³⁵ where Liang was very lacking. Liang's mindset was on a horizontal plane.³⁶ For example, his theory of "village construction"³⁷ was based on a horizontal understanding. He did not approach the understanding of Chinese society through the evolution of Chinese history and culture but instead only tried to think up programs by looking at the folk customs there before his eyes. The representative statement of his understanding of Chinese culture can be found in his *Essentials of Chinese Culture*, where he says, "Ethical principles are the common standard; the professional vocations are just distinct paths."³⁸ This understanding is not wrong, but if you stop there, you only get an understanding of the actual social situation, not the culture that made the society take the

35 *zongguan yishi* 縱貫意識. Mou may mean partly Xiong's consciousness of *historical* continuity, but generally he uses *zongguan* in a special sense, to mean continuity of the mundane with the transcendent, which is to say, something trans-historical.

36 *hengpou mian* 橫剖面. Literally, a cross-sectional plane. In Mou's terminology, this refers to the immanent, the mundane. Mou is using this as the contrast to the vertical continuity of Xiong's outlook.

37 *xiangcun jianshe* 鄉村建設. In 1924 Liang resigned from Peking University and spent the next thirteen years trying to reform China from the grassroots up through a program of rural activism. At a time when other Chinese intellectuals were concerned with national solidarity and nation-building, Liang famously said, "Chinese society is a society of villages. If you are looking for 'China', where would you look for it if not in thirty thousand villages?!" (中國社會一村一落社會也，求所謂中國者，不於是三十萬村落，其焉求之?). See Liang's *Zhongguo wenhua yaoyi* 中國文化要義 [Essence of Chinese culture], Chap. 3, §4, in vol. 3 of *Liang Shuming quanji* 梁漱溟全集 (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1989–1993).

In 1936, a year before it was disrupted by the Japanese invasion, Mou visited Liang's community in Zouping, Shandong but had a falling out with him. See Li Shan, *Mou Zongsan zhuan*, 31.

38 *lunli benwei, zhiye shutu* 倫理本位，職業殊途. *Zhongguo wenhua yaoyi* 中國文化要義 (Essentials of Chinese Culture), Chap. 5, in *Liang Shuming quanji*, vol. 3. The "professional vocations" are those of scholar, farmer, laborer, and merchant, conceived of as professions rather than as classes (§JJ, 180).

form it has or its deep historical wellsprings. If you expend all your efforts here, you will not get an appropriate understanding of the solutions to the problems of the age. Because of these shortcomings, Liang's proposal for saving the country was "village construction." What problems can village construction solve? At most it can follow the current of folk customs in peacetime and help a little with people's livelihoods and make them a little more honest and sincere, but it cannot solve China's political problems. In the end he got intimidated by Mao Zedong's revolutionary panache. Actually there is nothing wrong with village construction, but to adapt to the times you have to understand the times. For that you need right knowledge of the present age (*xiandai* 現代), which is the only thing that can serve as a compass for the times and a basis for construction. But even at his death, Liang's understanding of the times only amounted to those two lines, "We cannot take the Western road; nor can we take the Soviet road." Then what road are we to take?! Caught unprepared by the demonic Communist Party, unable to resist it, there is no use in our talking about village construction. It is fine to say that we cannot take the Soviet road, but to say that we cannot take the Western road shows that Liang could not recognize the value of Western liberal democracy. What else was he going to use to build up China? What else can deal with the Communists?

That was why Liang's cultural movement came to nothing. His purely academic research on Chinese Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism was also very weak. That is why, whenever Xiong encouraged him to drop the village construction stuff and go back to teaching, Liang's eyes opened wide and he said, "What learning do I have to teach?" Liang's knowledge of Western philosophy came from Zhang Shenfu's³⁹ classes on Bertrand Russell and Zhang Dongsun's translation of Bergson's *Creative Evolution*.⁴⁰ Bergson's status in Western philosophy is not a high one, and Russell did make a contribution to logic but did not contribute very much to true philosophy. But at that time people in philosophical circles in China worshipped them, from which you can see just how provincial our academic trends were. Where Chinese learning was concerned, Liang was very appreciative of the Wang Yangming's grand-student

39 張申府 (1893–1986). One of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party, professor of philosophy at Tsinghua University, and also a devoted student of the thought of Bertrand Russell and the translator of Russell's works into Chinese.

40 *L'évolution créatrice* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1907), translated by Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀 as *Chuanghua lun* 創化論 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1917). Zhang (1886–1973) was a Japanese-trained philosopher and political who, together with Zhang Junmai, organized the small political party to which Mou belonged in the 1930s. Most of his teaching career was spent at Yanjing University in Beijing.

Wang Dongya⁴¹ and was rather attracted to his way of “naturalness and ease” (*ziran satuo* 自然灑脫), and he wished to interpret Confucius’ idea of “humaneness” (*ren* 仁) accordingly. Actually there is some benefit to taking this approach, but ultimately it is not the right starting point for understanding Confucianism.⁴² Liang was indeed what I have been calling a person of character, wisdom, and aspirations, his cogitative powers were strong, and he certainly was creative. He was not old at all when he wrote *The Cultures of East and West and Their Philosophies*,⁴³ and he thought it all up out of thin air. But because of that, the new terminology it introduced was baseless. Its cultural typology was too simple, like his saying that the West is advanced, India is backward, and China is just right. This is all mere shadows. So yes, he had strong cogitative powers, real character, and lofty aspirations, and even a fair amount of wisdom; but without learning to give him substance, he ended up accomplishing nothing, a complete waste of talent. Such a great pity as this is something that most people cannot detect, cannot feel; even he himself was not aware of it. That book of his really has no great value, and he himself did not stand by it. In the end he believed in Buddhism and was no longer a Confucian. In these troubled times for China, to stand out by establishing one’s life-force and character is a hard thing to do.

41 王東崖 (1511–1587), also known as Wang Bi 王襞, son of Wang Gen 王艮 (1483–1541), founder of the Taizhou school, which brought what we might call a radical spiritual leveling interpretation to teachings of Wang Yangming. On Liang’s affinity with both Bergsonian vitalism and the Taizhou school, see An Yanming, “Liang Shuming and Henri Bergson on Intuition: Cultural Context and the Evolution of Terms,” *Philosophy East and West* 47, no. 3 (July 1997): 337–362.

42 *rujia* 儒家. Some scholars have suggested substituting the new word “Ruism” for the more familiar “Confucianism” on the grounds that Confucius was not so central a figure in the tradition, historically, as the name suggests (after all, he is not the originator of the tradition after the fashion of a Jesus or Śākyamuni) and that associating the early tradition with the person of Confucius in particular is an anachronism. However, Mou stands behind the English word “Confucianism,” identifies Confucius as its progenitor (see “Confucian Moral Metaphysics”), and identifies the *rujia chuantong* specifically as “the Confucian tradition” or “the Confucius tradition” (*Kongzi chuantong* 孔子傳統) (q.v. Mou Tsung-san, “Immediate Successor of Wang Yangming: Wang Lung-hsi and His Theory of Ssu-wu,” *Philosophy East and West* 23 (1974): 103–120; *SJJ*, 52, 397; *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. 1, 13).

43 *Dong-xi wenhua ji qi zhexue* 東西文化及其哲學 (1921) (*Liang Shuming quanji*, vol. 1), the book which first brought Liang his fame, was based on a series of lectures he gave at Peking University in 1920 at about the time of this twenty-seventh birthday. Though long since superseded, like many of the intellectual products of the 1920s and 30s, it had a long-lasting effect on popular outlook and assumptions that lives on even today.

Ma Yifu was the most vast and refined in his basic knowledge of the inner principles of Chinese history and culture, but it is still too much to say that he had an objective and profound understanding. How can we tell? Just after Xiong Shili wrote his *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*, Ma wrote a preface for it, using four-six parallel couplets no less. It was beautiful. In it he said Xiong's work would "shed light on root and trace / order Heaven and humanity / encompass antiquity and present / and deliberate on China and India."⁴⁴ These four verses made for very pretty praise, chiming with music and agitated with longing. But it is hard to tell whether when Ma wrote them he had any substantial meaning in mind. The last three lines are fairly easy to understand, but at the time, when I was in college, I did not get the first line, about "shedding light on root and trace." Xiong did not seem sure either. Now I know that that line is not a simple one. In that article I mentioned earlier, the best one in the commemorative volume, Zhu Baochang quotes it too, but he is careless about the meaning. That phrase, 'root and trace' (*benji* 本跡) is an erudite one, and it shows that Ma was a man of great knowledge, but I think he did not necessarily understand what it meant. The phrase "root and trace" comes from the Wei-Jin period. At that time they were trying to reconcile Confucius and Laozi and came up with a so-called "theory of trace and root." The idea of "trace and root" appeared throughout the Wei-Jin, and finally Ruan Xiaoxu⁴⁵ came along and wrote a summary of it. The Tiantai tradition of Buddhism also used it for their "critical examinations of teachings" (*panjiao* 判教). We can say that it has a long history and a depth of connotations. But for Ma to use it in commenting on the *New Treatise* seems out of place. Given that book's theme, using this word to praise it was kind of a mismatch. It was just for literary effect.

In another part of Ma's preface, he wrote, "He follows in the footsteps of all the ancient philosophers, like Wang Bi's subtle praise of the Way of the *Book of*

44 將以昭宣本跡，統貫天人，囊括古今，平章華梵。In Xiong Shili 熊十力, *Xin weishi lun: wenyanywen ben*, 6–7. A four-six parallel couplet (*si liu pianwen* 四六駢文) is a highly mannered, *recherché* genre of composition which has been criticized at various points in China's literary history as empty and formalistic.

45 阮孝緒 (479–536). Famously eremitic bibliographer of the Liang dynasty who compiled the *Seven Records* (*Qi lu* 七錄), a catalog in seven parts of every book then known to exist. The "outer chapters" (*wai pian* 外篇) comprised catalogs and Buddhist and Daoist books, and though the *Seven Records* is lost, the preface is preserved in Sengyou's 僧祐 *Extended Anthology of the Propagation of the Light* (*Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集) (T2103.52.108c–111c).

*Changes*⁴⁶ or Nāgārjuna's⁴⁷ propounding of the *Madhyamaka*." The first part likened Xiong's *Treatise* to Wang Bi's commentary on the *Book of Change*, after which Wang added his *Brief Remarks on the Changes of the Zhou* (*Zhouyi lüeli* 周易略例). Wang was extremely creative, but the important thing to realize is that his commentary actually has nothing to do with the real meaning of the book. So why would you want to compare Xiong's book to that?! If they really were alike, would you not be saying that Xiong's book is worthless? Wang was using Daoist *xuan* principles (*xuanli* 玄理) to interpret the *Book of Changes*, whereas the *Changes* is based on Confucian philosophy. Xiong's position is purely the Confucian life-creating spirit of the *Changes*. His position is exactly the opposite of Wang Bi's, and this could not be more obvious, yet somehow Ma did not notice. This shows that what Ma Yifu cared about was writing nice prose, not right, objective understanding. And as for "Nāgārjuna's propounding of the *Madhyamaka*," that has even less to do with the main point of Xiong's book. Nāgārjuna belonged to the school of emptiness, and the opening verses of his *Treatise on the Middle View*⁴⁸ are, "Neither arisen nor destroyed, neither permanence nor nihility, neither one nor different, neither coming nor going." This is what is called "conditioned arising as the eight negations" (*ba bu yuanqi* 八不緣起). It states the basic Buddhist position on "emptiness of self-nature" (*xingkong* 性空), concerning the nature and character of dependently arisen dharmas as viewed under "true determination perfect wisdom."⁴⁹ Their nature is "empty" and their character is that they are illusory. This position is absolutely the opposite of Xiong's. His *New Treatise* not only criticizes the old Yogācāra of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu⁵⁰ but also does not endorse Nāgārjuna's

46 *Yijing* 易經. A divinatory text, famous for its sixty-four hexagrams, which is numbered among China's five (formerly six) classics. Also known as the *Zhouyi* or *I Ching*.

47 Chs. 龍樹. Indian writer of the 2nd or 3rd century C.E. and seminal figure of Buddhism's *Madhyamaka* movement.

48 *Zhongguan lun* 中觀論. T1564 (Skt. *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*). This is the same text that Mou refers to in "The Place of the Tiantai Tradition in Chinese Buddhism" by the alternate name *Zhonglun* 中論. The quotation that follows ("不生亦不滅, 不常亦不斷, 不一亦不異, 不來亦不去") is its opening quatrain (T1564.30.1b14–15).

49 *shixiang bore* 實相般若. See Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, 79–82. For reasons explained in my preface to the appendix, I have dispensed with buddhological convention and translated *shixiang* 實相 as "true determination" to take account of the special, Kantian-influenced way in which Mou thinks of the word *xiang* 相. In this case, the resulting phrase, "true determination perfect wisdom," remains ugly and opaque, but no more so for the general reader than "true mark *prajñā*."

50 Chs. Wuzhuo 無著 and Shiqin 世親. Fourth-century Gandhāran philosophers, said to have been brothers, who composed the seminal Yogācāra commentaries.

Madhyamaka. So to try to flatter Xiong as “also like Nāgārjuna with his propounding of the Madhyamaka” is not only wrong but also off-key.

Ma Yifu could only compose essays and go for scholarly refinement. He had no learning to teach and his cultural consciousness was not as strong as Xiong's. He himself admitted that his compassion (*beiyuan* 悲願) was insufficient. Without enough cultural consciousness you cannot teach; without sufficient compassion you cannot teach. So he was a very pompous man. He said that people nowadays are not worth teaching, and if people wanted to study with him, they had to come to him; he would not go to them.⁵¹ And he absolutely refused to accept a university job. He stayed in solitude at the Western Lake from his youth, and at twenty-seven years of age he stopped receiving visitors or going out. When Xiong wrote his *New Treatise*, Xiong and Ma were both in their forties. Xiong heard there was this retiring scholar at Western Lake and wanted to go see him. Someone told him that Ma did not receive visitors, so then Xiong tried to find some to give him an introduction but that did not work either. So Xiong was forced to send Ma his manuscript with a letter. For a long time there was no response, and just when Xiong was about to lose his temper, Ma Yifu came to see him personally. It really was a case of “honoring him with his presence, even if he was late in coming.”⁵² As soon as they met, Xiong chided Ma, asking why he had gone so long without replying. Ma replied that if Xiong had simply written him a letter he would have responded long ago. But since he also sent his work, Ma wanted to look closely at it to get the measure of him so that, if it was worth it, he would come to visit. “And now,” he said, “have I not come to meet you?” Thus the two became great friends. We can see from this story what kind of person he was. He had too much of the scholarly eccentric about him and even though, where knowledge is concerned, he was more widely read than Liang or Xiong, he still had no objective understanding. For example, he loved to use neologisms but they seldom made sense. I once saw a letter he wrote to He Changqun,⁵³ who studied history and often went to visit Ma and also knew Xiong. He once asked Ma a question about the intellectual

51 只聞來學，未聞往教。A paraphrase of a line in the first chapter of the *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) which reads, “The rules of propriety countenance [a student's] coming to learn but not [the teacher's] going to teach him” (禮聞來學，未聞往教). Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed., *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義 (Correct Meaning of the *Book of Rites*) (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1992), 13.

52 惠然肯顧，何姍姍其來遲。A pair of proverbs that stem from the *Book of Odes* and *Book of Later Han* but are in common vernacular use.

53 賀昌群 (1903–1973). One of China's first scholars of the Dunhuang materials, He taught history at National Central University in Chongqing and Nanjing from 1942 and was department chair at the same time that Mou chaired the philosophy department.

history of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang; that is, a question about the development of Chinese Buddhism. In his response, Ma did not call Buddhism “Buddhism.” He made up a new word: “learning about meanings” (*yixue* 義學). I did not understand at first. I knew the ancients had so-called “learning about the ‘doctrinal principles’”⁵⁴ and the Song and Ming had their “learning about principles” (*lixue* 理學), but I could not figure out on what basis Ma was calling Buddhism “learning about meanings.” The principle that Buddhism teaches about is the principle of emptiness, and there “meaning” refers to “the meanings of the dharmas” (*fayi* 法義), or what we would now call concepts. For example, if we are talking about the doctrine that “all dharmas are characterized by suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and lack of self-nature,” then “suffering,” “emptiness,” “impermanence,” and “lack of self-nature” are the meanings (*fayi* 法義) of the subject, “all dharmas.” They are just concepts that can be applied as predicates to the subject. All these predicates are summed up as “the true determination according to perfect wisdom” (*bore shixiang* 般若實相). So when Buddhism talks about the “four-fold unobstructed wisdom” (*si wu'ai zhi* 四無礙智) of a bodhisattva—unobstructed in words, meanings, expression, and principles⁵⁵—it includes the item “unobstructed in meanings” (*yi wu'ai* 義無礙). Confucians talk about the “principle of nature” (*xingli* 性理) and Daoists talk about “principles of *xuan* metaphysics” (*xuanli* 玄理), so “meaning” is something everyone has. Confucians have Confucian meaning, Daoists have Daoist meaning. So how can you use “learning about meanings” to refer only to Buddhism?

I have been talking about the problems with these old gentlemen, but I do not want anyone to take this as disrespect for the older generation. Actually I hold them in high regard. In this age to have real character, wisdom, and aspirations is in itself a very difficult thing. But I simply want to emphasize the importance of “learning.” Without learning to give it substance, ultimately life is wasted. We fail our age. This is pretty much the problem with our whole age.

54 *yili zhi xue* 義理之學. In Han times this meant simply the study of what the then-antique language of the Classics meant. In the Song it came to be used as another name for learning about moral principles (*lixue* 理學), but in this list, coming before the Song-Ming Confucians, it seems to have the first sense.

55 The four are normally listed as unobstructedness in *dharmas*, meanings, words, and expression (*fa yi ci bian* 法義辭辯), without including principle (*li* 理) (cf., e.g., T374.12462c22–463a2). Mou has probably become momentarily confused with the Chengguan’s commentary to the Huayan Sutra, where he does indeed use the characteristically Huayan phrase “unobstructedness with respect to thing and principle” (*shi li wu'ai* 事理無礙) in addition to mentioning the fourfold unobstructedness of the bodhisattva (e.g. T1735.35.645b2 and 647a20).

Take my teacher Xiong Shili for example. Never a moment went by that he did not want to continue his existing *New Treatise* and add a *Treatise on Pramāna*.⁵⁶ Originally his plan had been for the *New Treatise* to have two volumes, the first a *Treatise on Viśaya*,⁵⁷ talking about metaphysics, and the second a *Treatise on Pramāna*, talking about epistemology. But he could never write that *Treatise on Pramāna*, and the real reason is that he did not have enough learning to carry it through. For Xiong had only acquired so much, and that little bit could be covered in a sentence or two. As soon as the subject of heaven as the ocean of nature⁵⁸ in the *Book of Changes* or the non-duality of substance and function came up, Xiong would sigh endlessly with admiration of those ideas, as though all the learning in the universe were contained therein. And of course there is great beauty there and a bottomless treasury, but even a bottomless treasury needs to be “opened up”⁵⁹ if it is to be systematized. Thus it was that though Xiong went on to write many books, they mostly repeated the same things. I would like to encourage anyone who would like to read Xiong’s writings to read his letters. The sincerity of his cultural consciousness flows out from the heart and is truly both moving and enlightening. As for his *New Treatise*, there is no harm in not reading it, for the system is not well-built. Even though, as I said, Xiong had only acquired a little bit, that little bit was extraordinary and unmatched. When Ma Yuan met emperor Guangwu of the Han, he sighed, “Now I know that you have the real stuff of emperors.”⁶⁰

56 *Liang lun* 量論. In Indian epistemology, a *pramāna* means a valid source of knowledge, and Xiong appropriated the term as part of his transvaluation of Yogācāra Buddhist philosophy. Like Mou after him, Xiong was interested in an epistemological theory that would honor what Mou would later call “intellectual intuition” as a valid kind of knowledge.

57 *Jing lun* 境論. A *viśaya* is an object of perception.

58 *qianyuan xinghai* 乾元性海. In keeping with his habit of transvaluing Buddhist ideas along the lines of the *Book of Changes*, Xiong identified the “ocean of nature” (a Buddhist concept) with the Heavenly or *qian* element in the *Changes*. See Guo Lijuan 郭麗娟 and Wang Mingzhen 王明真, “Xiong Shili ‘qianyuan xinghai’ sixiang tanxi 熊十力「乾元性海」思想探析 [An Examination of Xiong Shili’s Theory of Heaven as the Ocean of Human Nature],” *Liaoning Daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* (April 2010): 30–34.

59 Mou is referring to Lu Xiangshan’s comment that Confucius introduced the idea of humaneness but needed Mencius to expand on what he had taught (夫子以仁發明斯道，其言無罅縫。孟子十字打開，更無隱遁，蓋時不同也). See *Lu Jiuyuan ji* 陸九淵集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 398.

60 In the story, the general Ma Yuan meets the emperor and tells him, “Now that I see your magnanimity, like emperor Gaozu’s, I know that you have the true stuff of an emperor.” Xu Jialu 許嘉璐, ed., *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (History of the Later Han), vol. 2 (Shanghai: Hanyu Dacidian, 2004), 652.

That sentence could be applied to Xiong too. In his life the “real stuff” (*zhenzhe* 真者) was there. This real stuff is the original core learning of Confucianism. Having grasped that, one can establish oneself in the world without shame, surveying everyone, and shaping a new trend of learning. This is the key that makes a Confucian a Confucian. On this point we respect our teacher. But we should also know what his shortcomings were. Knowing them, we are cautioned, and being cautioned, we can set the direction of learning for our age accordingly. This is what is called self-awareness.

Self-awareness is waking up through objective understanding, having right views and a definite direction for the mind. To be more specific about objective understanding, in studying pre-Qin Confucianism, for example, you must look carefully at how it took shape and what its basic doctrines are. This kind of understanding of philosophical doctrine is very difficult, for it has to be a corresponding (*xiangying* 相應) understanding. That does not just depend on familiarity with the sentences themselves, or on mere theoretical comprehension. Understanding the sentences and being able to explain them does not necessarily mean understanding. There has to be a corresponding echo in life as well. If it does not correspond, then it would be better to go teach literature or history or science or something else. There are many provinces of learning, each with its strong points, and it is enough for everyone to teach responsibly within his or her field. Not everybody needs to go teach about philosophy or Confucianism. Is it not better only to teach about them if one can do it properly? Take someone like Zhou Dunyi,⁶¹ the founding ancestor of Song-Ming Neo-Confucian learning of principles.⁶² His ideas were actually very simple,

61 周敦頤 (1017–1073). Best known as author of the *Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* (*taiji tu shuo* 太極圖說) and *Complete Guide to the Book of Changes* (*Yitong* 易通 or *Tongshu* 通書). See Mou's remarks on Zhou and his work in “Three Lineages of Song-Ming Confucianism” in this volume.

62 The Song dynasty lasted from 960 to 1279 and the Ming from 1368 to 1644. Note that Mou has omitted the intervening Yuan dynasty, in which Mongol conquerors ruled. Being a foreign conquest dynasty, the Yuan has traditionally interested modern Chinese thinkers, even though it was actually the period in which Neo-Confucianism, once a marginal movement of quaint eccentrics, won government recognition and was installed as the new official orthodoxy.

Coming after a long period in which thinkers and writers were very receptive to the intellectual influence of Buddhism, the Neo-Confucians gave new attention to the many ways in which the entire Buddhist tradition was legitimately and deeply at odds with the Chinese classical inheritance. Thus, the movement began as something self-consciously and even polemically Confucian in a way that way that their Han dynasty predecessors

and he could clearly explain the message of the *Doctrine of the Mean*⁶³ and the appendices to the *Book of Changes*⁶⁴ in just a few sentences while staying true to the pattern of Confucianism. This was due entirely to having a corresponding understanding, not due to vast learning and wide reading. This is why Huang Zongxi quoted Wu Cheng's words about Zhou Dunyi: "He silently understood the wonder of the Way."⁶⁵ This "silent understanding" was a proper understanding; he understood the metaphysics of the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the Appendices to the *Book of Changes* (*Yizhuan* 易傳) very incisively. And not only do you have to have a corresponding understanding of pre-Qin Confucianism but also of Han classical learning, Wei-Jin *xuan xue*,⁶⁶ and Sui-Tang Buddhism. And whether you have this understanding, whether you are fit to teach it or not, is something you have to understand about yourself (*zizhi* 自知). Self-understanding is also a kind of objective understanding, and if you cannot teach it, then do not insist on teaching it and talking irresponsibly. For example, teaching about Chinese Buddhism is especially hard because the more than four hundred years when China absorbed Buddhism and digested and brought for Tiantai and Huayan and Chan is really the summit in the development of human wisdom. Modern Japanese may look down on Chinese

had not, since they did not have a powerful, foreign Other (that is, Buddhism) to define themselves against.

Mou famously proposed the thesis of three great epochs of Confucianism, which held "that Confucianism in its long history had seen a glorious first epoch at the time of Confucius and Mencius, saw a decay later during the Han Dynasty, then underwent a second revival, the second epoch, with the Neo-Confucian renaissance of the Song Dynasty," with the third such epoch beginning in the twentieth century (Bresciani, *Reinventing Confucianism*, 30).

- 63 The great Neo-Confucian commentator Zhu Xi nominated four works to form the core of his curriculum. Two of these, the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, purport to be collections of sayings and dialogues of Confucius and Mencius. The other two are a pair of treatises (though fairly short ones) called the *Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大學) and *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸).
- 64 Mou refers generically to "the Appendices to the *Book of Change*" (*Yizhuan* 易傳), of which there are ten, but in practice he quotes almost exclusively from the so-called "Great Commentary" or "Commentary on the Appended Phrases" (*Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳).
- 65 *moqi daomiao* 默契道妙 (SYXA, 522). Wu Cheng 吳澄 (Caolu 草廬) (1249–1333) was a leading Confucian scholar of the Yuan dynasty.
- 66 *xuan xue* 玄學 refers to a very broad intellectual trend of revived interest in texts that lay outside the official Confucian canon of the Han dynasty and showed special interest in speculation on cosmology and rulership. In English its name is sometimes translated as "Dark Learning," "Mysterious Learning," or "Profound Learning," and it has also been referred to as "Neo-Taism."

and say that Indian Buddhism is one thing and Chinese Buddhism another and that Chinese Buddhism is fake Buddhism. That is all rubbish. Of course Chinese Buddhism is different in some ways from Indian Buddhism, but not in the way that things which are parallel or opposite each other are different. It is the same Buddhism with differences in its earlier and later stages of development. Indian Buddhism only had the school of emptiness and the school of existence, not Tiantai and Huayan with their classifications of the teachings. The Chan tradition is a particular achievement, one that could only have been brought about through the wisdom of Chinese people. But even though Chan is called a “separate transmission outside the teachings,” on examination, it is also a “separate transmission outside the teachings, *within* the teachings.”⁶⁷ Its basic line closely adheres to Buddhist doctrine without fail. The eminent monks of Chinese Buddhism, like Master Zhiyi and Fazang,⁶⁸ were all great philosophers. Turning our eyes to the West, there is not even a handful who can be mentioned in the same breath with such great philosophers as these. There is truly no reason for Chinese people to underestimate ourselves. The reason that people at the time called Master Zhiyi “the Śākyamuni of the East” is that they had an appropriate understanding, whereas in the early years of the Republic, Master Ouyang of the Inner Studies Institute⁶⁹ actually looked down on Master Zhiyi and claimed that he had not ascended to the rank of bodhisattva. But actually, when Master Zhiyi called himself a “disciple of the fifth grade,” in terms of the taxonomy of the six different senses in which one can be identical to a buddha, that is equivalent to the rank of “identity with the buddhas in the sense of being similar,” which is to say, “purity of the six sense-bases.”⁷⁰ I would say that in the history of Western philosophy, only Kant came

67 See Mou's essay “The Rise of the Buddhist Learning of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang,” included in this volume.

68 Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顗 (538–597) and Xianshou Fazang 賢守法藏 (643–712) are the paradigmatic representatives of Tiantai and Huayan philosophy and hence for Mou's purposes are China's two most significant Buddhist philosophers.

69 Ouyang Jian 歐陽漸 (Jingwu 竟無) (1871–1943) founded the China Inner Studies Institute (*Zhina neixue yuan* 支那內學院) in 1921 as a platform for reviving the “genuine” Buddhism of Indian Yogācāra among Chinese laypeople. and the principal champion for the reconstruction of Yogācāra Buddhist thought in the Republic of China. Mou is being sarcastic here in calling him “Master Ouyang” or “Great Master Ouyang” (*Ouyang dashi* 歐陽大師).

70 In an earlier work Mou writes a long and abstruse essay against Ouyang and in defense of Zhiyi. Zhiyi's amanuensis Guanding 灌頂 writes that, according to Zhiyi's own account of his spiritual attainments, he “ranked in the fifth grade” (*wei ju wu pin* 位居五品) (T1911.461b; T2050.50.196b). Ouyang took this to mean that, by Zhiyi's own reckoning, he

close to purifying the six sense-bases. The others probably did not. To cultivate to that level is not an easy thing. When everybody calls Indian monks like Asaṅga and Vasubandhu and Nāgārjuna bodhisattvas, that is just a courtesy. It is difficult to say whether they actually surpassed the purity of the six sense-bases and attained the rank of bodhisattva. If you conclude that because Master Zhiyi honestly placed himself at the rank of “similarity to a Buddha” his teachings are not reliable and that “when the Tiantai and Huayan traditions flourished, the light of Buddhism was dimmed” and you insist on the reliability of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu,⁷¹ this standard of evaluation is meaningless. Where cultivation is concerned, to achieve purity of the six sense-bases is no easy thing, and in matters of learning, to “classify and explain all the sagely teachings from the time of the Buddha in the East, leaving none out,”⁷² how is that not great wisdom? Buddhism is a great teaching with endless doctrinal significance and such a long history of development; naturally the various doctrines it contains are subtle and complex. To explore the origin and development of each of them one by one to figure out their rank order of course requires great powers of comprehension and sagacity. Master Zhiyi’s critical examination of the teachings has a sound method and basis. That is what is meant by work with a high level of “objective understanding.” Taking that lightly shows that one is not objective and does not understand one’s own limits, does it not?

Why do I keep emphasizing objective understanding? Because the people of our present age are the most lacking in standards (*fadu* 法度), the most unobjective, and so they have the most need to look at things all over again in the right way. The first thing is to understand one’s own basis. Ancient Chinese learning had measure (*guimo* 規模) and method. This proper method disappeared after the destruction of the state at the end of the Ming. The Qing did not continue it, and since the founding of the Republic we have gone even farther awry, so that when the ravages of disease came, we had none of the right ideas and no way to cope. Since the tradition of learning is an integrated

had achieved only a lowly kind of spiritual attainment. The object of Mou’s essay is to show that, when Zhiyi that, he had in mind a different taxonomy of spiritual achievements than Ouyang thought, and that in fact he was quite a bit more advanced. See *Foxing yu bore* 佛性與般若 (Buddha Nature and Prajñā) (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1977) (hereafter abbreviated *FB*), 911–1023 (especially 1016ff.).

71 Though Mou himself is not especially impressed by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, these are the figures that Ouyang esteemed most.

72 Korean Tiantai doxographer Chegwan’s 諦觀 (d. 971?) “Typology of the Four Teachings in Tiantai” (*Tiantai sijiao yi* 天台四教儀) remarks, “Master Zhiyi of Tiantai used [a scheme of] five periods and eight teachings to classify and explain all the sagely teachings from the time of the Buddha in the East, leaving none out” (*T* 1931.46.774c13–14).

whole, if you do not understand yourself, still less can you understand other people. If even the likes of Liang, Ma, and Xiong could not match themselves to the past worthies, how could anyone? And as for people like Hu Shi, with his prejudiced frame of mind, how could they understand the West? With scholarly orientations like this, what will the Chinese nation rely on to give direction to its life? What will it rely on to cope with the times? That is why it is so important first to have objective understanding. The first step is to understand ourselves; the second step is to understand the West. Then we can look for the way out for Chinese culture, and we hope that our young friends will take on this responsibility. In its simple essentials, this responsibility is to revive the ancient meaning of Greek philosophy. Its original meaning was what Kant defined as a “doctrine of practical wisdom.”⁷³ And what is wisdom? Only “yearning after the highest good” is wisdom. As most people know, philosophy is the “love of wisdom,” and the “love” in question is the kind of love that is “heartfelt yearning for that highest good in human life and constantly wanting to put it into practice.”⁷⁴ That is why Kant called “philosophy” in its ancient Greek sense a “doctrine of practical wisdom.” The term is very apt. But this ancient meaning of philosophy has already been lost in the West. Nowadays all that is left is linguistic analysis under the conditions of advanced civilization, with logic having been reduced to applied computing. This does not actually count as philosophy, only the degeneration of philosophy into a technology. To enter into the depths of philosophy, it has to be that “love of wisdom,” the “yearning after the highest good.” But though the West has forgotten it, this sense of philosophy has been preserved in the Chinese tradition, as what the Chinese ancients called “teachings” (*jiao* 教). Buddhism exemplifies the meaning of “teachings” most clearly, but Confucianism has it too, as the “teaching” referred to in the *Doctrine of the Mean* when it says, “The understanding that arises from authenticity is called our nature, and the authenticity that arises from understanding is called teaching,” and when it says, “What heaven decrees is called our nature; following our nature is called the Way; cultivating the Way is called teaching.”⁷⁵ The meaning of “teaching” here is not institutional

73 *shijian de zhihuixue* 實踐的智慧學. This is Mou's translation for Kant's word *Weisheitslehre* in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, q.v. p. 108 of the Akademie edition and Mou's translation of the corresponding passage in *Kangde de daode zhexue* 康德的道德哲學 (Kant's Moral Philosophy) (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1982), reprinted in *MXQ*, vol. 15, 398. For Mou's most important discussion of the idea, see *YSL*, iv–vii.

74 Mou is paraphrasing the language of the “Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason” in Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*.

75 自誠明，謂之性，自明誠，謂之教 (*Zhongyong* 23) and 天命之謂性，率性之謂道，修道之謂教 (*Zhongyong* 1).

education as currently practiced, which takes knowledge as its standard. Rather, it is “philosophy,” the “yearning after the highest good” of a doctrine of practical wisdom.

Nowadays in the West, Anglo-American analytic philosophy is in command, and the most famous on the European continent are Heidegger's existential philosophy and Husserl's phenomenology, the “dainty philosophies” (*xianqiao zhexue* 纖巧哲學) of the twentieth century, uninformed by the great Way of the exemplary person.⁷⁶ Only that which connects upwardly (*shangtong* 上通) with noumenon or being-in-itself (*benti* 本體) counts as informed by the great Way of the exemplary person, whereas those two men do not have an idea of noumenon. So as far as I am concerned, Husserl's phenomenology, though written so tortuously and with such show, is at bottom impoverished to the point of having no content at all. For it has lost the wisdom of method and given up philosophy's stock-in-trade, so that all that is left for it is to say empty words. All those questions of theirs can just be consigned to science; what need is there for philosophy to be its cheerleader? So nowadays, we cannot rely on the West for real philosophy; we have to come back to ourselves and understand Chinese philosophy. My life's work has been very simple, it has been preliminary objective understanding, but it has already surpassed previous ages'. Thus I once wrote a letter to a student of mine on the mainland saying that my life has been very ordinary, and the only exceptional thing is that very few people nowadays can surpass me in objective understanding. I have no prejudices. I have even read some of Marx's *Capital*, and have done so with an open mind. I am not even a complete stranger to economics; it is simply not my specialty. So my disgust for Marx is not a bias but a true inability to appreciate him even after I had understood him. As another example, my understanding of Buddhism was also the result of hard work. Xiong Shili was my teacher and I was with him everyday while he criticized Yogācāra for this and that, and so I finally took Xuanzang's *Treatise Establishing Consciousness-Only*, together with Kuiji's commentary and other people's commentaries, and gave it a good reading sentence by sentence. It was hard to understand and took tough work. And after I had read it, I said to Xiong, “Sir, your understanding is not so correct.” Xiong scolded me, because he was a man with some biases. A person must not hold a prejudice, because then immediately all further judgments are skewed and some clear-seeing person has to come along and point them out. Ideally it is a teacher or someone older who points them out to the person. He does not

76 Confucius' word '*junzi* 君子' has no good English equivalent and is variously glossed as “exemplary person” (Hall and Ames), “superior person” (Legge), “principled person” (Su), and “gentleman” (Waley).

have to agree, but it is not alright to form a mistaken understanding. It is a shame that nobody could persuade Xiong. He was an undetached, stubbornly arrogant reader and could not straightforwardly and sympathetically understand the other person's position. Instead he would smash it up into shards and then go reject them one by one. Nor did he even read Confucian texts much. All he understood was "heaven as the ocean of nature" and "non-duality of substance and function," but that is not enough. And so it was that after he had said his bit, he could not write his *Treatise on Pramāṇa*. I once wrote to him and say, "Sir, your learning cannot be passed down. You will have to rely on me to pass it down or it will not happen."⁷⁷ Later, by writing *Critique of Cognitive Mind*⁷⁸ and *Appearance and Thing-in-Itself*,⁷⁹ hopefully I was able to supplement some of Xiong's deficiencies, namely the one with the *Treatise on Pramāṇa*.

The first thing to do is to look at the ancient classics and see how far the ancients got and whether there are still further advances to be made. For example, the scholars of the Wei-Jin who revived Daoism developed the idea of "xuan principles" (xuanli 玄理) very well, but as we can see now it still was not enough and so we need to re-explain Daoism. As another example, Buddhism used to be very strictly methodical and well thought out, but that has all been neglected and lost now, and moreover its style of exposition does not suit modern people. Thus I wrote *Buddha Nature and Prajñā* to serve as a re-explanation of Buddhism. Whether monastic or layman, no one gives a satisfactory explanation of Tiantai and Huayan, for this is a field for an expert, not

77 This was not just a casual observation. Consider that Mou believes that both the Confucian and Buddhist perfect teachings nearly died out in the Song for want of the right students to inherit them. Hu Wufeng's student Zhang Nanxuan 張南軒 (1133–1180) was "weak and under-talented" and unable to stand up to Zhu Xi and defend his master's teachings properly, in Mou's opinion, and the last great Tiantai apologist, Siming Zhili 四明知禮 lacked forceful successors as well and was even betrayed by his disciples, Jingjue Renyue 淨覺仁岳 (992–1064), who defected to the opposition (FB, 1181–1182; *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. 2, 432).

78 *Renshi xin zhi pipan* 認識心之批判, 2 vols. (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1956). Reprinted in MXQ, vols. 18–19.

79 I have translated Mou's *xianxiang* 現象 as "appearance" rather than "phenomenon" (though Mou himself elides the distinction sometimes, as in SJJ, 280) in response to Lee Ming-huei's observation that, in the language of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it is "appearance" (*Erscheinung*) that Kant pairs with "thing-in-itself," "phenomena" being a class of appearances that is paired with "noumena." (See Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary* [Blackwell: Oxford, 1995], 79–80.) I am grateful to Esther Su for alerting me to the disparity.

something that anyone can expect to understand after a cursory reading through a few Buddhist scriptures. Though I am not a Buddhist, I have a better objective understanding and a better capacity to delve deeply into the material and re-explain it, and that is not an insignificant contribution to the propagation of the Buddhist dharma. Tang Junyi⁸⁰ put great effort into studying Huayan, even though in fact it is not superior to Tiantai, but Tang still did not have quite enough in the way of objective understanding. Tang's understanding of Chinese culture had stopped at the level it was at when he was in his twenties and thirties. That was when he matured, and although he wrote many books later on, he was really just adding to the *amount* of his understanding, not going much deeper or making big advances. In contrast, when I undertook to write about Buddhism, I was in my fifties, when my understanding was of course greater, and it was only after grueling preparation that I could begin writing. Here is another story. When I was revising the history of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism and the texts of Master Zhu and Hu Wufeng,⁸¹ I published a pair of articles in the *Democratic Review* which had a great impact on Tang. One day I went to see him, and Mrs. Tang told me that Tang had been reciting Hu Wufeng in his sleep. That showed that he knew that my understanding had surpassed his. Some people refused to concede to my explanation of Master Zhu, but learning is objective and not conceding is not alright.

Our first step is to acquire a good understanding of the ancient classics with a quiet mind and then, in keeping with the ancient sense of philosophy as a "doctrine of practical wisdom," to prop up Chinese doctrine (*yili* 義理) and remind Chinese philosophy. "Reminting" (*chongzhu* 重鑄) calls for adapting to the times, digesting Western philosophical wisdom, and seeing what the contribution of Western culture is to the world and how we are to digest it and put it in place. I believe that for the work of absorbing Western culture, the best medium is Kant. Granted there are many Western philosophers, but we cannot use Russell or Heidegger, and still less can we use Plato or Aristotle. Continuing and reminting is something that needs the strength of the young; there is little

80 唐君毅 (1909–1978). Mou's longtime friend and benefactor and fellow student of Xiong Shili, Tang helped the undiplomatic Mou find a stable job at New Asia College, after his last post had become untenable.

81 胡五峰 (Hu Hong 胡宏) (1102–1161), son of another prominent scholar, Hu Anguo 胡安國. Hu *père et fils* commanded a significant following in the Song, though Zhu Xi eventually earned a vastly greater one, and in his writings on the history of Confucianism, Mou eventually named the then-obscure Hu Hong as one of the principal orthodox Confucian philosophers and ruled that Zhu Xi was the brilliant but errant founder of a divergent branch of the true Confucian tradition. Mou details this view in "Three Lineages of Song-Ming Confucianism."

that I can do. I recently published a translation of Kant's third *Critique* into Chinese.⁸² I am not a Kant expert but I do believe that I have a relatively good understanding of Kant. To understand Kant one must first understand his original meaning. There are more people who teach about his first *Critique* and people know a bit more about this one. There are fewer who teach about his second *Critique* and people know a bit less about it. As for the third, no one teaches about it and no one understands it. I have been translating it and at the same time working hard to understand it and understand Kant's original meaning, in order to be able then to digest it. In my view, Kant really is talking about problems and wants to solve some problems, but to see his limits in solving those problems, the only way is with traditional Chinese philosophical wisdom. Chinese wisdom can take Kant even farther. If Kant experts only read Kant and Westerners only read Western philosophy, they will not necessarily understand Kant's original meaning. Among British and American translators of Kant, each of the *Critiques* has three people who have translated it but no one person has translated all three. They are expert in just one aspect of Kant and so do not necessarily understand Kant. I am not an expert, for my foundation is Chinese philosophy, and therefore I can discern Kant's original meaning and take him a step further.

Why do I say that Kant is the best medium for reminding Chinese philosophy? I often say that "one mind with two gates" is a shared philosophical model.⁸³ From ancient times the West has recognized the two gates, as Kant did, but nowadays Western philosophy is only left with one gate,⁸⁴ and this amounts to a shrinkage in philosophy. In the West, the noumenal aspect of the one mind with two gates has not been developed well. It did receive a little of the attention due it from Kant, but it was negative, and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*⁸⁵ continued Kant's negative approach, so that all was left were a few ripples. In Russell's hands, those ripples disappeared, so that when

82 *Panduanli zhi pipan* 判斷力之批判 (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1992), reprinted in *MXQ*, vol. 16. Mou had already published a translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason* as *Kangde chuncui lixing zhi pipan* (康德「純粹理性之批判」), 2 vols. (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1983), reprinted in *MXQ*, vols. 13–14, and *Shijian lixing di pipan* 實踐理性底批判, in *Kangde de daode zhexue*.

83 *yixin kai ermen* 一心開二門. A Buddhist term, inspired by the *Awakening of Faith*, which Mou uses as a description for the typically Chinese "two-level ontology" (*liangceng cunyoulun* 兩層存有論). See his "Confucian Moral Metaphysics" in this volume.

84 That is, modern Western philosophy is only concerned with empirical, not transcendent, knowledge.

85 Translated by Mou as *Mingli lun* 明理論 (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1987), reprinted in *MXQ*, vol. 17. Mou means that Kant and Wittgenstein considered the possibility of intellectual

Russell wrote the introduction to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* he did not even mention it at all, causing Wittgenstein to believe that Russell did not understand him. Therefore when I translated the *Tractatus*, I left out Russell's introduction. Wittgenstein's point was that anything belonging to the world of value, of the good and the beautiful, is mysterious and unsayable, and that whereof one cannot speak, one must remain silent.⁸⁶ This sort of attitude is as negative as it is possible to be, and in keeping with this, on the European Continent, Heidegger and Husserl did not touch noumena at all. The two gates are the original meaning of philosophy, but now all that is left is the one gate of phenomena. Chinese philosophy happens to be just the opposite. It is best at noumena but not good at phenomena. That is also the real reason that China wants modernization. The science and democracy demanded for modernization belong to the stuff of phenomena. In the past Chinese people were not so good at this aspect, leaving us a little worse off, and thus it is that modern people curse Chinese tradition and Confucius daily. But why pin so much on Confucius? The only reason he gets dragged into this is that he did not develop the phenomenal side of things well. But actually, the ancients did a great job just in developing the noumenal aspect so completely. It is no fair for you only to want to eat ready-made foods, as it were, and to demand that the ancients do all the work for you. So if you understand the reasons behind things, you will not go around blaming the world; your mind will be at peace. And if you do not have science or democracy, well, there is nothing so extraordinary about science and democracy. Just go and work hard at learning them. Cursing Confucius helps nothing. Hu Shi was constantly going on about the virtues of science, so why did he not go *study* science instead of insisting on doing textual exegesis on *Dream of the Red Chamber*? Yin Haiguang⁸⁷ worshipped science and Russell, so why did he not settle down and do research and teach about Russell instead of using his smattering of logic to heap abuse on people all the time? Since we now know how valuable democratic politics is, let us go and diligently establish laws and obey them instead of hollering all the time in the

intuition, a kind of God-like knowledge not mediated by the senses, only to deny that it is possible for humans.

86 *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922), 27.

87 殷海光 (1919–1969). A student of Jin Yuelin's and member of the department of philosophy at National Taiwan University. He was known both for his interest in philosophy of science and also for outspoken liberal democratic views that brought him frequent trouble from the KMT government.

Legislative Yuan.⁸⁸ Hollering does not bring about democracy. Revolution is revolution, not democracy. Democracy is party politics and it means following procedure. In sum, science and democracy are realizable; “the Way is formed by someone walking it,” as the saying goes.⁸⁹ They are not objects of worship. God is an object of worship; science and democracy are not. Chinese propagandists for science and democracy divinize them, rave about them, and worship them. These are all cases of lacking right understanding and therefore lacking right action. Without right understanding and right action, culture does not come about and there is no science and no democracy.

Along with its progress as a highly scientific civilization, the West has ended up destroying philosophy, which now only handles technological questions and is reduced to a satellite of science. We have nothing against technology; we respect experts. In keeping with the Confucian broad-mindedness of the “one mind with two gates,” we affirm all these things as fitting contents for human reason, and all such fitting contents for human reason should make their appearance in history. Why should Chinese people alone not be able to bring them forth? Why is it that when I talk about “bringing forth science and democracy from Chinese culture,” uncomprehending people respond, “So have you brought them forth?” As if I am the Buddha and I can just speak the words and magically create them! If I could just open my mouth and bring them forth, then what need would there be for *you*? Where on this earth is there anything that can be resolved that way? People who ask a question like that are just stirring the pot to be provocative, and they are neither scientific nor democratic. If you can deeply understand the significance of “one mind with two gates,” then you will understand that the more advanced civilization is, the greater the need for a “doctrine of practical wisdom” and for what in China has been called “teaching” to firm up the course of our life and right the problems that come with advanced civilization. Therefore Westerners should also look to China for instruction and not just expect Chinese people to come seek instruction from them. But Westerners are able not to respect Chinese because Chinese do not read their own books and hence have no instruction to offer. For example, a few years ago there was a foreign student who wanted to study Mencius. He figured that to study Mencius, one should go to Free China,

88 *lifa yuan* 立法院. The legislature of the Republic of China. In Taiwan's democratic history it has been the scene of extremely colorful disputes and frequent fisticuffs.

89 *dao xing zhi er cheng* 道行之而成. A reference to Zhuangzi's “Discourse on Seeing Things as Equal” (*Qìwù lùn* 齊物論). Translation adapted fm Brook Ziporyn, *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009).

and in Free China the highest seat of learning is National Taiwan University, where there was a famous person named Mao Zishui.⁹⁰ The student went to him to learn, but it turned out to be as fruitless as asking directions from the blind. The student transferred to New Asia College, where I told him to study with Tang Junyi. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on inner sageliness and outer kingliness, and he said that the concept of outer kingliness is lacking in the West, which shows that he learned a few things. And so I say that Chinese and Westerners should each first stabilize their own basis and then go on to learn from one another. China lacks science and already knows that it needs to learn from the West. And Westerners, for their part, aside from the civilization of science and technology, should be able to get some ideas about how to solve the problems of cultural post-modernity from diligent study of China's three traditions of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. That is what is called reconciling (*huitong* 會通) Chinese and Western culture. Such reconciliation should be promoted where it can, though not forced where it is not necessary, just as every nation has aspects that make it unique and which therefore should be preserved and need not be made all alike. Reconcilability is something that emerges from the universality of human reason, as all the world's great teachings each have a corresponding basis in human nature, each have a universal and enduring contribution, and each can be learned from. Protestant Christianity and Catholicism have their contributions, and Confucianism and Daoism also have their contributions, and so we do not endorse using Protestant Christianity or Catholicism to usurp Chinese culture. Prejudiced denial of others' contributions is an evil of humanity and Jesus would never encourage his followers to do so.

At this juncture between tradition and creation, Chinese youth must set their gaze afar and should know that in the development of human wisdom thus far, there have been five great systems: the Platonic system, the Christian system, the Confucian system, the Daoist system, and the Buddhist system. Equipped with a fair understanding of these five systems, one can largely infer the rest about human culture of the past. And there are boundaries to what each system has contributed to humanity, so that we cannot go demanding of Confucianism that it should have contributed something of substance to science and democracy, much less call it worthless because it did not. For example, Confucians did not form themselves into political parties, yet the Confucian

90 毛子水 (1893–1988). One of the founders of the May Fourth-era magazine *New Tide* (*Xin chao* 新潮), Mao was teaching in the history department at Peking University when Mou studied there. Later he moved to Taipei and taught at National Taiwan University in the Chinese department.

ideal of human life can still train excellent politicians. Confucius does not oppose you campaigning for election, and indeed politicians can practice the Way in Confucius' stead. And a Confucian wishes for the development of science in order to improve the people's lives; that is what is meant by "establishing virtue, benefiting people, and strengthening their livelihoods."⁹¹ So everybody needs to work together and people of every kind must show their worth and not just place demands on Confucius alone, for Confucianism is not omnipotent. In this age, young people whose ambitions extend to Chinese philosophy have an extremely important and serious mission to take on, namely the reminting of "doctrine of practical wisdom." The value of a "doctrine of practical wisdom" is not just for China but for the world. Westerners are not able to take on this work, whereas Chinese people at least still have the wisdom of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism from which to choose. If you calm your minds and do not just change with every shifting wind and put forth your vitality, then on the one hand you can reclaim the basis of your own nation, and on the other you can digest Western culture, establish a great ambition and bring about great wisdom and, with true character, you can seek right understanding and act rightly, each person contributing his or her utmost and hopefully creating a new day in Chinese culture.

91 *zhengde liyong housheng* 正德、利用、厚生. Part of a list contained in the *Book of Documents* of the duties of a ruler. The original list also includes preserving the peace (*weihe* 惟和).

The Chinese Idea of Settling Oneself and Establishing One's Destiny¹

The Fazhu Study Association² has convened a conference on the question of settling oneself and establishing one's destiny (*anshen liming* 安身立命), but since I myself have no really good opinions, I will respond with two quotations. Mencius says, "Fathoming one's mind is the way to know one's nature. Knowing one's nature, one then knows heaven." And in the other quotation: "Preserving one's mind and nurturing one's nature is the way to serve heaven. Holding premature death and long life as no different from each other and awaiting them in self-cultivation is establishing one's destiny."³ Settling oneself and establishing one's destiny is today's topic. It was first brought up by Mencius, and the word '*ming*' here refers to "destiny" (*mingyun* 命運) or one's "lot in life,"⁴ and '*liming*', "establishing *ming*," means that destiny can be established. But "established" by what means? "Holding premature death and long life as no different from each other and awaiting them in self-cultivation" is the principle and the way of establishing one's destiny.

And what does "establishing one's destiny" in this sense have to do one's destiny and one's lot in life? Mencius says, "Therefore, one who knows destiny does not stand beneath a teetering wall." That is, one who understands destiny should not stand at the foot of a wall that is about to collapse. Mencius

- 1 "Zhongguoren de anshen liming 中國人的安身立命." Originally delivered as a talk at a Dec. 23, 1991 conference on "Settling Oneself and Establishing One's Fate" (*anshen liming* 安身立命) and published in Huo Taohui 霍韜晦, *Anshen liming yu dong-xi wenhua* 安身立命與東西文化 (Settling Oneself and Establishing One's Fate and the Cultures of East and West) (Hong Kong: Fazhu, 1992). Reprinted in *MXQ*, 439–444.
- 2 *Fazhu xuehui* 法住學會. A part of the Fazhu Institute, establish in Hong Kong in 1982 by Huo Taohui for the preservation and regeneration of traditional Chinese teachings. As intimated by the name "Fazhu" ("Dharma Abiding"), the institute is receptive not only to the Confucian skein of Chinese tradition but also to the Buddhist one (and the Daoist as well), and Mou will make a final nod to this ecumenism in the peroration.
- 3 The two passages, following one upon the other, form the opening of Mencius' thirteenth chapter: "盡其心者，知其性也。知其性，則知天矣。存其心，養其性，所以事天也。殀壽不貳，修身以俟之，所以立命也" (7A.1).
- 4 *mingxian* 命限. Literally, the limits set by fate. In Mou's *Treatise on the Summum Bonum* he uses this to refer to the very fact that humans are finite. That is, though we are one in nature with heaven and the cosmos, they are infinite and we are not. (See *YSL*, 142–144.)

then goes on to say, “To die in shackles and handcuffs is not the right fate.”⁵ That is, life and death are a matter of fate, and one cannot just die however one pleases. For example, during the War of Resistance when the Japanese demons bombed us, when the sirens went off we still had to take shelter. It would be unreasonable to think that because life and death are a matter of fate, we should just let them bombard us without hiding. Therefore “dying in shackles and handcuffs is not the right fate.”

But as I understand it, the phrase “establishing destiny” in the topic chosen for us today by the Fazhu Study Association is not limited solely to *ming* in the sense of destiny or one’s lot but rather should be taken a little more broadly. In addition to its purely negative aspect as destiny or lot, there is also a positive aspect. This positive aspect of ‘*ming*’ probably still does not appear in the *Analects* or the *Mencius*. When Confucius says, “Without understanding destiny, one has no way to be a cultivated person,”⁶ *ming* still means one’s destiny or lot in life. But later, when the Song Neo-Confucian Zhang Zai says, “Establish the mind for heaven and earth, and establish a life (*ming*) for the people; carry on discontinued learning for the past sages, and create peace for the ten thousand generations,”⁷ Zhang’s ‘*ming*’ means something distinct from destiny or lot in life. Those are not things that we can establish. Even sages cannot establish them, so how could a sage “establish a destiny for the people?” Thus Zhang’s ‘*ming*’ does not mean destiny or lot in life but rather has a positive meaning. Zhang’s second pair of lines picks up the first pair. “Carry on discontinued learning for the past sages” picks up “establish the mind for heaven and earth,” and “create peace for the ten thousand generations” picks up “establish a life for the people.” For in society, it is useless to rely on one individual’s cleverness, and it is useless to rely on one individual’s subjective impressions. Even the wisdom of the Buddha Śākyamuni or Confucius or Jesus Christ is not the private view or subjective philosophy of one person. These past sages cannot be ignored or taken lightly. We people of today have dirty minds and narrow vision, but the minds of the Buddha Śākyamuni and Confucius and Jesus were not like this. Therefore, it is only by carrying on the discontinued learning of the past sages that that we can espy a road, a principle, and this principle not

5 The complete passage reads: “Mencius said, there is nothing which is not fate, and it is fitting to accept it as right. Thus one who knows fate should not stand at the foot of a wall that is about to collapse. To die fulfilling one’s way, that is the right fate. To die in shackles and handcuffs is not the right fate” (孟子曰：莫非命也，順受其正。是故知命者，不立乎巖牆之下。盡其道而死者，正命也。桎梏死者，非正命也) (7A.2). Cf. *YSL*, 144–145.

6 不知命，無以為君子也 (*Analects* 20.3).

7 為天地立心，為生民立命，為往聖繼絕學，為萬世開太平 (*SYXA*, 769).

only establishes the mind for heaven and earth but also can establish life for the people and create peace for the ten thousand generations. Although the past sages are not necessarily better than modern people, in terms of science it is those who come later who excel, whereas this is not necessarily so in terms of opportunities to develop. Nowadays some people are raising the idea of post-modernity, meaning that the more advanced and developed the area, the smaller its opportunities to develop. For example, Hong Kong is the most advanced and has attained a high level of civilization, yet it has no culture. There is a difference between culture and civilization: civilization refers to the orbit in which people live and to technology for coping with the environment, whereas culture refers to upbringing and education.

I often wonder whether, in a post-modern age three or four thousand years hence, when life has been thoroughly technologized, there can still be a great philosopher the like of Kant or a great piece of literature the like of *Dream of the Red Chamber*. I think that, even if there will be, it is still a question whether anyone will be able to understand them.

Humanity's scientific and technological knowledge grows greater and greater all the time, but by contrast human inspiration continues to shrink as brains are packed full with science and technology and have no more room in them. There are two conditions for the opportunity to generate inspiration. The first is that one cannot stray too far from nature, and yet everywhere modern science and technology destroys nature; this is utterly horrible. The second is that one cannot be too comfortable, yet science and technology make people more comfortable all the time. Scientific and technological civilization may make people happy, but the more convenient life is, the more it causes substantial individual atrophy and drying up. Buddhism teaches that of the six realms of sentient beings, humans have the easiest time becoming buddhas. Why? Because sentient beings in the heavens⁸ enjoy too much happiness and cannot become buddhas, and hell-dwellers and hungry ghosts have too miserable an existence, so that it is difficult for them to become buddhas. Therefore Buddhism teaches that there are "Four Difficult Things," namely to acquire a human birth, to be born in a central land, to hear the buddhadharma, and to end *samsara*. That is, it is hard enough to have the right causes and conditions

8 In parentheses Mou adds here "e.g. long life and early death" (*ru changshou yao* 如長壽、夭) apparently in reference to his earlier quotation from Mencius: "Holding premature death and long life as no different from each other and awaiting them in self-cultivation is establishing one's fate." However, the precise logic of the remark, probably an *ad lib*, is not clear to me beyond the notion, common to both Buddhists and Mencius, that a fortunate life should not distract anyone from self-cultivation.

for human birth. It is harder still to be a resident of central lands.⁹ And someone may be teaching the dharma daily, but you will not necessarily hear it. Even if you do, you may not understand it, and so being liberated from *samsara* is very, very difficult.

In 1948 I fled to Hong Kong, and for over forty years I have remained perpetually a refugee, because I have no home to go back to. Originally I am from Qixia county in Shandong, but the people there do not recognize me now because I do not have a household registration.¹⁰ My ancestors are in Shandong, but if I return no one will acknowledge me. They will only welcome me to bring them money. I am still a refugee, something truly lamentable.

But to return to the point, in those four lines of Zhang Zai's, if we string the last three lines together to form a single core, the highest level is to establish the mind for heaven and earth. Zhang's "establishing a life (*ming*)" is different from Mencius' "establishing a destiny (*ming*)," for aside from referring to one's lot in life and destiny, it also refers to life and the normal mode and manner of living. The multitudes of ordinary people have no way of taking care of their own needs. They need a social order, so this is objective, and hence when the next line says "create peace for the ten-thousand generations," this is a reference to establishing the way of politics (*zhengdao* 政道). So who can dare claim to establish a life for the masses? As used to be said in China, the Duke of Zhou's¹¹ establishment of rites and music can be seen as "establishing a life for the people," or creating an appropriate mode of life for the masses. For the people to have a decent life therein does not mean not being subject to destiny and to birth and death, for there are still the problems such as longevity and wealth

9 *zhong guo ren* 中國人. Here Mou is using the word in its traditional Buddhist sense, meaning not "a Chinese person" but a person fortunate enough to be born in a land where the *buddhadharma* is abundantly accessible.

10 *hukou* 戶口. A common feature of local administration in East Asia, the household registration system functioned in the PRC of the Mao and Deng eras like the Soviet system of internal passports. Officially, a citizen was forbidden to live anywhere except the locality where he or she was officially registered and could be deported back to that place. Writer Chen Ruoxi depicts that process and the abuse it permitted in her story "Residency Check (*Cha hukou* 查戶口)," collected in *The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978, rev. ed. 2004).

In fact, it was possible for Mou to return to the mainland to visit or even to live, as Chen Ruoxi chose to do, but he steadfastly refused even to set foot in the PRC ever again. Mou's point here seems to be that the home of his youth is gone, vitiated by Communism.

11 Eleventh-century B.C.E. ruler, idealized and venerated as a main Chinese culture-bringer.

and so on, which is to say, the limits imposed by destiny. But there needs to be a right life (*zheng ming* 正命), and amidst birth and death there still needs to be a decent birth and death.¹² That is what is meant by establishing a life for the people. An appropriate life and death is not an easy thing, something that each of us knows, sadly. Where, after all, is there an appropriate life for the Chinese nation and for Chinese people? Who can answer me? Some people say that in China having human rights means having the right to survive, but where do Chinese people have even the right to survive?! Do you have a decent life and death? Not even Liu Shaoqi or Peng Dehuai got a decent life and death.¹³ This is the problem of establishing a life for the people and creating peace for the ten-thousand generations. This is *ming* in Zhang Zai's positive sense, broader and more affirmative than that of Confucius or Mencius. People need a decent life and death, and for that they require a path through life and a social order. This is a political question, and it is the question which we will discuss today, of objectivization (*keguanhua* 客觀化).

From the great unifications of the Qin and Han to the revolution of 1911, China was an absolute monarchy for two thousand years, and this brought with it certain problems. Wang Fuzhi¹⁴ summarized them in three points: the difficulties of succession, of dynastic change, and of being prime minister. First, it was difficult to arrange the succession of the imperial throne. Second, there was no procedure for changing to a new dynasty except for seizing the realm by war or by usurping power through revolution. Dynastic change was done by force; political power came from the barrel of a gun,¹⁵ which is not rational. None of this accorded with Confucian voluntarism, and from Confucius onward there was no true system of political law. For example, who

12 *zhengdang de shengsi* 正當的生死. Expressing the same thing in modern terms, we might say "a decent livelihood and social stability." Mou is going out of his way to use Buddhist vocabulary with this audience.

13 High-ranking military officers and Communist Party members who fell from grace with Mao Zedong. Each was persecuted very publicly during the Cultural Revolution and his health broken.

14 王夫之 (Chuanshan 船山) (1619–1692). One of imperial China's last great scholars, in Mou's estimation. Though Mou dwells here on Wang's shortcomings, in "Meeting at Goose Lake," he describes Wang, together with contemporaries Huang Zongxi and Gu Yanwu, as far-sighted but ill-starred political-philosophical reformers who, were it not for the interference of Manchu foreigners, could have brought China its own form of modernization and thus averted tragedy. (It is curious that Chinese Marxist scholars also celebrated Wang Fuzhi for his materialism.)

15 A reference to Mao's famous statement in his address to the emergency meeting of the CCP on August 7, 1927 in Hankou.

inherited the throne from Zhu Yuanzhang?¹⁶ In a society based on familial succession, it should have been his grandson through his eldest son, the Jianwen emperor, but when the prince of Yan, Zhu Di, refused to obey him, the only path open to him was usurpation and war.¹⁷ As another example, in the time of Tang Gaozu, Li Shimin resorted to armed struggle which resulted in the incident at Xuanwu gate.¹⁸ This problem still exists today, with successors being trained up unsuccessfully all the time.¹⁹

Another problem was the difficulty facing prime ministers. Under China's feudal absolutism, the demands placed on the prime minister were quite high. Since the prime minister did not hold political power, his was a difficult position. Wang Fuzhi expressed this third point very clearly; Chinese society has always had administrative governance (*lizhi* 吏治), never political government (*zhengzhi* 政治), and the prime minister was the representative figure of administrative governance.²⁰ Political power lay in the hands of the emperor, acquired for the emperor by an act of conquest rather than won rationally; the emperor was an irrational being. In China's history the emperor was an irrational being, subject to no rational principle (*li* 理). The prime minister only helped the emperor—in fact, he did not even help him, only toady to him.²¹ To summarize, these three problems never were resolved very well in Chinese cul-

16 朱元璋 (1328–1398). Founder of the Ming dynasty, also known as Ming Taizu or the Hongwu emperor.

17 After Zhu Yuanzhang died in 1398, he was succeeded by the child of his eldest son, who reigned briefly as the Jianwen 建文 emperor. However, he was overthrown in 1402 by his uncle Zhu Di 朱棣, the late emperor's fourth son.

18 The founding emperor of the Tang, Gaozu 高祖, was thrust aside by his son Li Shimin 李世民 after the latter ambushed his eldest brother, the crown prince, outside the palace gate in 618.

19 Note that when Mou delivered this address, Taiwan was still almost a decade away from what was widely billed as the first peaceful transition of political power in China's history, the 2000 election of opposition candidate Chen Shuibian, and on the mainland Chinese were still worrying about the political tumult or even civil war that they feared could erupt from a power vacuum after the death of Deng Xiaoping, who was still the Communist Party's "gray eminence."

20 Mou expands on this distinction in a lecture on "The Significance of the Legalist Political Framework." The key difference, he explains, is that in "administrative governance," the prime minister and other members of the bureaucracy are merely civil servants and so they can only implement policy, not make policy. That power is reserved to the monarch (§JJ, 179).

21 *bangmang* 幫忙, *bangxian* 幫閑. Mou has a great deal to say about such "toadying" in his essay "The Rise of Buddhist Learning in the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Sui and Tang," also included in this volume.

ture and the traditional system of familial succession was deficient for purposes of government and economy. Therefore China needs to modernize, and it is very important to build a system to ensure the people's livelihood.

Wang Fuzhi raised these three points about Chinese history and also Chinese culture—the difficulty of succession, of dynastic change, and of being prime minister—but even such a great thinker as he had no solutions. At the end of the Ming, Huang Zongxi also considered these things in his essays *On the Ruler* and *On the Minister*.²² Finally Wang Fuzhi also placed his hopes on a sage when he wrote, “Unless a sage arises whose supreme humanity and great rectitude may serve as an exemplar for people for a thousand years, what else can check this tumult?”²³ This is a depressing sentence, for how long does one have to wait for a sage to come along? Traditional Chinese thinkers could think of no solution, but now that we have linked up with Western culture it is no difficult problem to solve. Reasoning straight from the Chinese society they knew, Wang Fuzhi and Huang Zongxi could not solve it; it is hard to arrive at solutions based directly on the traditions of established culture. It is as Liang Shuming said: “In Chinese culture reason was precocious.”²⁴ Although it is problematic for him to say that if China had never connected with Western culture then it would always have been thus, there is some truth in it. This is what was amazing about Liang, namely that he departed from his own original path and, when he encountered a different culture, felt that glint in his eyes. Whereas before Wang Fuzhi could think of no solution, nowadays even an ordinary person could realize that there is no need to wait for a “thousand-year human exemplar.” That sort of talk is both mysterious and vague. Since Confucianism teaches the three ultimates (*san ji* 三極) of heaven, earth, and

22 *yuan jun* 原君, *yuan chen* 原臣. Chapters of Huang's *Waiting for the Dawn* (William Theodore DeBary, tr. [New York: Columbia, 1993]).

23 “自非聖人崛起，以至人大義立千年之人極，何足以制其狂流哉？” Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, *Du Tongjian lun* 讀通鑑論 (Treatise on the *Comprehensive Mirror for the Aid of Governance*), vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975), 657.

24 The famous thesis of Liang's *Cultures of East and West and Their Philosophies* (1921), in which Liang compared Western, Chinese, and Indian ways of handling the relationship between humans' will and their material conditions and concluded that, although the Chinese way of adapting the will in response to actual conditions was ultimately superior to the Western way of adapting material conditions to suit people's will, China would have been better served by passing through the Western stage of cultural development first.

See Guy Alitto, *The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), Chap. 3; Thierry Meynard, *The Religious Philosophy of Liang Shuming: The Hidden Buddhist* (Leiden and Boston: 2011), 34–37.

humanity as the way of the three powers of the universe (*san cai* 三才), the “ultimate of humanity” (*ren ji* 人極) was already established long ago; hence when Wang Fuzhi mentioned his “exemplar for humanity” (*ren ji* 人極), he was not talking about the traditional Confucian “ultimate of humanity.” Thus the problem of establishing a life for the people became a serious one. When Zhang Zai wrote that line it was an exaggeration, but looking at the state of society nowadays we can see its meaning very clearly.²⁵

Social order cannot violate the constant way (*changdao* 常道) of nature and the human heart. Likewise, everyday home cooking is exactly what is needed in real life; you cannot dine every day on fattened chicken and goose. Establishing a life for the people requires creating a path for living that accords with the constancy of nature and human nature. You do not need any special tricks to accomplish this. The thousands of years of Chinese culture have value, and so does Western culture from the times of the Greeks and Romans. It will not do simply to dismiss them as feudal or bourgeois. They both have truth to them, and they both have to be weighed even-mindedly and taken in.

If people can simply manifest rationality in an even-minded way, then what further difficulty can there be to modernizing China? There will be no need, as Wang Fuzhi and others thought, to await the appearance of a great sage. There are so many people nowadays who claim that modernizing China is difficult, oh so difficult, but what exactly is the problem? Modernization is a question of rationality; science is a question of rationality; democratic politics is a question of rationality. Are questions of rationality somehow only manageable by Westerners? Are Chinese not people too? Not rational beings? That would be absurd. To lack even this little bit of faith in Chinese people is very pitiable indeed. Why should we be unable to be as rational and modern as they? Why should we be incapable of possessing what they do? That makes no sense.

Above I have spoken about establishing a life for the people, in the objective way.²⁶ If I were to extend the discussion, in keeping with today’s theme of “settling oneself and establishing one’s destiny,” from the exterior mode of living to our own interior, to the question of our own life-force (*shengming* 生命),

25 It is not clear why Mou thinks it was exaggerated. Zhang phrases his goals in grand, meta-physical terms, but the same is true of any Neo-Confucian. I would guess that what Mou means is that when Zhang wrote in the eleventh century about establishing a life for the people, the country of Song was stable and prosperous and Zhang did not know from his own experience what it was to live in a time of deep instability.

26 Mou attaches different meanings to the word “objective” depending on context. Here he uses it in the way he often uses “real” or “real-life” (*xianshi* 現實), to refer to pragmatic, “exterior” matters pertaining to the material world, in contrast to “interior” self-cultivation.

then that is a very complicated matter indeed, not a fit subject for a few brief remarks. In the past, all the great religions and philosophies have discussed that extensively, with Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Christianity all contributing. Those are the interior questions, the obverse of the objective ones. Even supposing that external problems were all completely solved, ingeniously and without omission, we would be helpless there if we were also helpless with respect to our own interior life. Ultimately, settling oneself and establishing one's destiny is about one's own heart (*neixin* 內心); the externals are just complementary arrangements. Simply putting society in order is comparatively easy. Where the interior is concerned, traditional culture has much to contribute, whether Chinese or Western. It is as Alexander the Great said, referring to questions of one's own inner life, "Conquering the world is easy, conquering oneself is hard."²⁷ Buddhism has very profound insights about this aspect, as do the Song-Ming Neo-Confucians, the Confucian tradition, and the Daoist tradition too, but people pay no attention to this aspect at all and have forgotten their learning. Zhang Zai's dictum about "carrying on discontinued learning for the past sages" is about the inner aspect of settling oneself and establishing one's destiny. Merely talking about the external side of the past sages' philosophies is not enough.

27 Probably a garbling of Plutarch's remark about Alexander's premarital chastity, "considering the mastery of himself a more kingly thing than the conquest of his enemies" (τοῦ νικᾶν τοὺς πολεμίους τὸ κρατεῖν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλικώτερον ἡγούμενος) (Bernadotte Perrin, tr., *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. 7 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967], XXI.4).

Meeting at Goose Lake

*The Great Synthesis in the Development of Chinese Culture and the
Merging of Chinese and Western Tradition¹*

Prefatory Comments by Interviewer Lu Xuekun

At the request of friends at the journal *Legein*,² I interviewed my teacher on the eve of the International Conference on New Confucianism. Thinking of his familiar saying, that “philosophers must point the way for society,” I chose to ask the following three questions.

1. Please discuss the direction of the development of Chinese culture.
2. In a recent television interview with aTV,³ you said that Confucian thought is about “the constancy in human nature and the natural world” (*renxing zhi chang, ziran zhi chang* 人性之常、自然之常). Likewise, in your lectures you have said, “Confucian philosophy is a doctrine of practical wisdom, the guiding principle for individual living and also for social practice.” Would you speak, then, about what the responsibility of New Confucianism should be in modern times?
3. As even the Chinese mainland is seeking “opening and reform,” the relationship between Confucianism and modernization has become a hot topic.⁴ How should New Confucians respond to this question?

1 “Ehu zhi hui: Zhongguo wenhua fazhan zhong de da zonghe yu Zhong-Xi chuantong de ronghui 鵝湖之會：中國文化發展中的大綜和與中西傳統的融會。” The text of Mou’s keynote address on December 19, 1992 to the second “International Conference on New Confucianism” published in the form of an interview with Lu Xuekun 盧雪崑, a former student of Mou’s and later professor at New Asia College in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. First published in the Sunday supplement to *Lianhe bao* 聯合報 (Taipei), December 20/21, 1992. Reprinted in *MXQ*, 445–458.

The “meeting at Goose Lake” was a famous debate in 1175 between Lu Xiangshan, one of Mou’s heroes, and Zhu Xi, later the interpreter of record of the Neo-Confucian synthesis.

2 Ehu 鵝湖 (lit. “Goose Lake”). The leading journal of New Confucianism.

3 aTV 亞洲電視, a Hong Kong television station.

4 For an excellent historical review of this discussion, see John Makeham, *Lost Soul*, Chapters 1 to 4.

Mou: I will not take your questions one by one, for they amount to a single question. At the International Conference on New Confucianism two years ago, I gave an address⁵ which was a reflection on the old teachers of the previous generation, who despite their enlightening example, lacked objective understanding and hence could not meet the needs of the times. Today I will change to a different theme and speak on a couple of points as a response to your questions.

The Future of Chinese Culture is a Period of Great Synthesis

The rise of New Confucianism is a historical necessity, and so it has a historical mission to carry out. Today I will tell you about two points.

In the year of the July 7 incident,⁶ there was a Chinese philosophy conference in Nanjing which included a paper by Shen Youding.⁷ Shen was one of the smartest of the people doing philosophy, a genius not just with logic but also with philosophy. But he was not resolute and stubborn enough. The *Doctrine of the Mean* says, "Choose what is good and hold fast to it."⁸ Whatever sort of gifts you have, for example in logic, if you hold fast you can become an expert logician and contribute something. Supposing you have a gift for philosophy, if you hold fast then you may even be able to contribute at the highest levels of Chinese and Western philosophy. Sadly, Shen did not have enough follow-through and resolve, but he did have some good ideas and a lot of insight. He may not have truly understood Chinese history and culture in a detailed and deep way, but he had a general understanding of the subject. And in his paper at that conference he said that Confucianism in the pre-Qin period consisted of Confucius and Mencius and later of the Song and Ming Neo-Confucians. And in the future, he said, the trend in Chinese history would be toward a period of great synthesis (*da zonghe* 大綜和). This great period of synthesis is certain to pick up from the Song-Ming Confucians and, from that stunted quarter, advance further and respond to the needs of the times.

5 "Objective Understanding and the Remaking of Chinese Culture," included as the first essay in this volume.

6 The Marco Polo Bridge Incident of July, 1937, a prolonged skirmish that is conventionally considered the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945).

7 沈有鼎 (1908–1989). Logician then teaching at Tsinghua (Qinghua) University.

8 A reference to the *Doctrine of the Mean's* definition of the sincere person: "Authenticity is the Way of Heaven. . . . The sincere person is the one who chooses the good and holds fast to it" (誠者天之道也 . . . 誠之者擇善而固執之者也) (*Zhongyong* 20).

We commonly say that Song-Ming Confucianism was skewed in the direction of inner sageliness. By the end of the Ming, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when Wang Fuzhi, Huang Zongxi, and Gu Yanwu appeared,⁹ they already knew that Chinese history was about to turn in a new direction, that they could not continue in the direction that Song-Ming Confucians had been going for six hundred years, because it placed too much weight on inner sageliness. Thus people like Huang, Wang, and Gu began advocating openness to external things, expanding from inner sageliness to outer kingliness as well, and thus it was that they began to emphasize the pragmatic study of statecraft (*jingshi zhiyong zhi xue* 經世致用之學). But the reason that this development from inner sageliness to outer kingliness was interrupted and did not bear fruit was the Manchu Qing dynasty. The arrival of the Manchus meant that China was ruled by an alien race, and this stifled Huang's and Wang's development of outer kingliness from inner sageliness. As everyone knows, Huang, Wang, and Gu were the three great holdouts from the Ming. Wang Fuzhi stayed holed up on Heng Mountain writing books that were prohibited from being published until Zeng Guofan had them printed much later.¹⁰ Huang Zongxi's *Waiting for the Dawn* was so forward-thinking, but it was constantly blocked by the Qing.¹¹ Gu Yanwu both espoused a distinction between the

9 Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682), Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695), Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619–1692) are often named as the luminaries of the Ming-Qing transition. Mou refers to them by their literary names, Gu Tinglin 顧亭林, Huang Lizhou 黃梨洲, and Wang Chuanshan 王船山.

10 For a time Wang Fuzhi served the defeated Ming remnant, which maintained a rump state in the extreme south of the country until 1662. However, in 1650 Wang quit his post and withdrew into seclusion in his native Hunan. He remained obscure during his own lifetime, but in 1865 his writings were published posthumously by his fellow Hunanese Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811–1872), who though a servant of the Qing also supported toward a practical “statecraft” (*jingshi* 經世) turn in late imperial Confucian learning. (For more information see Daniel McMahon, “The Yuelu Academy and Hunan’s Nineteenth-Century Turn Toward Statecraft,” *Late Imperial China* 26.1 [June 2005]:72–109.)

11 *Mingyi daifang lu* 明夷待訪錄. Literally, “A Record of Awaiting an Enlightened Monarch.” The title is a clever one. *Mingyi* happens to mean “dawn,” “enlightened monarch,” and also “the Ming monarch.” Here I have used the title given to the work by William Theodore DeBary in his translation, *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince* (New York: Columbia, 1993).

death of a dynasty and the death of the world¹² and also pressed for pragmatic learning about statecraft. But because he fundamentally opposed the Manchus, his scholarly thought and his cultural spirit were not passed on.

The three hundred years of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries comprised the Manchus' Qing empire, and the Qing empire brought not even a scintilla of benefit to Chinese culture. That is China's recent history. How could it be that China's original history and culture gave rise to the Communist Party? It was the shallow intellectualism of the May Fourth movement.¹³ Why was the movement so shallow? Because of the baleful influence of mid-Qing textual studies.¹⁴ As its influence spread gradually, Chinese intellectuals lost the ability to think and to carry on with the development of thought. And because of those three hundred years of Qing rule and the intellectuals' loss of the capacity to think, the historical opportunity was lost and the movement toward and demand for a development from inner sageliness to outer kingliness was repressed. If there had been no three hundred years of Manchu rule, the natural course of the Chinese nation's development would have been little different than the West's. It was exactly during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries that the West progressed quickly toward modernization. That outward opening in thinking is evident in Huang Zongxi's *Waiting for the Dawn*. Of itself, the cultural life-force (*wen-hua shengming* 文化生命) of the Chinese nation was poised to open outward. It was only that it was repressed by the Manchus.

Shen Youding was a logician, but he had the sort of intelligence that made him enjoy discussing the big questions and the big topics. He had a gift for

12 *wang guo* 亡國 and *wang tianxia* 亡天下. The difference was between the toppling of one ethnically Han dynasty by another and the conquest of the Chinese cultural area by a foreign race.

13 *wusi yundong* 五四運動. An intellectual movement of nationalism, anti-imperialism, and cultural modernization named after a May 4, 1919 demonstration of students in Beijing protesting China's treatment in the Treaty of Versailles, which was also associated with a celebration of science, democracy, and the powers of critical reason. Scholars such as Vera Schwarcz have called the movement "the Chinese Enlightenment" (see her eponymous book, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), but Mou is enough of a cultural conservative that he blames its simple positivism and uncritical scientism for mutilating Chinese people's traditional sensitivities and thus blinding them to the evils of Communism until it was too late.

14 For Mou's detailed criticism see "The Rise of Buddhist Learning in the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Sui and Tang," also included in this volume.

philosophy, and when I wrote my book on the *Book of Changes*,¹⁵ he could appreciate it even when other people around me could not. He said my book “transformed the corruptible into the wondrous.”

The fellow had insight. During the war he said that the cultural life-force of the Chinese nation had originally wanted to open outward but had been repressed by the Manchus and that although at that time we had arrived at a great epoch of war with Japan, history would one day continue marching forward; Japan could not destroy China. So he could see that, in the development of history, the China of the future was certain to undergo a great synthesis, and that this great synthesis would take the teachings on inner sageliness of the Song-Ming Confucians and open them outward to external matters. When Shen said this, it was just a few profound words. No one understood him. They did not have his vision, because we did not understand the old teachings on inner sageliness. That year of the incident at the Marco Polo Bridge, I was only twenty-seven, so I myself did not understand them. At the time, when I saw Shen's paper, I thought there was a lot of truth to it. But he could not “choose the good and hold fast to it,” so he was not able to take that trend of great synthesis and spell out its inner structure step by step. Now, I could express it no better than Shen could, but I did recognize that his article was saying something very true. After that came the war, and with the retreat from Shanghai we became refugees. During the eight years of the war that I spent with Xiong Shili, I steeped in the core and inner significance of Chinese culture and grappled with it anew. Before one tries to open outward the external matters, the thing to do is sort carefully through the core and inner significance of Chinese culture and arrive at a penetrating, objective understanding; with that, the opening to external matters will come naturally.

When Shen said China's future would be a great synthesis, nobody could understand what he meant clearly and correctly. His talk of a great synthesis was not some grand pronouncement; those are useless. So what is a great synthesis? How does it take place? At the time we did not know. Yes, Chinese culture has a cultural life-force, it has a basis; all this is true. But beyond that, what exactly are we to synthesize? That is a hard question to answer.

15 In 1932, still an undergraduate, Mou wrote a manuscript entitled “A Study of *Xuanxue* and Moral Philosophy in China from the Perspective of the *Zhouyi*” (*Cong Zhouyi fangmian yanjiu Zhongguo zhi xuan xue ji daode zhexue* 從周易方面研究中國之玄學及道德哲學). This was later published as *Zhouyi de ziran zhexue yu daode hanyi* 周易的自然哲學與道德涵義 (The Natural Philosophy of the *Zhouyi* and Its Moral Significance) (Taipei: Wenjin, 1988), reprinted in *MXQ*, vol. 1.

What Will Control China's Destiny in the Future is Thorough-Going Mind-Only Theory

This October, Shandong University in Jinan held a conference on New Confucianism.¹⁶ An old student of mine from when I taught in Chengdu during the war named Fu Chenglun attended.¹⁷ After the conference Fu wrote me a long letter about it. A conference on New Confucianism was an amazing thing after the old campaigns like “Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius.” A professor from Shandong University talked about three contributions of New Confucianism. The first was that it was carrying traditional Chinese culture forward, after it had been bound up and made a “dead crab.” Second, it was weighing the merits and drawbacks of Confucianism for modernization. And third, it was building a model for how to combine the Chinese and the Western. This professor also discussed the shortcoming of New Confucianism, namely that it did not incorporate enough pragmatic statecraft learning. Their question was this: “What do you New Confucians have to do with modernization?” As though we were politicians! Where exactly are we supposed to go to conduct statecraft?! Science is not magic. We cannot just invoke its name and conjure it up before our eyes. This problem is everybody's problem, a problem for the nation and a problem of historical trends. With philosophy we can pave a way for it. That is New Confucianism's contribution.

At the end of this long letter, Fu Chenglun mentioned Shen Youding. Shen was a very strange man. He certainly did have some important ideas, but he seldom paid attention to things like political science and philosophy of history, and he did not discuss questions of culture. Fu's letter mentioned that back in Kunming during the war, Shen had written an article in which he said, “What will control China's destiny in the future is either the thorough-going materialism of Yan'an¹⁸ or the thorough-going mind-only theory of these areas.” By “these areas,” he meant the free world in the broad sense and, in the Chinese context of the time, the world ruled by the KMT. It was a very weird thing for Shen to say. As for the first clause, as everyone knows at the time Leftism was

16 Mou modestly neglects to mention that the topic of the conference (held October 15–18, 1992) was “*Mou Zongsan and New Confucianism*.”

17 傅成綸 (1918–2011). Fu made his home in Changzhou, in his native Jiangsu, where he was a secondary school teacher.

18 From 1936 to 1948, the Chinese Communist Party was based in the northern Shaanxi city of Yan'an. In the popular Communist imagination, it is remembered with nostalgia as a place and time when something like true communism was realized for a short time, like the Paris Commune or Orwell's Barcelona, and was also lionized for the West by books like Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*.

fashionable across the land. Everyone was leaning in the direction of Yan'an, Leftist social trends were going that way, and public opinion was all hollowed out. By "thorough-going materialism" Shen meant the whole Communist shtick, and though in fact it did take over, things have not been so simple. The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have fallen and, though it is hard to say how much longer the Chinese Communist Party will be able to hold on, sooner or later there will be no avoiding a peaceful evolution.¹⁹ Eventually the mainland has to change and undergo opening and reform.²⁰ There is no road back for them. The result of forty years of Communist Party domination of the mainland is the thorough-going failure of "thorough-going materialism." Nobody believes in Marx anymore.

With that gone, what is left is "the thorough-going mind-only theory of these areas." And what is meant by a true mind-only theory²¹ and who exemplifies it? What Shen said had a kind of philosophical insight; indeed, only a philosopher could have said that. His talk of "the thorough-going mind-only theory of these areas" had everything to do with that talk he delivered in Nanjing about the "great synthesis." His thorough-going mind-only theory was just a more philosophical way of referring to that great synthesis; the two are the same thing. And times seem to have proven Shen right. The winds have changed. No one believes in materialism and Marxism anymore. Fu Chenglun's letter said that after the conference on New Confucianism, a woman who was an associate professor pointed out that no one at the conference had mentioned Marxism-Leninism. That would never have been allowed before. It was a sign that the winds had changed. Marxism-Leninism was ignored. People of a slightly older generation who expressed an interest in Confucius had to play along with the Communist Party and go through the motions of linking him to Marx somehow. None of them believed in Marx and Lenin, and in getting roped in with Marx, it was woe to Confucius. Confucius was made a symbol of mind-only theory.

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- 19 In Mao's time, "peaceful evolution" (*heping yanbian* 和平演變) had referred to the feared back-sliding from a firm Stalinist kind of politics and economy to crypto-capitalism, probably through subversive Western machinations. After the Tiananmen incident of 1989, the term became shorthand for the fate of the Soviet empire and, among the Party faithful, retained its connotations of foreign subversion.
- 20 Under Deng, "opening and reform" (*gaige kaifang* 改革開放) was the codeword for measured market and political reforms conducted in such a way as to leave the Party in political command.
- 21 For euphony, I have rendered *chedi de weixin lun* (*chedi de weixinlun* 徹底的唯心論) as "a true mind-only theory" or simply "mind-only theory" in many places below.

It is important to understand that, in this context, mind-only theory is not an abstract philosophical word. I have not read that article of Shen's so I do not know just what he argued or how. He wrote it during the war against the Japanese, when we were in Chengdu, and nobody paid attention to him. Apparently it was not very long, maybe just a few sentences. That is why I say that Shen was not firm enough in "choosing the good and hold fast to it" and that his scholarly powers were not strong enough. "Mind-only theory" is just a phrase, it needs to be filled in and given substance. It is a great system, a great synthesis. This great synthesis must be raised up, built up piece by piece. This is a difficult task and requires great effort.

The "thorough-going materialism" of Yan'an that Shen spoke of has been tried, and the result was that it failed thoroughly. The future direction of the Chinese nation, the direction of the historical trend, must necessarily be that of mind-only theory. It must necessarily be a great synthesis. That is to say, the rise of New Confucianism is a necessity of the trends of history and we must take up that responsibility. The Chinese nation is to take up the responsibility of that necessity.

Be Ever Mindful, Quietly Driving One's Plough

I am the sort of person who just quietly ploughs away. I have never been a government official, never belonged to the KMT, and of course I have certainly never belonged to the Communist Party.²² I am not a participant in this age, I am a spectator. So where my life is concerned, this is a sentence you have to pay attention to. Being a "spectator" means you find quietude amid tumult and just quietly drive your plough. That is what a "spectator" is. I have lived over eighty years, quietly busying myself at my plough. This stuff takes time! It does not matter how smart you are unless you have time.

Teaching is all I am good for. I could not work in government or do business, nor did I serve during the war against Japan. So in this age, that makes me a spectator, not a participant. All I could do was trod along behind my plough, reading and teaching my whole life. At the same time, I always held one thing in mind, thought about one problem. And what problem was that? It was the direction for the historical development of Chinese culture, how to bring forth outer kingliness from inner sageliness. That is exactly the great synthesis that Shen Youding was talking about.

22 After college Mou did work for a fringe political party called the National Social Party (*Guojia shehui dang* 國家社會黨). Li Shan gives details in *Mou Zongsan zhuan*, Chap. 2.

This great synthesis is not an empty phrase. If you want to follow the main artery of the life-force of Chinese culture and immerse yourself in an understanding of it step by step, then you must first understand yourself. It is useless to generalize in vague terms about “the cultural life-force” or “the pre-Qin Confucians.” You have to enter into it step by step and grasp the main artery of the cultural life-force of the Chinese nation. This takes a long time and arduous labor, not just a bit of mere verbiage. Simply referring to “the teaching of Confucius and Mencius” accomplishes nothing. You have to understand the wisdom of Confucius and the wisdom of Mencius. You must tap into that understanding step by step. That is what Xunzi referred to as “genuinely accumulating learning and earnestly practicing it for a long time” in his “Exhortation to Learning.”²³ Only by awakening into an understanding, step by step, of the main artery of the life-force of your own culture can you come to know how it is able to develop into a great synthetic system.

As for that step by step understanding, talking first about the pre-Qin, I wrote a few books on this, one being *Philosophy of History* and another being *Politics and Governance*,²⁴ to go from the Xia, Shang, and Zhou right through to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. This is the only way to grasp the life wisdom of Confucius and Mencius in the pre-Qin era and understand the lives of Confucius and Mencius in the context of the movement and development of history. Working my way forward, I then wrote *Talent and Xuan Principle*, covering the classical studies (*jingxue* 經學) period of the Han through the revival of Daoism in the Wei-Jin.²⁵ My *Philosophy of History* and

23 *zhen ji li jiu ze ru* 真積力久則入. Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (Collected Commentary to the *Xunzi*) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1988), 11.

Quanxue pian 勸學篇 is the first chapter of the *Xunzi* 荀子 as organized by ninth-century editor and commentator Yang Liang. I have based my rendering on John Knoblock's, in *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, vol. 1 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 139.

24 *Lishi zhexue* 歷史哲學 (Gaoxiong: Qiangsheng, 1955), a monograph about Chinese culture's failure to develop science and technology independently as well as its political future, and *Zhengdao yu zhidao* 政道與治道 (Taipei: Guangwen, 1961), an anthology of Mou's articles on Chinese political philosophy which had first appeared in Xu's Hong Kong-based New Confucian political theory magazine, *Minzhu pinglun* 民主評論. Reprinted in *MXQ*, vols. 9 and 10 respectively. Together with Mou's *Daode de lixiangzhuyi* 道德的理想主義 (Moral Idealism) (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1978), they belong to what is called Mou's “trilogy on the new ‘outer kingliness’” (*xin waiwang sanshu* 新外王三書).

25 This revival, which included eclectic reading interests and reinterpretations of Han Confucianism, was once referred to in English as “neo-Taoism,” is now more often called *xuanxue*, translatable as “dark,” “mysterious,” or “profound learning.”

Politics and Governance were about the life-force of China's original culture, the development from the Xia, Shang, and Zhou to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, and then the appearance of Han classical studies. This is a course of development that emerged from the Chinese nation's own root, which ended at the close of the Eastern Han. Westerners believe that the cultural development of the Chinese nation ended after the Han and thereafter disappeared.²⁶ But we cannot look at things that way. We believe that Chinese culture is like the proverbial "great vessel which is completed only after a long time."²⁷

The development of that original cultural pattern of Chinese nation from a single root ended at the close of the Eastern Han, and then with the Wei-Jin period the road took a turn. As the proverb says, "suddenly the road entered yet another village, full of dark green willows and brightly-colored flowers."²⁸ This was the revival of Daoism. Daoism was indigenous to China, having already emerged in the Warring States period before the Qin, but it had not yet had an effect. Its real efflorescence came during the Wei-Jin period. Thus in writing *Talent and Xuan Principle*, I found the Wei-Jin system of *xuan* metaphysics. Then, through the Daoist revival and the reception of Buddhism, the next phase was the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Sui-Tang. During

26 In particular, this opinion is associated with Oswald Spengler in the Declaration ("Xuanyan," 7, 22). Spengler's book, first published in 1918, was no longer much of a going concern in the West when the New Confucians published their Declaration forty years later, and still less by the time Mou gave this interview in the 1990s, but Spengler's star has never really faded among Chinese intellectuals. Not only does he continue to influence popular notions of geopolitical history, but he also still commands an attentive audience in New Confucian circles, where one can still find him quoted. For example, Tu Wei-ming still writes of the "Promethean drive and Faustian restlessness" of the modern West, a "Faustian drive to explore, to know, to conquer, and to subdue." See "The 'Moral Universal' from the Perspectives of East Asian Thought," *Philosophy East and West* 31.3 (July 1981), 261; "Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality, in Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, eds., *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 3.

27 *da qi wan cheng* 大器晚成. A quotation from chapter 41 of the *Laozi*, usually used as a polite reassurance for people whose aspirations for great accomplishments have never quite panned out, in much the same way that parents might describe an adult son or daughter who lacks direction as "a late bloomer."

28 *liu an hua ming you yi cun* 柳暗花明又一村. A reference to "Travelling Through a Shanxi Village" (遊山西村) by Southern Song poet Lu You 陸遊 (1125–1210). The poet writes, "After mountain upon mountain and winding streams, just when it seems the road can take me no further, suddenly it enters yet another village, full of dark green willows and brightly-colored flowers."

those periods, the life-force of Chinese culture was cut off (*duanjue* 斷絕). They were a great excursus, wandering far afield on a great byway. That was the time of Buddhist suzerainty, but ultimately Buddhism could not rule the land and empire, for even though Buddhism was absorbed into China during the Sui and Tang, what the Tang emperor Taizong²⁹ inherited was still China's old, traditional culture. It was merely that its cultural spirit was not obviously manifest. I wrote *Buddha Nature and Prajñā*, covering the transition from the revival of Daoism to the Buddhism of the Northern and Southern Dynasties and Sui-Tang, and thoroughly understood Buddhism. After Buddhism came Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism, and I wrote *Metaphysical Realities of Mind and Nature* as a guide to that subject. Through the prolonged work of writing these books, I tapped into the interior of the main artery of the life-force of the Chinese nation's culture and expressed that life-force. Through that expression, "the main artery of the life-force of the culture" was no longer merely an empty phrase. This is the only way to solve the problem of "outer kingliness."³⁰ What exactly is meant by developing "outer kingliness?" When Huang Zongxi and Wang Fuzhi called for developing outer kingliness from inner sageliness, it was the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In modern times, what we are calling for is a merging with Western cultural tradition, a great synthesis.

Building a Great Synthesis with the Mainline Chinese Culture as the Basis

A great synthesis would involve absorbing the Western traditions of science and liberal democracy. This great synthesis first needs to tap into the main artery of the millennia-long life of Chinese culture, through a step-by-step process of accumulating understanding. People like Hu Shi and the Communists may have asked, "What is this 'China'?" as though stumped, but the life-force of Chinese culture is very rich indeed. It is not China which is lacking; it is Hu Shi who is lacking. It is not the life of traditional Chinese culture which is lacking;

29 Taizong 太宗 was the posthumous title of Li Shimin 李世民, second emperor of the Tang (r. 626–649). Mou refers to him in "The Chinese Idea of Settling Oneself and Establishing One's Fate," using his murder of his elder brother and usurpation of his father's throne of an example of what was wrong with the imperial political system.

30 That is, the problem of reforming China's economic and political life through science and democracy. See Mou's "Objective Understanding and the Remaking of Chinese Culture," included in this volume.

it is the Communists and their Marxism-Leninism which are evil and irrational. So in this great synthesis, it is the mainline of our very own culture which will be the basis and which will merge with the Western tradition of the Greeks. Western science and philosophy comes from the Greeks. Modern liberal democracy has many components, with contributions from Greek tradition, from Roman tradition, and from the modern Industrial Revolution and the English Magna Carta. Western liberal democracy is also a modern product, coming in the last three hundred years, rather than something that existed from the beginning. And in the Western tradition, apart from Greece and Rome, there is also the Hebrew tradition, which is religious (Christian). These are the contours of Western culture.

What we want is a great synthesis based on the mainline of the life of our own culture, a great merger with the science and philosophy developed out of the Greek tradition and with the liberal politics developed by the West out of various causal conditions, but we do not want a great synthesis with Christianity. The relationship with Christianity is not a matter of synthesis but of “critical examination of the teachings.”³¹ We do not oppose Christianity. Western people’s faith and prayer is fine; that is their way, though it is not ours. But we can critically examine teachings, as Buddhists of the past did. We can distinguish what is the same and different in them, what is high or low, and what is perfect or imperfect.

So for this great synthesis, we must thoroughly understand the main artery of our own national culture and go through this present age, attaining objective understanding step by step. You should not make the mistake of thinking that Sui-Tang Buddhism had nothing to do with governing the realm and take it lightly for that reason. For Sui-Tang Buddhism contributed much to intellectual opening. After we first get clear about the mainline of our own national cultural life, then we can understand the Western tradition from the Greek scientific and philosophical tradition all the way to modern liberal democratic politics. Is that not a great synthesis? Such a synthesis is not just some pot of chop suey or an arbitrary assortment of cold cuts; it is an organic structure. So a great synthesis has to be approached philosophically. It is a philosophical system, Shen Youding’s “thorough-going mind-only theory.”

31 *panjiao* 判教. A Chinese Buddhist-derived practice of ranking various teachings from lowest to highest or least adequate to most adequate. One of the main reasons for Mou’s interest Buddhist philosophy was the practice of “critically examining the teachings” (the translation, couched in Kantian language, is Esther Su’s), and he succeeded at introducing the practice into the study of Confucian thought as well in his last book, the *Treatise on the Summum Bonum*.

Of Shen's two possibilities, "thorough-going materialism of Yan'an or thorough-going mind-only theory of [the free] areas," the day of thorough-going materialism has come and gone, and it thoroughly failed. And so, as luck has it, what is being born now is a thorough-going mind-only theory. This mind-only theory is a great system, but what kind of great system? Externally speaking, it is a synthesis of the two great cultural systems of China and the West. Internally speaking, in terms of the inner workings of this doctrinal system, it is what Shen Youding said: a thorough-going mind-only theory.

The Construction of a System of Mind-Only Theory

What is a "true mind-only theory?" There is nothing wrong with using the phrase "mind-only theory," but within Western philosophy there is no mind-only theory, only idealism. This has to be clarified. Neither Plato's idealism nor Kant's idealism nor Berkeley's idealism³² can be regarded as a mind-only theory. Idealism is not mind, so Western philosophy only has idealism, not a mind-only theory. What the Communists call "mind-only" or "idealism" is for them just an indiscriminate term of opprobrium. They use "idealist" and "materialist" as value labels, but they are clueless about Western idealism. Idealism is about ideas, but an idea itself is not mind. Plato's idealism is a theory of Forms. Kant's is a transcendental idealism. What are ideas? For Kant, they are concepts of reason, which are different from concepts of the understanding. Concepts of the understanding are categories, which are the conditions for accomplishing knowledge. Concepts of reason cannot represent knowledge. Therefore, Kant's thought can only be called a transcendental idealism. For Berkeley, an idea is a perceived phenomenon, not a mind but an object of mind, a particular, real object. Berkeley's doctrine that "to be is to be perceived" is a subjective percept theory (*zhuguan de juexiang lun* 主觀的覺象論). It is completely wrong to translate it as a "subjective idealism" (*zhuguan de guannian lun* 主觀的觀念論) or "subjective mind-only theory" (*zhuguan de weixin lun* 主觀的唯心論). In the West, ideas are always regarded as objects, and though objects are related to the mind, in particular to the cognitive mind, nonetheless

32 Bishop George Berkeley (1685–1753) of the Church of Ireland opposed the ascendant branch of British Empiricism, that of John Locke, with an immaterialist version in which the substrate of things' existence is the mind of God. His ideas are best articulated in his very readable *Three Dialogues* of 1713, in which the character Philonous ("lover of mind") presents Berkeley's arguments to an opponent Hylas ("matter").

they are not themselves the mind. Therefore only China has true mind-only philosophy.

China has mind-only thought, not idealism. When Chinese speak of the mind, they do not mean ideas. The “moral knowing and moral ability” (*liangzhi liangneng* 良知良能) that Mencius talks about are mind, as is his mind of the “four sprouts.”³³ When Lu Xiangshan says, “The cosmos is my mind, and my mind is the cosmos,”³⁴ the basis for this cosmic mind is in Mencius. The moral knowing spoken of by Wang Yangming is also mind. The system which came before that of the “essentially pure *tathāgatagarbha* mind” (*rulaizang zixing qingjing xin* 如來藏自性清淨心) was the “consciousness-only” tradition, which postulated an “*ālaya* consciousness,” which was also a mind, not an idea.³⁵ So only China has true mind-only philosophy. And what exactly is meant by “true mind-only theory?” It is precisely this grand system of Chinese mind-only philosophy. And what supports this grand philosophical tradition and makes it stand out? Internally speaking, this great tradition represented by the great synthesis is China’s system of mind-only theory; externally speaking, it is the blending of Chinese and Western cultural systems.

Where philosophical systems are concerned, we would do best to use Kant’s philosophy as our bridge. Kant is the best go-between for absorbing Western culture to remind Chinese philosophy and support Chinese doctrines. Kant’s framework opens up two realms, the realm of phenomena and the realm of noumena (*benti* 本體) or, if we superimpose Buddhist terminology on it, it is “one mind with two gates.” In the West, the noumenal dimension has not been developed well. In Kant’s system, noumenon has only a negative meaning.³⁶ In Buddhist talk of “one mind with two gates,” the mind in question is the essentially pure true mind which is the *tathāgatagarbha*, and it opens forth

33 *siduan* 四端. Mencius teaches that the human mind possesses an innate moral faculty and comes equipped with the “sprouts” or “beginnings” of four of the cardinal virtues: humaneness, rectitude, propriety, and wisdom (*ren yi li zhi* 仁義禮智). See *Mengzi* 2A.6 and 6A.6.

34 *yuzhou bian shi wu xin, wu xin bian shi yuzhou* 宇宙便是吾心, 吾心便是宇宙. See the “Chronological Biography” (*nianpu* 年譜) in *Lu Xiangshan quanji* 陸象山全集 (Complete Works of Lu Xiangshan), 317.

35 The *ālaya* or storehouse consciousness (*alaye shi* 阿賴耶識) is the aggregation of or container for a being’s karmas and the individuated consciousnesses (such as visual consciousness and auditory consciousness) which arise from them.

36 That is, it lies over the transcendental horizon beyond which Kant tries not to speculate (q.v. *Critique of Pure Reason* A 286/B 343–A 289/B 345). In particular, what Mou famously takes issue with is Kant’s refusal to acknowledge that humans can have “intellectual intuition.”

through the doors of True Suchness (*zhenru* 真如) and samsara (*shengmie* 生滅). The door of samsara is the phenomenal realm. What the Tiantai tradition calls the “three thousand worlds in a moment of thought”³⁷ is a reference to these two doors: there are not two distinct sets of three thousand realms, only one set. Looked at from one side it is the quiescent, True Suchness, characterized by permanence, happiness, selfness, and purity. Turning it over and looking at from the other side, it is samsaric contingencies.³⁸ And where do the dharmas of the three-thousand realms come from? Not from an act of creation by the essentially pure *tathāgatagarbha* mind, because it cannot create. So how then do they come about? From ignorance (*wuming* 無明, *avidyā*). It is only from ignorance that all these things are conjured up; take away ignorance and the dharmas of the three thousand worlds become pure “merits.”³⁹ This is what the Vimalakīrta Sūtra calls “getting rid of the sickness without getting rid of dharmas.”⁴⁰ Thus it is that Buddhism speaks of “one mind with two gates.”

The Buddhism of China’s past did a good job of covering both the “door of True Suchness” and the “door of samsara,” discussing first the latter and then the former. In the West, Kant handled the door of samsara well, which is to say the phenomenal realm, but he could not develop the door of True Suchness because Kant attached only a negative meaning to noumena. Applied to Kant’s philosophy, “one mind with two gates” refers to phenomena and noumena. But it must be understood in Chinese terms, through the mainline cultural spirit of the three Eastern teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. Trying to understand the “one mind with two gates” by means of Kant’s system does not work; it must be through the Chinese tradition. This is why I say that if you want to get a handle on what China has been doing for thousands of years, you must delve deeply into the mainline of its cultural life. Thoroughly immersing yourself is the only way to understand its strengths; otherwise “cultural life” is just an empty phrase. To paraphrase Hu Shi, where would Chinese

37 *yinian sanqian* 一念三千. See Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhistologist*, 143–145. Also see Hans-Rudolf Kantor, *Die Heilslehre im Tiantai-Denken des Zhiyi (538–597) und der philosophische Begriff des “Unendlichen” bei Mou Zongsan (1909–1995): die Verknüpfung von Heilslehre und Ontologie in der chinesischen Tiantai* (Soteriology in the Tiantai Thought of Zhiyi and the Philosophical Concept of the ‘Infinite’ in Mou Zongsan: The Linkage Between Soteriology and Ontology in Chinese Tiantai) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 156–161.

38 This Tiantai trope of “turning over” (*zhuan* 轉) the cosmos/mind, obverse and inverse, like a coin, was popularized by Siming Zhili. See *FB*, 714–720.

39 *gongde* 功德, *guṇa*. Mou is drawing this talk of “conjunction” and “pure merits” from the Flower Garland Sūtra. See Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhistologist*, 131, 133–134.

40 *chu bing bu chu fa* 除病不除法. *T* 475.14.545a17.

culture be then?! If he really does not know, then must that not mean that for several thousand years the Chinese nation was off somewhere taking a nap?

First thoroughly understand China's mind-only system, and then based on the wisdom of that system, digest Kant. For Kant's cannot be called a true mind-only theory, only a transcendental idealism, which implies that it is negative. What is positive in Kant is his empirical realism, which is limited to the phenomenal world, the empirical world. Concerning this, please see my book *Appearance and Thing-in-Itself*. The thing for us to do, then, is to take Kant's transcendental idealism and his empirical realism and, building on Chinese wisdom, turn it into a two-tiered ontology, of "attached ontology" and "non-attached ontology."⁴¹ "Attached ontology" is that of the cognitive mind (*shixin* 識心). A "non-attached ontology" is that of the wisdom mind (*zhixin* 智心), and it is this which is a true mind-only theory. Mind-only theory emerges from "non-attached ontology," and it is something that cannot come out of Western philosophy. The mind-only theory that emerges from non-attached ontology can also be called thorough-going realism (*shizai lun* 實在論). Since the wisdom mind emerges simultaneously with material suchness (*wuru* 物如)⁴² and the wisdom-mind is absolute mind and material suchness is absolutely real, even though it is a thorough-going mind-only theory, it is also a thorough-going realism. This is also what Wang Yangming means by saying that things (*wu* 物) are "enlightenment's creative feeling."⁴³ "Things without the form of things" means this as well.⁴⁴ How can one understand such a subtle principle unless by penetrating deeply into it?

41 Mou's famous "two-tiered ontology" (*liangceng cunyoulun* 兩層存有論) is a working out of his idea of "one mind with two gates" in terms borrowed in equal measure from Buddhists and from Kant. (See "Confucian Moral Metaphysics" in this volume, as well as Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhistologist*, 61–64 and Kantor, "Ontological Indeterminacy.")

Stephan Schmidt has suggested talking about these phenomenal and transcendental levels as the levels of "reality" and "actuality." See his "Mou Zongsan, Hegel, and Kant: The Quest for Confucian Modernity," *Philosophy East and West* 61, no. 2 (April 2011): 272.

42 Though Buddhist in flavor, the word seems to be a modern coinage from late-Qing Yogācāra anarchist Zhang Binglin's "Essay on the Establishment of Religion" (*Jianli zongjiao lun* 建立宗教論), where Zhang defines it as ontological substance (*benti* 本體). Mou, however, is using it to refer simply to phenomenal things.

43 *mingjue zhi ganying* 明覺之感應. See "Confucian Moral Metaphysics," in this volume, on Wang Yangming's two senses of the word "thing" (*wu* 物).

44 *wu wu zhi wu* 無物之物. A reference to Wang Longxi's "teaching of the four withouts" (*sìwu jiao* 四無教). On the translation, cf. Mou Tsung-san, "The Immediate Successor of Wang Yangming: Wang Lung-hsi and His Theory of Ssu-wu," *Philosophy East and West* 23 (1973): 104 n.2.

No Political Party Can Be Relied Upon to Bring to Life a True Mind-Only Theory

These days we demand science and democratic politics. We cannot hope for any political party to come along and provide leadership for bringing a true mind-only theory to life. Politicians cannot control such things, so there is no relying on them to come and do it for you. Besides, politicians also need to be under this great system. What does that mean? It means that this great system is a matter of philosophy and cultural direction. Amid the joining of the two great systems of China and the West, we affirm both science and democracy, and we are preparing the way for them in the realm of philosophy. Affirming a free society of liberal democracy will allow us to propound this thought, independently and in perpetuity. For it is only in a free society that we can teach freely. The KMT is a political party, and it is already a good thing that it has moved toward liberal democracy;⁴⁵ that is already a contribution to China's modernization. It would be too much to hope that it would also propound this grand system. Still less can one hope that the Communist Party would do so, for it is essentially a reaction *against* the Chinese and Western traditions, and the only way for it to return to them would be for it to be thoroughly reformed and opened up and to abandon the pernicious doctrine of Marxism-Leninism. Therefore, the only thing one can do is to supervise their democratic liberalization, protect the academic freedom that that brings, and safeguard the mainline of the Chinese and Western traditions.

Marxism belongs to the past now. On the mainland they can still be socialist, but not the Marxist kind of socialist, for Marxist socialism is purely a reaction and is ill-intentioned. So the mainland's "socialism" has to accord with the saying in the "Conveyance of Rites,"⁴⁶ that "amid the practice of the great Way, the world is for all."⁴⁷ Practicing that kind of socialism definitely requires abandoning Marxism-Leninism, for Marx's socialism does not acknowledge a universal human nature or a standard of values, but rather it tears down all moral values entirely. This is nothing other than reaction and the spirit of

45 The KMT had just ended four decades of martial law on May 1, 1991 and completed its transition to a multi-party system.

46 *liyun* 禮運. The ninth chapter of the *Book of Rites*.

47 大道之行也，天下為公。 (Li Xueqin, *Liji zhengyi*, 658.) In modern Chinese politics, this quotation is associated with Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), who is a patron saint for both the ROC and the PRC.

quantification.⁴⁸ So Marx's socialism is a "quantitative socialism," whereas a socialism that adhered to the "Conveyance of Rites" would be a "qualitative socialism." To put socialism in practice on the mainland, they would certainly have to change from "quantitative socialism" to "qualitative socialism," with Confucius in charge and not Marx.

Finally I wish to say that science and liberal democracy are matters of reason, things inalienably shared by humanity in virtue of their reason. Since it is a matter of human reason, how can anyone say that it is peculiar to the West? This is not a matter of westernization. The reason that the Communist Party of China forbids anyone to bring up "liberal democracy" is that they fear "peaceful evolution." Also I wish to say that science and liberal democracy are not just matters for philosophers but for everyone. If everyone embraces science and liberal democracy, we can bring them about. This "everybody" includes both Taiwan and the mainland. If both were to take the road of science and liberal democracy, would we not then have academic freedom? That is why I say that New Confucians must take up the necessity for that great synthesis coming about in the unfolding of history, under the guarantee of liberal democratic politics.

48 *lianghua* 量化. Mou's use of the word in this passage is redolent of his teacher Xiong Shili's distinction between empirical knowledge (*liangzhi* 量智) and innate, moral knowledge (*xingzhi* 性智).

PART 2

*Methodological Concepts and Problems of
Chinese Philosophy*



Philosophy and the Perfect Teaching¹

1

In ancient Greek, the word *philosophy* means “the love of wisdom.”² The Greek *philo* means love, and *sophia* means wisdom, hence “love of wisdom.” Wisdom is the name for having an insight into the “highest good” (*zui gao shan* 最高善). “Love of wisdom” is a yearning for the highest good, a heartfelt interest in it, a passion, a thirsting for it. So philosophy or the study of wisdom, as a province of learning, is inseparable from the highest good. And being inseparable from the highest good, it is also inseparable from practical reason. Practical reason must be oriented toward the highest good. “Highest” carries two senses, the first being “ultimate” (*jiuji* 究極) and the second being “completely satisfactory” (*yuanman* 圓滿). Here what we have in mind is its second meaning, completely satisfactory. The “highest good” of Kantian moral philosophy is best translated as “*summum bonum*,”³ meaning whole and unsurpassable good. So philosophy in the ancient Greek sense is the pursuit of the highest good, corresponding to what Chinese tradition calls “Teachings” (*jiao* 教). Whatever the sages speak are Teachings. And in fact, they need not even be spoken by a sage. A Teaching is anything which suffices to educate people’s reason and guides people to purify human life-force, by means of practice (*shijian* 實踐), and reach its ultimate extent (*zhi qi ji* 至其極). So philosophy is the study which educates people’s reason and guides them to purify human life-force by means of practice and so in this sense philosophy is a kind of lesson (*jiaoxun* 教訓), namely a lesson conducted by means of concepts and behavior, which is to say that it includes both conceptual and behavioral aspects. The concept here is the concept of the highest good, and the behavior is the behavior “through which the highest good is obtained.” Hence philosophy could be called the “theory of the highest good.”

1 “Zhhexue yu yuanjiao 哲學與圓教.” First published in *Fayan jikan* 法言季刊 4 (December 1986), based on a lecture Mou gave that October at the *Fazhu xuehui* 法住學會, part of the Fazhu Institute, established in Hong Kong in 1982 by Huo Taohui for the preservation and regeneration of traditional Chinese teachings.

2 In this article, I have italicized words for which Mou gives the English, either together with or in place of the Chinese.

3 *yuanshan* 圓善. The year before this article appeared, Mou completed a book in this subject which turned out to be his last, the *Treatise on the Summum Bonum* (*Yuanshan lun* 圓善論) (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1985). This article can be read as a very concise statement of the ideas of that book.

To love wisdom is to seek the highest good, but having wisdom does not necessarily lead to the development of a system. It is when wisdom is conceptualized and made into a lesson that it can form a system. A system is what Mencius called “a clear line of thought from beginning to end,”⁴ a conceptual lesson with a clear line of thought from beginning to end. Most of the time, a system cannot help but have some kind of slant to it, the way that people’s personalities tend in a certain direction, their natures inclining more toward probity or responsibility or a balance between the two.⁵ Since the Greeks, Western philosophy has been slanted in the direction of conceptual formation and overlooked the concern with seeking the highest good found in the ancients’ notion of “Teachings.” But philosophy in the ancient Greek sense was, in contrast, preserved in Chinese tradition, whereas in contemporary Anglo-American analytic philosophy there is virtually no philosophy left. European philosophy never speaks of the highest good and lacks a moral component,⁶ but here again philosophy in the Greek sense has been preserved in Chinese tradition. Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism could be called the philosophies of China, the three forms of practice in the East. Confucian moral cultivation (*xiuyang* 修養) is practice; Daoist cultivation (*xiulian* 修煉) is practice; Buddhist precept, concentration, and wisdom (*jie ding hui* 戒定慧) is practice. Confucians wish for people to become sages, Daoists wish for people to become True People (*zhenren* 真人), and Buddhists wish for people to become buddhas; these all amount to purifying our lives.

2

When Kant talked about the highest good or the completely satisfactory good, it was one in which virtue and happiness were merged (*defu heyi* 德福合一). That is, both virtue and happiness are required in order to be completely satisfactory. This is not how Chinese people put it. Mencius talks about dying for virtue’s sake,⁷ and Dong Zhongshu says, “Establish righteousness instead of

4 *shizhong tiaoli* 始終條理. A reference to *Mengzi* 5B.1.

5 For ease of understanding, I have changed the order of Mou’s list, which in the text is thus: “*xing zhi qing, xing zhi he, xing zhi ren* 性之清、性之和、性之認.”

6 I find this a strange claim. I can only suppose that what Mou means is that Continental philosophy does not specialize in practicing personal moral cultivation.

7 *shashen chengren* 殺身成仁. The origin of the phrase is actually the *Analects* 15.9, though Mencius of course expresses similar sentiments too (q.v. Slingerland, *Analects*, 177–178).

seeking profit.”⁸ They are talking in terms of moral significance, where virtue must be a requisite condition for happiness, but it is not right to say, conversely, that happiness must be a condition for virtue. Happiness cannot be had illicitly. To seek it one follows a Way (*dao* 道) and obtaining it is a matter of destiny (*ming* 命).⁹ Whether one wins happiness is not under one’s own control. There is also the matter of one’s individual destiny.¹⁰ This has to do with existence. But whether or not one gains *virtue* is entirely under one’s own control. One is responsible for that much. Confucius said, “I desire humane-ness, and humane-ness arrives.”¹¹ The relationship of virtue and happiness is a synthetic (*zonghe* 綜和) relationship, not an analytic (*fenxi* 分析) one. And since it is not an analytic relationship, there is no necessity involved. What then do we rely on to join the two of them together, so that there is a just requital¹² for everything whatsoever and a due proportion between virtue and happiness? People sometimes say, “Great virtue must surely bring honors and long life,” and ordinary people hope that this is the case. But in reality, it is not always so. Westerners pin their hopes for this kind of ideal coincidence of happiness with virtue on God. Thus Kant thought the existence of God was a necessary postulate—God was necessary to make the concept of the highest good possible—but in the real world (*zai xianshi shang* 在現實上), the highest good could never be attained. The spirit of Western culture thus appears as a ceaseless pursuit, a heterogeneity of mutual commotion and conflict, producing brilliance. The philosophical meaning of Teaching transformed into a Christian, religious type of teaching that goes through God rather than through practice¹³ and awakening. Christianity is unlike Confucianism, Daoism, and

8 *zheng qi yi bu mou qi li* 正其義不謀其利. Shi Ding 施丁, ed. *Hanshu xinzhù* 漢書新注 (New Annotated *Hanshu*), vol. 3 (Xi’an: Sanqin, 1994), 1768. Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 B.C.E.) is credited with winning government sponsorship for Confucianism for the first time from Emperor Wu of the Han.

9 This sentence is a quotation from Mencius: “求則得之, 舍則失之; 是求有益于得也, 求在我者也. 求之有道, 得之有命, 是求无益于得也, 求在外者也” (7A3). Cf. *YSL*, 25, 147; Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhist*, 200.

10 *mingxian* 命限. Cf. *YSL*, 142–146.

11 *Analects* 7.30. Confucius asks rhetorically, “Is humane-ness far off? [No,] I desire humane-ness, and it arrives!” (仁遠乎哉? 我欲仁, 斯仁至矣). Cf. Slingerland’s rendering: “Is Goodness really so far away? If I simply desire Goodness, I will find that it is already here” (*Analects*, 74).

12 *baoying* 報應. The word has both strong Confucian overtones (as in the phrase “*tianli baoying* 天理報應”) and also clear association with Buddhist notions of karmic retribution (*yinguo baoying* 因果報應).

13 That is, a personal spiritual cultivation.

Buddhism, which affirm practice as a way of becoming divine (*chengshen* 成神). From the very beginning, Chinese culture was already a unified culture, which Liang Shuming called a culture of precocious reason.¹⁴ As a unified and harmonious entity, Chinese culture is a single line pointing straight ahead; the mainland's Marxism is a gross distortion. China's Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism all emphasize moving through practice to reach the highest good. This unreachable highest good can yet be reached in a moment; this is what is called "sudden enlightenment."¹⁵ My *Treatise on the Summum Bonum* takes Kant's theory of the highest good a step further and explicates the *summum bonum* from the perspective of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism.

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- 14 Liang Shuming 梁瀨溟 (1893–1988), a Chinese philosopher who taught at Peking University during Mou's student years, claimed that Chinese culture had skipped an important early stage of cultural development, namely an outward-directed, goal-oriented mastery of nature (typified of course by the West) and jumped directly to the second stage. See Guy Alitto, *The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), Chap. 3; Thierry Meynard, *The Religious Philosophy of Liang Shuming: The Hidden Buddhist* (Leiden and Boston: 2011), 34–37.
- 15 *dunwu* 頓悟. In the first instance, the topic of sudden realization of enlightenment, as opposed to a gradual accumulation, is associated with history of Chan Buddhism. However, Mou sees important analogs in Daoism and Confucianism as well and sees this as one of the hallmarks of a "perfect teaching." See Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, 191–200.

Ten Great Doctrinal Disputes in the Development of Chinese Culture¹

This looks like an enormous topic, and so I would like to deal with it one item at a time, commenting on each with a few sentences so as to give a kind of outline. Even though it will be a very compressed treatment, so long as I can sketch the problems clearly, that will be enough.

Of these “ten great doctrinal disputes in the development of Chinese culture,” the first nine are ones which have come down to us through history, and the tenth is a problem that belongs to the present era. Thus there are ten in total. For I believe that our own era is bound up with the past, not something isolated. Modern people think on the horizontal plane for the most part, disconnected from history. In the development of national culture,² this is abnormal. So I want to roll the problems of our present age in with the unfolding of culture, in hopes of attracting the attention of ordinary people.

By “doctrinal disputes,” I mean looking at thousands of years of China’s historical development with special attention to intellectual arguments, or putting it a bit more technically, at disputes about philosophical problems.

1 “Zhongguo wenhua fazhan zhong yili kaichuang de shi da zhengbian 中國文化發展中義理開創的十大爭辯.” Address delivered December 4, 1986 at a conference sponsored by National Central University and the *China Times Renjian Magazine*. First published in *Ehu yuekan* 12.11 (May, 1987).

2 *minzu wenhua* 民族文化. Mou means by “national” an ethnic group that also encompasses political life but is much broader. The word ‘*minzu* 民族’ is often still translated as “nationality,” but its semantic range is like that which the English word held in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when it was defined in ethnic terms and not according to the government by which one was ruled. So for example, by the mid-19th century, long before independent Bulgarian, Greek, or Armenian states had been created from Ottoman lands, it was common to speak of a Bulgar, Greek, or Armenian “nationality.” Likewise, when Mou speaks of the development of “national culture” here, he does not have an especially political sense in mind, and we can read him as saying something little different from “Chinese culture.” It would almost be right to translate *minzu* as a “people” so long as we keep in mind that the speaker may think of it as possessing an essence or quiddity that makes it more than just the sum of individual persons.

The first dispute belongs to the Spring and Autumn Period,³ namely the dispute between Confucians and Mohists.⁴ Following the establishment of Confucian thought at the end of the Spring and Autumn period, there came the rise of the Mohists. The two groups advocated different things and hence there was dispute over the right and wrong of Confucianism and Mohism. Before Confucianism and Mohism, in the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties,⁵ there were no intellectual divergences and disputes, and so we can count the Confucian-Mohist quarrel as the first dispute in the history of the development of Chinese culture. Zhuangzi's "Equalizing Things" (*Qiwu lun* 齊物論) contains a passage which says:

How could ways be so obscured that there could be any question of genuine or fake among them? How could words be so obscured that there could be any question of right or wrong among them? Ways are obscured by the small accomplishments already formed and completed by them. Words are obscured by the ostentatious blossoms of reputation that come with them. Hence we have the rights and wrongs of the Confucians and Mohists. What one calls right the other calls wrong; what one calls wrong the other calls right.⁶

We can see how hot the dispute was. Zhuangzi wants to dispel this great dispute and so he remarks that "if we want to right their wrongs and wrong their rights, then the best thing to use is clarity."⁷ We cannot discuss this in detail, but anyone can look at the text and commentaries for him- or herself. Zhuangzi is a Daoist, and Daoists have their own way of thinking, which Zhuangzi tries to use to dispel the disagreement between Confucians and Mohists. Whether

3 The name comes from the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which chronicles the politics of Confucius' home state of Lu from 722 to 481 B.C.E. More broadly, the term refers to the period when real control over the Eastern Zhou dynasty's lands slipped out of the hands of the Zhou court itself and increasingly into those of feudal lords.

4 Followers of Mo Di 墨翟, who flourished at the end of the fifth century B.C.E. Their disagreements with the Confucians encompassed several topics, the most famous being their rejection of the Confucian preoccupation with "ritual" (*li* 禮) and their preaching impartial love for all (*jianai* 兼愛) rather than the differentiated, graduated love of the Confucians.

5 Roughly the 21st to 8th centuries B.C.E.

6 Cao Chuji 曹礎基, ed., *Zhuangzi qianzhu* 莊子淺注 (Lightly Annotated Zhuangzi), rev. ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2000), 21. The translation is assembled from Brook Ziporyn, *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009), 11–12, and Burton Watson, *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1964), 34.

7 欲是其所非而非其所是,則莫若以明. Translation by Watson, 34.

he succeeds, whether his remarks are even on target, we shall set aside for the moment. What I would like to draw attention to is that through the Confucian-Mohist debate, the Confucians achieved their position in the development of Chinese culture as the orthodoxy, right down to the final years of the Qing dynasty.⁸ It has only been since the founding of the Republic⁹ that it ran into trouble, and yet even despite this trouble, it has not been completely discontinued. Even the Communist Party, the most anti-Confucian group of all, with its erstwhile “Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius” campaign, not only no longer criticizes Confucius but in fact has done an about-face and venerates him.¹⁰ Thus we can see that Confucianism retains a measure of permanence. And why does it have this permanence? This is worth examining.

The second great dispute is that between Mencius and Gaozi’s about “nature as what is inborn.”¹¹ Why must Mencius oppose saying that “nature is what is inborn?” Mostly in order to explain that “humaneness and rectitude are within” (*renyi neizai* 仁義內在). This is an extraordinary, enormous matter. If one can understand the interiority of humaneness and rectitude, then one can understand what makes morality morality and what makes Confucianism Confucianism. Under most any circumstances, everyone recognizes morality and has a sense of morality, but not everyone understands its exact significance. To understand morality, the essence (*benzhi* 本質) of Confucianism, the interiority of humaneness and rectitude is crucial, and it can only be expressed through Mencius. Therefore I call his position a “great insight.” In

8 The Qing finally discontinued the civil service exam based on a Confucian classical curriculum after 1904.

9 In 1911, the Republic of China (*Zhonghua minguo* 中華民國) supplanted the Qing empire (*da Qing guo* 大清國). Though driven from the mainland in 1949, that government continues to rule on the island of Taiwan. With the Republican revolution, not only was Confucianism no longer sponsored by the Chinese state, but it was also exposed to unprecedented criticism by modernist reformers.

10 In 1973 and 1974, at the tail end of the Cultural Revolution, the Communist Party conducted the most famous of its anti-Confucian campaigns, which associated the purged Communist general Lin Biao 林彪 (1907–1971) with Confucius, linking them symbolically as the arch-reactionaries of ancient and modern times. Later, following the ascendancy of Deng Xiaoping in 1978, Beijing reversed course. Since then, the Party has encouraged scholarly and popular interest in Confucius and Confucianism. This did not move Mou from his lifelong hatred of the Communist Party, but Mou’s former student Tu Wei-ming (b. 1940) was and is one of the leaders of this new propagation of Confucianism in the People’s Republic.

11 *sheng zhi wei xing* 生之謂性. The quotation comes from the *Mengzi* (6A.3). Mou writes a commentary on almost this entire chapter of the *Mengzi* in his *Treatise on the Summum Bonum*, 1–58.

more than two thousand years, scarcely a handful of people have truly understood this great insight. If you, ladies and gentlemen, wish to understand the content of this debate, then it is necessary to read Mencius' chapter "Gaozi" carefully. Its text and doctrines are difficult to understand. I expended great effort explaining it sentence by sentence in my *Treatise on the Summum Bonum*; reading it will help you understand. These first two, then, are the two great disputes of the pre-Qin era.¹²

The two Han dynasties¹³ focused on the study of the classics and did not exhibit any great intellectual breakthroughs. By the end of the Eastern Han, classical studies was something dead and petrified and did not satisfy people's spiritual needs, wherefore the "Pure Criticism" movement arose.¹⁴ It was the Pure Criticism movement which bred the "disaster of the proscribed cliques,"¹⁵ which led to the Pure Conversation movement of the Wei and Jin dynasties.¹⁶ Pure Criticism and Pure Conversation were very different; Pure Criticism criticized political affairs and Pure Conversation discussed "the three profound texts," namely the *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Book of Changes*, and took Lao-Zhuang Daoist¹⁷ thought as its guide, and hence we can describe the thought of that period, the Wei-Jin as a revival of Daoism. After Confucianism ascended to orthodoxy in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, Mohism went into decline and toward extinction. Even though Daoism arose contemporaneously, the conflict between Confucianism and Daoism had not become apparent; Zhuangzi had not criticized Mencius, nor Mencius Zhuangzi. But as

12 The period before the founding of the Qin dynasty in 221 B.C.E.

13 The period from 206 B.C.E. to 220 C.E. In Chinese it is common to refer "the two Han dynasties (*liang Han* 兩漢)" because an interregnum lasting from 9 C.E. to 25 C.E. separated the original dynasty, subsequently dubbed the "Western Han," from the "later" or "Eastern Han."

14 *qingyi* 清議. A protest movement of scholar-officials, schooled in Confucian classics, to stem the abuses of the court eunuchs. Though it was put down, it is considered the forerunner of the "Pure Conversation" (*qingtan* 清談) of the Wei. See Alan K.L. Chan, "Neo-Daoism," 304, in Bo Mou, ed., *History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008).

15 *dang gu zhi huo* 黨錮之禍. A pair of incidents in the court of the Eastern Han, in 166 and 168, in which groups scholar-officials were framed as seditious cliques by rival court eunuchs and suppressed. Mou views the incidents as examples of the difficulty intellectuals had under traditional Chinese autocracy with engaging in politics without either selling their integrity or paying with their lives (*SJJ*, 191–192).

16 The period from soon after the collapse of the Han in 220 to fall of the Eastern Jin in 420.

17 That is, the Daoism of Laozi and Zhuangzi, or "philosophical Daoism," as opposed to the more magical "Huang-Lao" Daoism.

Daoism began to thrive in the Wei-Jin period, Confucian-Daoist conflict finally emerged. However, since Confucius' place as a sage had long since been universally acknowledged, no one could now oppose it. Thus people sensed a need to resolve the conflict between Daoism and Confucianism, and so the great task of the age became to harmonize the two or, as they put it, to "reconcile Confucius and Laozi" (*huitong Kong Lao* 會通孔老). Positions such as Wang Bi's¹⁸ ideas that "a sage embodies non-being" (*shengren ti wu* 聖人體無) and that "a sage has feeling" (*shengren you qing* 聖人有情) were at the forefront of the thought of the day, and Xiang Xiu and Guo Xiang¹⁹ made efforts in that direction also. They resolved the problem by means of a "theory of root and traces" (*jiben lun* 迹本論). They believed that someone could only be called a sage who penetrated substance to reach function (*tongti dayong* 通體達用). The Duke of Zhou²⁰ and Confucius were sages and they had the function of creators; and in terms of their function, they were in the midst of traces. But the reason that they could have that trace function was that they took "embodying non-being" as their root. Embodying non-being is a way of saying that they had and embodied the "non-being" spoken of by the Daoists. But Laozi and Zhuangzi could only speak of it, not embody it, and this is why they were only able to be philosophers and not sages, though they there exactly right in what they said about the Dao. Whether Wang Bi and the others actually succeeded in this strategy of harmonization remains to be seen. Reconciling two such great teachings in particular is not the sort of thing that can simply be polished off and then stay fixed forever. On the contrary, this question is one that stays eternally fresh. Even now, it is worth weighing anew. If you take on this question even only slightly, you immediately enjoy a great opening up of the mind. This is one of humanity's eternal questions.

The fourth great dispute also happened in the Wei and Jin, namely the question of whether names can exhaust meaning. This is another of those great problems in philosophy that must be dealt with. Even though this dispute arose in the Wei-Jin, in fact the opening sentence in Laozi's *Daodejing*, "The Dao that can be spoken of is not the eternal Dao, the name that can be named is not the eternal name," already contains deep reflection on the function of names. There are things which can be said and things which cannot. When

18 王弼 (226–249 C.E.). Commentator on Laozi and the *Book of Changes* and a leading figure of the Profound Learning (*xuan xue*) movement.

19 Xiang Xiu 向秀 (c. 227–272) and Guo Xiang 郭象 (252–312), celebrated commentators on Zhuangzi.

20 Legendary sage-ruler of the eleventh century, credited with contributing to the *Book of Songs*, *Book of Change*, and *Rites of Zhou* and idealized by Confucius.

things cannot be said, this shows that names have their limitations and certain truths cannot be fully expressed, which is just what is meant by the saying, "Writings do not exhaust language, and language does not exhaust meaning."²¹ There were three schools of thought in the Wei-Jin concerning the function of names. One claimed that names can exhaust meaning fully; this was Ouyang Jian's²² position. Another school claimed that they cannot exhaust meaning at all; this was Xun Can's position.²³ Yet another school believed that it is a bit much to say that they either do exhaust or do not exhaust meaning completely; this group advocated a position of "exhausting without exhausting, not exhausting yet exhausting." This was Wang Bi's position. Each of the three groups had their points and their evidence, and these are detailed in my *Talent and Xuan Principle*. You might consider reading it. Questions of language and meaning today remain ever new. From the 1930s to the 1950s or 60s was virtually what Russell called "the age of Wittgenstein." Wittgenstein's renown in that period was due to nothing except that one saying of his: "What can be said at all can be said clearly; and whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must remain silent."²⁴ What is unsayable? He believed that such things as truths of metaphysics, questions of good, questions of beauty, and also the meaning of the world and the value of human life all belong to what is unsayable, and what is unsayable should be left unsaid. This is the sort of position venerated by logical positivism, a celebrated school of thought in Anglo-American philosophical circles. But of course this sort of position cannot be the final one.

21 *shu bu jin yan, yan bu jin yi* 書不盡言, 言不盡意 This is a quotation from the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳, the "Great Commentary" to the *Book of Changes*. More fully, the text reads: "子曰, 書不盡言, 言不盡意, 然則聖人之意, 其不可見乎?" ("The Master says, writing does not exhaust language and language does not exhaust meaning. But as for the sage's meaning, what is there which cannot be seen?") Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed. *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義 (Correct Meaning of the *Book of Changes*) (Beijing: Beijing Daxue, 1999), 291.

22 歐陽建 (d. 300 C.E.), author of an extremely short essay entitled "Language Exhausts Meaning" (*Yan jin yi lun* 言盡意論). (Note that this is a different figure than Yogācāra reconstructionist Ouyang Jian 歐陽漸, whom Mou excoriates in other essays in this volume. Also note that the "歐陽堅" in the original essay [MXQ, 374], is a misprint.) Mou gives an extended treatment of the 3rd- and 4th-century debates about the adequacy of language to meaning in his book on *xuan xue* 玄學 or what used to be called "Neo-Taoism," *Caixing yu xuanli* 才性與玄理 (Talent and *Xuan Principle*) (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1993), 243–254.

23 荀粲 (d. 238 C.E.).

24 *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922), 27. Mou translated the *Tractatus* into Chinese under the title *Mingli lun* 明理論 (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1987; reprinted in MXQ, vol. 17).

When we discuss contemporary philosophical problems, we immediately think of the dispute of the Wei-Jin and the distinction made in the *Daodejing*'s claim that "the Dao that can be spoken of is not the eternal Dao" between the Dao that can be spoken of and the Dao that cannot.

The fifth dispute, occurring in the Northern and Southern Dynasties,²⁵ is that concerning whether or not the spirit perishes. This is because, when Buddhism arrived in China with its doctrine of rebirth, it was opposed by a naturalistic and nearly materialistic thinker of the time named Fan Zhen,²⁶ who taught that the spirit perishes, which is to say, that after death consciousness is snuffed out, and his "Essay on the Perishing of the Spirit" (*shen mie lun* 神滅論) still exists. However, in order for Buddhists to talk about rebirth, they needed to teach that the spirit does not perish, and this brought about a debate. The essays that emerged from this dispute are collected in the *Anthology of Propagation of the Light* and the *Expanded Anthology of the Propagation of the Light*.²⁷ But few people read these essays or discuss this question, possibly because these days this dispute is not a going question. The fault for this does not lie with Fan Zhen, whose naturalistic theory of a perishable spirit is something that even an extremely simple mind could have arrived at. Rather, it lies with those Buddhist proponents of an undying consciousness, who did not go deep enough. If we think about it anew and compare it with Western religion, we can see that the problem at issue is not a simple one. First, an undying spirit is not one of Confucianism's "three imperishables" (*san bu xiu* 三不朽) namely the virtue, merit, and words which one establishes [during one's lifetime] (*li de, li gong, li yan* 立德、立功、立言).²⁸ Second, it is something different from the undying soul taught in Christianity. Since the Buddhist theory of unperishing consciousness is referring to the *ālaya* consciousness (*alaiye*

25 The period which followed the Wei-Jin, lasting from 420–589. During this period, the lands north of the Yangzi River were ruled by invaders from the steppes, with the South being retained by the Han Chinese. In different ways, both areas were very hospitable to the growth of Buddhism.

26 范缜 (450–515), an opponent of Buddhist thought in the court of devotedly Buddhist Emperor Wu of the Liang, who exiled Fan.

27 *Hongming ji* 弘明集 (T2102) and *Guang Hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (T2103), compiled by Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518) and Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) respectively.

28 The reference is to the *Zuo zhuan*. See Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed., *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 (Correct Meaning of the Zuo Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals) (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), 1001–1004.

阿賴耶), the conscious mind, which is extinguished every instant,²⁹ it directly contradicts the Christian teaching of the immortality of the soul. In Buddhism, the eternally abiding dharma body is not an immortal soul. Strictly speaking, neither Confucianism nor Buddhism nor Daoism has the Western concept of immortality of the individual soul; their talk of the “permanent” (*chang* 常) and “imperishable” (*bu xiu* 不朽) does not refer to a soul. However, the Wei-Jin dispute could not penetrate very deeply into these matters and was not amenable to a definite determination. Hence this debate did not attract sustained attention and seemed to be just a transient historical phenomenon, not something of much intellectual value. However, now we can consider it anew, and it is not necessarily without negative value.

The sixth dispute is a technical debate that happened after Buddhism had been fully absorbed into China, in the Tiantai tradition. The point of dispute was abstruse enough that is not easily understood. However, the question did attract sustained attention and in fact was a great contribution to the development of human wisdom. This was the debate between the “on-mountain” and “off-mountain” (*shanjia shanwai* 山家山外) factions of the Tiantai tradition over the question of the perfect teaching (*yuanjiao* 圓教). What was the “on-mountain” group? The mountain in question was Mount Tiantai. Master Zhiyi³⁰ founded a new dharma lineage in the final years of his life on Mount Tiantai in Zhejiang, and because the lineage was established entirely by Tiantai Zhiyi, it came to be known as the Tiantai tradition. Its orthodox faction was called the “on-mountain” group, and an offshoot of the tradition which did not keep to traditional Tiantai doctrine came to be labeled the “off-mountain” faction. During the anti-Buddhist persecution by Emperor Wuzong,³¹ when Buddhist sutras and treatises were nearly all thrown into the flames, the Tiantai Buddhism was not spared. There remained no Buddhist writings to read and the Tiantai school fell into decline. Fortunately, Tiantai doctrine had already

29 *chana mie* 刹那滅. Mou is referring to the doctrine of *kṣaṇikatva*, in which all things arise and then disappear repeatedly in extremely rapid succession, producing an effect like that of animation.

30 Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顗 (538–597). Significantly, Mou refers to him not by name but by the honorific title given him by his patron Emperor Yang of Sui, “Wise One” (*zhizhe* 智者). Zhiyi is the hero, so to speak, of Mou’s *Buddha Nature and Prajñā*. See Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhistologist*, 67ff.

31 In 842, Emperor Wuzong began a campaign of repression against foreign religions, which included not only Buddhism but also the Nestorian version of Christianity, which like Buddhism was associated with inner Asian peoples.

spread to Korea, where its writings were preserved intact.³² It was only during the Five Kingdoms period (907–960) after the fall of the Tang that the king of Wuyue sent people to retrieve Tiantai texts from Korea and Tiantai monks once again could understand the doctrines of their tradition. But because of the long hiatus and the abstruseness of the doctrines involved, some people could re-establish an understanding of them and some could not. Those who could not came to have a skewed understanding in which they tried to interpret the Tiantai tradition from the point of view of the Huayan tradition. The one who truly understood Tiantai at the time was Zhili,³³ dubbed the Revered One of Siming, who became the seventh Tiantai patriarch and defended the original teachings. Later generations called his the “on-mountain” group and referred to the ones who misunderstood as the “off-mountain” group. The dispute between them came to be known as the On-Mountain/Off-Mountain debate, and broadly speaking we could describe it as a debate between the Tiantai and Huayan traditions. Tiantai and Huayan represented the pinnacle of Buddhist development in China, and the focus of their dispute was the question of the “perfect teaching” (*yuanjiao* 圓教). This question is the loftiest and most profound question in philosophy. It was never even touched in Western philosophy, which shows just how deep and subtle it is. And yet, sadly, among Chinese thinkers there was never anyone who could propagate it abroad. If nowadays we were to take it up again for examination, this would be an extremely great boon both for the understanding of the value of Chinese culture itself and for the work of comparison with Western culture.

Next comes the flourishing of Neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming. Within Neo-Confucianism, everyone knows of the distinction between the Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang schools, of course. This is an intramural distinction within Song-Ming inner sageliness studies,³⁴ which is exactly what we are interested in here. The seventh great dispute I wish to bring up is the one in the Southern Song between Chen Tongfu 陳同甫 (also known as Chen Liang

32 The study of Buddhist writings has been greatly blessed by the preservation of the Koryŏ edition of the Buddhist canon, ingeniously preserved on wood blocks at Haein Monastery since 1399. See Lewis R. Lancaster, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), ix–xvii.

33 Siming Zhili 四明知禮 (960–1028), historically the most important apologist and polemicist for the Tiantai tradition.

34 *neisheng zhi xue* 內聖之學. The contrast is with the “learning of outer kingliness” (*waiwang zhi xue* 外王之學). This is a reference to a favorite trope of the Neo-Confucians that begins with the *Zhuangzi*, “the way of being outwardly a king and inwardly a sage” (*neisheng waiwang zhi dao* 內聖外王之道) (Cao Chuji, *Zhuangzi qianzhu*, 489).

陳亮) and Master Zhu.³⁵ On the whole, the work of the Song-Ming Confucians focuses on inner sageliness, whereas Master Zhu and Chen Tongfu were debating the question of outer kingliness, so this dispute is a very special one. The main topic of this one arose from a discussion of the worth of the Han and Tang dynasties. Master Zhu inhabited a purely moral perspective, a true moralism, and thought the Han and Tang were without value, just as we today in ordinary society might use the expression “filthy Han and Tang.”³⁶ This is because the imperial capitals of the Han and Tang were so chaotic, and so from a stringent moral perspective, emperors Gaozu of the Han and Taizong of the Tang did not measure up. But they were both extraordinary heroes, the one founding the four-hundred-year-long Han and the other the three-hundred-year-long Tang! Master Zhu simply ignores all of this. If people do not abide by the Confucian norms governing relationships (*daoyi lunchang* 道義倫常), he judges them worthless. Looked at from this stringent perspective, all that is left in the whole of history is Yao, Shun, and the Three Dynasties,³⁷ and nothing after the Three Dynasties is even worth mentioning. To the Neo-Confucians,

35 Mou's associate and fellow New Confucian, Carsun Chang (Chs. Zhang Junmai 張君勱), wrote a helpful digest of this debate in his *Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, vol. 1 (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957), 309–331.

“Master Zhu” (*Zhu Fuzi* 朱夫子) is Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). As the story of Neo-Confucianism is usually told, Zhu Xi inherited the various works of earlier Neo-Confucian writers and reduced them to a relatively tidy and coherent system, and it was Zhu's commentaries which were made the core of the official civil service curriculum in the Yuan dynasty.

Mou famously criticizes Zhu's system as a misrepresentation of the authentically Confucian teaching, as exemplified by Mencius. However, even though Mou ranks Zhu below the schools of Hu Hong and Wang Yangming (which occupy the first and second rungs respectively), he esteems Zhu as one of the greats and makes a point of giving him his traditional title here, as “Master Zhu.”

36 *zang Tang chou Han* 龔唐臭漢. The expression comes from eighteenth-century author Cao Xueqin's novel *Dream of Red Mansions* (*Honglou meng* 紅樓夢). Cao puts it in the mouth of character Jia Rong 賈蓉, who has the distinction of being cuckolded by his own father, in reference to the sexual looseness of those dynasties. This is probably what Mou means in the next sentence by calling them “chaotic” (*luan qiba zao* 亂七八糟), which often carries overtones of pervasive sexual impropriety.

37 Yao 堯 and Shun 舜 are the proto-sage kings of Confucian myth, and the three dynasties in question are the Xia, Shang, and Zhou, covering roughly the 21st to 8th centuries B.C.E., which Confucius regarded as a sort of golden age of enlightened rule. See Mou's comments on Confucius' historiography in *Xinti yu xingti* (Metaphysical Realities of Mind and Human Nature), vol. 1 (Taipei: Zhengzhong, 1968–69), 191–196.

even the thriving Han and Tang, which people usually praise, were no good.³⁸ Thus Chen Tongfu came out to argue with them, saying in effect: “In your way of thinking, everything after the Three Dynasties has been ‘a leaky façade that is just killing time.’”³⁹ So he eulogizes the hero-rulers of the Han and Tang and thinks that even though there was indeed a period of confusion, when they were clear-headed and clear-sighted, they had great insights and achievements and were fit to rule. Chen is absolutely a heroic individualist.⁴⁰ The two debated hotly. We have all the texts and they are worth your time to look at.

What we have here is a question of the philosophy of history. Master Zhu looks at history from a moral perspective and so can only make a “moral judgment” (*daode panduan* 道德判斷). At bottom there is nothing wrong with strictly applying moral restraints in matters of individual cultivation (*xiuxing gongfu* 修行工夫), but when it comes to understanding history, is it enough just to stick to a completely moral viewpoint and make moral judgments? This is where there is a problem. I believe that to understand history, we need to have two kinds of judgment, “moral judgment” and “historical judgment.” Not having moral judgment would not be alright, simply because there would be right or wrong. But it is also no good to have *only* moral judgment, so we need

38 These two dynasties are usually explained as the two high watermarks of Chinese civilization, when the empire was united and extensive in its territory, strong but open-minded in matters of international trade and relations, and creative and rich in its artistic and intellectual production. Hence to denigrate them is particularly surprising.

39 *jialou guoshi* 架漏過時. This is the phrase that Carsun Chang renders more interpretively as “a vacancy of *Tao*” (Chang, *Development*, 316). The image, though, is of a decaying, weather-beaten shell of a building with nothing inside but the struts that are propping up its walls.

Mou is paraphrasing a couple of passages from the first of Chen's five letters on this topic to Zhu. In the first he writes to Zhu, “If you are to be believed, for the last fifteen hundred years Heaven and Earth have been a decaying façade that is just killing time, and people's minds have also just been passing the time by puttering at repairs. But then how can you account for the florid variety of things in the universe, and what is supposed to make the Dao continue eternally?!” (信斯言也, 千五百年之間, 天地亦是架漏過時, 而人心亦是牽補度日, 萬物何以阜蕃, 而道何以常存乎。) Later in the same letter he returns to the image: “Supposing that no one is any different from [the arch-tyrant] Jie, then public morals can never be fixed, Heaven and Earth cannot stand up, and the Dao is a wreck and has been for ages. And Heaven and Earth is a dilapidated, aging façade, just another thing like a clod of dirt, and the human heart is killing time patching it up, just half-dead vermin.” (使人人無異于桀, 則人紀不可修, 天地不可立, 而道之廢亦已久矣。天地而可架漏過時, 則塊然一物也; 人心而可牽補度日, 則半死半活之蟲也。) (SYXA, 1834.)

40 Literally, a “heroist” (*yingxiongzhuyizhe* 英雄主義者).

to exercise historical judgment as well. Master Zhu only had the moral part of the picture and could not bring historical judgment into play. Without that there is no fully understanding history, and that is the reason for Chen Tongfu's jibes about the "leaky façade just killing time."

For example, the first emperor of the Qin was indisputably a crude tyrant, and from a moral standpoint of course that was wrong. Chinese people have never said that he was good. But historically he did have his function and historically his dynasty is simply a fact. How should we approach it? We cannot decide that because he was immoral we will erase him from history and never talk about him; and if we are to talk about him, we need another kind of judgment with which to do so. As another example, take a monster like the Communist Party's Mao Zedong. From a moral standpoint, he was worthless scum. But the Communist Party's appearance in the development of the Chinese people is an indelible fact. How should we approach this period in history? Studying history is hard, for we need to be prepared with both kinds of judgment. And historical judgment is not a way of saying that "whatever exists is rational."⁴¹

Completely acknowledging an accomplished fact is not the same as historical judgment; there still remains a great deal which belongs to questions of wisdom. In understanding the debate between Master Zhu and Chen Tongfu we can encounter this kind of question, but since their debate there have not been many people at all who understand this kind of question. When I was at Donghai University,⁴² Xu Fuguan⁴³ said that he wanted to write about this problem, and as it happened I had just completed my book *Politics and Governance*, which had an entire chapter on Master Zhu and Chen Tongfu's debate and analyzed these two kinds of judgment, and I believed that I could resolve this dispute. Chen Tongfu was arguing for giving the Han and Tang pride of place. Although this was not a moralist's position, the question was whether, given his point of view, he could hold to historical judgment. And the answer was that he could not. For Chen Tongfu was a heroic individualist, and that relies on an intuition, one which emphasizes the life of the hero. And even

41 Mou seems to be referring to Hegel, who indeed is the central figure in his fellow New Confucian Carsun Chang's interpretation of the Zhu-Chen debate. In contrast, Mou attaches a special set of meanings to 'existence' and 'rational' in which what exists is only rational to the extent that it is given moral meaning. See Clower, *Unlikely Buddhologist*, 159–162.

42 A Christian university founded with American missionary support in Taizhong, Taiwan. Mou taught there shortly after it opened, from 1956 to 1960. As with more than one job, he left this one under a cloud. Li Shan, *Mou Zongsan zhuan*, 120–121.

43 徐復觀 (1903–1982). New Confucian and fellow signatory with Mou of the Declaration.

a hero's life certainly does hold interest, just looking at the hero's life still does not bring historical judgment into play. Master Zhu's way of looking at history in moral terms belongs to the category of reason. But, to use a Hegelian word, his kind of reason is that of the understanding.⁴⁴ The understanding is a scholarly, prosaic kind of reason, and using this kind of reason to look at history is looking at it in a static (*jingtai* 靜態) way. According to Hegel, to truly encounter history we must use the understanding to move to a dynamic reason.⁴⁵ Where Master Zhu's understanding is the rational type, Chen Tongfu's is the sensible (*ganxing* 感性) or intuitive type. The two stand in opposition, and in understanding history, neither one can bring historical judgment into play. The only way to do that is with dynamic reason, a curvilinear, dialectical reason, for in dynamic reason, the opposition between understanding and intuition has been dissolved. For a detailed discussion, see my *Politics and Governance*.

Next comes a pair of internal disputes within the Ming school of Wang Yangming. The first of the two, which is the eighth dispute on our list was Wang Longxi's and Nie Shuangjiang's "debate on the meaning of 'cultivating moral knowing'" (*zhizhi yi bian* 致知議辯). Wang Yangming taught about the cultivation of moral knowing,⁴⁶ but his students differed in their interpretation, giving rise to debate. Wang Longxi came from Wang Yangming's hometown and was his direct disciple, the inheritor of the authentic spirit of Wang Yangming; the ones who misunderstood it were the "Right Bank" (*Jiangyou* 江右) group, composed of Nie Shuangjiang and Luo Nian'an.⁴⁷ The "Right Bank" refers to the province of Jiangxi,⁴⁸ where Wang Yangming distinguished himself

44 *zhixing de lixing* 知性的理性. Reference to Hegel's criticism of Kant's presentation of reason, which Hegel says does not credit reason with causal power to effect change in the observable world. See Liu Chuangfu 劉創馥, "Heige'er sibian zhexue yu fenxi zhexue zhi fazhan 黑格爾思辯哲學與分析哲學之發展 (Hegel's Speculative Philosophy and the Development of Analytic Philosophy)," *Guoli Zhengzhi Daxue zhexue xuebao* 15 (January 2006): 93.

45 One of Mou's most fundamental criticisms of Zhu, and the most famous, is that he conceives of *li* 理 as static.

46 *zhi liangzhi* 致良知. Neo-Confucians took this much-debated concept from the *Great Learning*, an essay in the Classic of Rites to which Zhu Xi assigned a special canonic importance. Because Neo-Confucians disagreed so much about the meaning of this phrase, strictly speaking it should not even be translated at this point in the discussion. In Mou's only mature English publication, he leaves it half-translated, as "the development of *liang-chih*" ("Immediate Successor of Wang Yangming").

47 聶雙江 (1487–1563) and 羅念菴 (1504–1564).

48 The banks in question are those of the Yangzi River. As one floats downriver through its central stretches, the province of Jiangxi is on one's right.

by putting down the Zhu Chenhao rebellion.⁴⁹ After that, a great many would-be students were drawn to him by his fame. However, those people did not spend long soaking up his teachings, which they largely misunderstood. Thus after Wang Yangming died, they quickly fell into a dispute with Wang Longxi.

Why does this rank as a great debate? Because it is usually a debate that makes it clear what the essential substance of a particular doctrine is and who truly understands the doctrine and who does not. Anyone can say a few words about some philosophical slogans (*huatou* 話頭), but this is not a demonstration of real understanding. It is only watching people's thinking unfold layer by layer in the course of debate, paying attention to their choice of words and where they put their emphasis, that we can tell who truly understands. For example, Huang Zongxi⁵⁰ revered Wang Yangming, but in his *Records of Ming Scholars* he names the Right Bank group as the orthodox lineage of the Wang Yangming school. From this misjudgment, we can see that Huang did not truly understand Wang Yangming. Very obviously, the orthodox lineage of Wang Yangming runs through Wang Longxi and Luo Jinxi.⁵¹ The two may have their faults, but each has to be seen in context. We may even say that the Right Bank group can serve a helpful corrective function in some places; but what we may not say is that the Right Bank group could understand the essence of Wang Yangming's philosophy. Thus the reason that this is an important debate is that it is the touchstone for determining who really understood Wang's philosophy at the time, and also is the best training in that philosophy available to us latter-day people.

Next I will discuss the second internal dispute among Wang Yangming's followers, which we can number as the ninth great historical dispute, namely that between Xu Jing'an and Zhou Haimen⁵² on "the nine truths and the nine understandings" (*jiudi jiujie* 九諦九解). The "nine truths" here represents the position of Xu Jing'an. He misunderstood Wang Yangming's sentence, "That which has no good and evil is the mind-in-itself."⁵³ People ought to "have good

49 朱宸濠. Zhu was a minor member of the imperial family. In 1519, he launched an uprising from Jiangxi, where Wang Yangming was serving as provincial governor. Wang crushed the rebellion in little more than month.

50 黃宗義 (Huang Lizhou 黃梨洲) (1610–1695) became the most influential historian and critic of Song, Yuan, and Ming Confucianism.

51 王龍溪 (1498–1583) and 羅近溪 (1515–1588).

52 許敬庵 (Fuyuan 浮遠) (1535–1596) and 周海門 (Rudeng 汝登) (1547–1629).

53 *wu shan wu e, xin zhi ti* 無善無惡心之體. Chen Rongjie 陳榮捷 (Wing-tsit Chan), *Wang Yangming Chuanxi lu xiangzhu jiping* 王陽明傳習錄詳注集評 (Detailed Collection of Commentaries on Wang Yangming's *Instructions for Practical Living*) (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1983), 315. The translation is Mou's own ("Immediate Successor of Wang Yang-ming," 112).

and evil,” he thought. How can they have no good and evil? Would that not mean that there was no right and wrong?! Confucians affirm right and wrong as a matter of course, and so whatever positively affirms right and wrong and good and evil, is a “truth.” Xu presented nine arguments for such truths, a piece which he called the “Nine Truths.”⁵⁴ His opponent, Zhou Haimen, responded that even though without a doubt there are such things as good and evil, Wang Yangming’s talk of “having no good and evil” was not a way of denying right and wrong but of saying, “That which has no good and evil is the supreme good.”⁵⁵ Therefore he answered Xu’s nine “truths” point by point, calling his rebuttals the “nine understandings.” However, Xu never did understand what was meant by Wang Yangming’s word ‘no’ (*wu* 無). In actuality, this ‘no’ was used in the same sense in which Daoists are forever talking about ‘no’. The Daoist ‘no’ was originally just a truth held in common,⁵⁶ something that no sage can deny. And moreover, since anyone whose practical cultivation (*shijian gongfu* 實踐工夫) reaches a certain level will reach this state of realization (*lijing* 理境), we find it spoken of by Buddhists and Confucians too. Hence the “Great Norm” chapter of the *Book of Documents* speaks of “doing neither good

54 Xu published a treatise of the same name, published with Zhou’s response. See *Mingru xue’an* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2008) (hereafter cited as *MRXA*), 2.112–113, 2.121–130.

55 無善無惡謂之至善. This is an allusion to *Chuanxi lu* 123. Because Mou continues alluding to the passage below, it is worth summarizing here. The anecdote begins with a disciple of Wang’s pulling weeds in the garden and joking, “How difficult it is in this world to cultivate good and remove evil!” Wang decides to use the episode as an occasion for teaching about good and evil and responds that neither flowers nor weeds are intrinsically good or evil. “When you want to enjoy flowers, you will consider flowers good and weeds evil. But when you want to use weeds, you will consider them good. Such good and evil (*shan’è*) are all products of the mind’s likes and dislikes (*haowu*).” The disciple asks, “In that case, there is neither good nor evil, is that right?” and Wang answers: “... Good and evil appear when the vital force is perturbed. If the vital force is not perturbed, there is neither good nor evil, and this is called the highest good.” A moment later he follows up: “The sage, ... in his non-distinction of good and evil, merely makes no special effort whatever to like or dislike (*wu you zuo hao, wu you zuo wu*) ... As he pursues the kingly path and perceives the perfect excellence, he of course completely follows the Principle of Nature ...” (Excerpted from Wing-tsit Chan, tr., *Instruction for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings* [New York: Columbia, 1963], 63–64. Interpolations of *pinyin* are mine.)

56 *gongfa* 共法, lit. “common” or “shared dharma,” meaning a point of doctrine that all disputants agree on. This is one of the many Buddhist doxographic terms that Mou incorporated into his philosophy in the mid-1970s, in *Appearance and Thing-in-Itself* and *Buddha Nature and Prajñā*.

nor evil.”⁵⁷ There must be good and evil; good and evil are the distinction between right and wrong and good and bad. Of course people need them; this is undeniable. But it is a different question, what the best way is for people to manifest goodness and badness. The existence of good and evil and right and wrong: that is a “*what* is it?” question. Or we could say that it is a question that resides on the ontic level (*cunyou ceng* 存有層). But as for how we manifest good and evil, what the best way is to go about it: that is a “*how to?*” question, a question that resides on the level of function (*zuoyong* 作用層). We have to be clear from the outset that these two questions belong to different levels. The ‘no’ of the Daoists is addressing a “*how to?*” question, which is something that any of the three traditions can and must address. Confucius himself says, “Would that there were no need for me to speak! . . . What does heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons are put in motion by it, and the myriad creatures receive their life from it. What does heaven ever say?”⁵⁸ We can see that ‘no’ is a spiritual state and is not the exclusive property of Daoists. But earlier thinkers, especially in the School of Principle,⁵⁹ seldom understood and would immediately write off anything with the word ‘no’ as Buddhist or Daoist heterodoxy and not the sagely Way. This became a great taboo among them. Master Zhu was the most rigid and left a legacy of six or seven hundred years which we still cannot dissolve.

Not being able to dissolve this taboo is a great disadvantage for the propagation of Confucianism. Therefore I have consistently tried to make this clear and persuade everyone to be rid of this taboo. For truths need to be presented

57 *wu you zuo hao, wu you zuo e* 無有作好，無有作惡 (James Legge, *Sacred Books of China, Parts 1–6* [New Delhi: Atlantic, 1990], 143). Wang Yangming also quotes this phrase in the passage from *Instructions for Practical Living* that Mou alluded to above (*Chuanxi lu*, 123).

The characters ‘好惡’ can mean either “like and dislike” (*hào wu*) or “good and evil” (*hǎo e*). They have the first meaning in their original context in this verse from the *Book of Documents*, which exhorts kingly impartiality: “Without selfish likings [*zuo hào* 作好], pursue the royal way. Without selfish disliking [*zuo wu* 作惡], pursue the royal path. Avoid deflection, avoid partiality; broad and long is the royal way” (Legge, op. cit.).

However, when Mou quotes this line in the present essay (just as when Wang Yangming quoted it in the passage Mou alluded to above), he is not discussing mere liking and disliking (*hào wu* 好惡) but the very ontology good and evil (*hǎo e* 好惡), and so I have translated it accordingly.

58 予欲無言 . . . 天何言哉，四時行焉，百物生焉，天何言哉 (*Analects*, 17.19). Translation adapted from Slingerland (*Analects*, 208).

59 *lixuejia* 理學家. This word can also refer to Neo-Confucians in general, but in this context, which Mou’s implicit contrast between Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming’s “School of Mind,” it seems to have the narrower meaning.

as they really are, and there is no getting around this 'no'. It is the highest level of spiritual practice and the sole source of the "xuan wisdom" (*xuanzhi* 玄智) of the Daoists, and so there can be no ignoring it. Let me give a perfect example to help everyone understand this. We cannot say that the Communist Party has no good or evil; indeed its good and evil are extremely powerful. It excoriates capitalism, and it curses the things it opposes in the most poisonous language. It also believes that it sympathizes with the weak, a veritable bodhisattva rescuing those in need. As far as the Party is concerned, it has all the truth in the world on its side. So how did it become so horrible? There is an old Chinese saying: "To hate evil is to lose one's virtue." The Communist Party's every crime is because their hatred of evil ruined their virtue. After all, in the real world, where is there a completely perfect society to be found? Society is full of problems and naturally there are many things to loathe. But in loathing them, we must not fall into crime ourselves. If in loathing them you lapse into some still greater irrationality, then you will commit crimes even greater than the crimes you detested! This is how the Communist Party created such vast evil. I never did understand why hating evil should be "the loss of virtue" until I saw the crimes of the Communist Party; that was when I finally understood. In addition, I finally understood that Daoist thought truly manifests one part of the highest wisdom in human life. There was no reason for me always to have thought of it as "heterodoxy." Daoism is simply one-sided. It only addresses the "how to?" level of things, not the "what is it?" level. Confucianism covers both, which is why Confucianism is the great, central, and supremely straight way.⁶⁰ This crucial point is the difference between Confucianism and Daoism. We absolutely have to distinguish clearly between these two levels at which "there is" or "there is not" something (*liangceng youwu* 兩層有無) in order to truly grasp the basic character of Confucianism and Daoism. If we confuse the two levels, then as soon as we see that 'no', we will mistake it as a denial of right and wrong and good and evil. And that is no good for either Confucianism or Daoism. The dispute over the "nine truths and nine understandings" can help us understand the difference in doctrines.

Even though the nine great disputes discussed so far all took place in the past, they are the lifeblood of the Chinese culture. If something is a relic of the past (*chenji* 陳迹), then we must let it pass into history, for there is no way of holding onto it. However, what these disputes express cannot be called a relic of the past. Rather, it is an orientation to life-wisdom (*shengming de zhihui fangxiang* 生命的智慧方向). If only you reflect on it, it can illuminate your life, inspire you, and manifest splendor in your thinking. No one should

60 *dazhong zhizheng zhi dao* 大中至正之道. See *Chuanxi lu*, 25.

look at this as just an antique. People who stand outside of it are standing outside their own cultural tradition.

Apart from that, we should investigate past ages. Each age has its own great problem and mission. In the Wei-Jin, the problem was to reconcile the teaching of Confucius and Laozi. In the Song and Ming, the problem was to deal with Buddhism. In this age of ours, what are the questions we have to deal with? This should be something very pressing for us, and it is what I want to discuss as our tenth dispute. This dispute is not just a debate between this figure and that; it is a question that must be faced by every son and daughter of the Chinese nation. In sum, it is the question of the free flow (*changtong* 暢通) of Chinese culture.⁶¹ Right now our culture is not free, and the main obstacle is the conquest of the mainland by Marxism. Why do the descendents of the Yellow Emperor insist on destroying themselves with this demonic way?⁶² This is truly a great tragedy for the Chinese nation. Therefore the mission before us is to “destroy Communism” (*po gong* 破共). From its very roots, Communism is a demonic heresy and should be thoroughly eradicated. Therefore rather than speaking of “opposing Communism,” I am speaking of “destroying Communism.”⁶³ Marxism cannot be destroyed in a day, and so the life-force (*shengming* 生命) of the Chinese nation cannot be made free in a day. Right now Deng Xiaoping is still keeping to the “Four Holding Ons” without letting go, for letting go would mean his immediate downfall.⁶⁴ But he also spoke the truth when he

61 The kind of freedom called to mind by the word *changtong* is that of unhindered flowing. If Mou had wanted to speak of freedom in a narrowly political sense, he would have used the familiar *ziyou* 自由.

62 *modao* 魔道. Originally a Buddhist term for an evil realm of rebirth, in general speech it refers to something wickedly heterodox.

63 In the days of Taiwanese martial law, “opposing Communism” (*fangong* 反共) was a common term in government propaganda slogans, such as “To be patriotic one must oppose Communism, and to oppose Communism one must be patriotic” (*aiguo yao fangong, fangong yao aiguo* 愛國要反共, 反共要愛國).

Note that Mou is treating the evil of Communism as virtually equivalent to the evils of Marxism, which is to say, the evils of Communist *thought*. This is in keeping with Mou's view of politics as a playing out of the real-world consequences of changes that have already occurred in a nation's culture and particularly its philosophy. This is also very apparent in the next paragraph, on the importance of finding the right Chinese response to Western religion.

64 The “Four Basic Principles” introduced in March, 1979 as a way of attempting to stay true to the PRC's Communist past while still conducting market reforms, were popularly called the “Four Holding Ons” (*sige jianchi* 四個堅持): holding on to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, holding on to the socialist road, holding on to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and holding on to leadership by the Communist Party. As with other slogans

said that the thirty years of experimentation with Communism on the mainland had not yet proven its superiority to capitalism, and so now the mainland must gradually open up. Our most urgent work at present is to encourage that opening as forcefully as we can. Opening is antithetical to Deng's holding on. When the mainland opens to the point that the Four Holding Ons cannot hold on anymore, the Communist Party will crumble as a matter of course and the Chinese nation can live anew.

Apart from this, the second task is the question of how to digest Western culture, and the focus is to be on the religious aspect. Chinese culture, whether it be Confucian, Daoist, or Buddhist, all belongs to the Eastern type of religion, and this type is entirely unlike the Western, Christian type. So the second task facing us is "distinguishing ourselves from Christianity" (*bian ye* 辨耶). We do not oppose freedom of religion, whether Catholic or Protestant, but as people whose standpoint is that of Chinese culture and who want to take responsibility for Chinese culture, we can and should differentiate like from unlike. Chinese culture has its uniqueness, naturally, and it is just a question of degrees and not very important just how much of its uniqueness we can recognize. But we may not idle on the job or knowingly twist facts and fudge the truth.

The third task is to "erect our basis" (*liben* 立本), meaning to protect the Chinese cultural tradition, and also to follow the main line of Chinese cultural development and revive the great basis for building China. The fourth task is to seek modernization. Modernization does not mean westernization; we must seek modernization but oppose westernization, for to westernize means to lose one's basis (*shi qi ben* 失其本). If we cannot complete these four tasks—destroying Communism, distinguishing ourselves from Christianity, erecting our basis, and modernizing—then the Chinese nation cannot be said to have completed its basic nature (*jin qi benxing* 盡其本性). As the *Doctrine of the Mean* says, "Complete one's own nature, complete humanity's nature, complete the nature of things."⁶⁵ For people to complete their natures, the nation must also complete its nature, which means completing the mission of the present age, namely freeing cultural life-force in order to build a national life of vitality. If the cultural life-force is taken and twisted, the life of the nation will surely be afflicted. If a nation cannot complete its nature, then it will lack the means to build a regime. Therefore this is the common mission of all Chinese people.

in Chinese, where the distinction between verbs and nouns is usually only notional, 'Four Holding Ons' is a necessarily ugly translation of something which in Chinese sounds quite snappy.

65 盡己之性，盡人之性，盡物之性。A paraphrase of *Zhongyong* 23.

Transcendental Analysis and Dialectical Synthesis¹

Ladies and gentlemen:

My topic today is “transcendental analysis and dialectical synthesis,” following the ideas of “transcendental analysis” in Kantian philosophy and “dialectical synthesis” in Hegel. These are both major themes in philosophy, which I will only be able to treat briefly in the course of this lecture, particularly because my health has been poor of late and I have only just returned home to convalesce after a two-month stay in the hospital.

The first thing to understand is that the Hegelian notion of dialectical synthesis presupposes Kant’s transcendental analysis. Each of Kant’s *Critiques* is divided into a part on “analytic” and a part on “dialectic.” However, Kant is using ‘dialectic’ in the classical sense it had had ever since the Greeks. With Hegel, that word took on a new and much different meaning. Dialectic in the classical sense was guided by logic and hence the so-called dialectical process was subject to logical examination. Thus there might be superficial antinomies, but it did not allow true contradictions. Either the two propositions were both false or they could coexist. But in Hegel’s dialectical method, it was necessary to go through contradiction to reach a higher state. Discovering “dialectic” in this sense was Hegel’s great contribution. However, this was only a contribution in the context of Western philosophy; for Chinese philosophy already understood this sort of thing on a high level. It was merely that China did not use these terms for it and had not laid it out theoretically. Its most prolific theorists in this respect were Daoism and Buddhism, and indeed Confucianism contained this sort of understanding as well, even though it did not like to talk about it. What I would like to do today is to point out that even though China’s Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism *can* talk about dialectics in this sense, nevertheless their dialectics is completely different from Hegel’s dialectics.

Talking about dialectical synthesis presupposes Kant’s critical analysis (*pipan fenjie* 批判分解), which is the most difficult part of Western philoso-

1 “Chaoyue de fenjie yu bianzheng de zonghe 超越的分解與辯證的綜合.” Delivered on June 10, 1993 as the keynote address at a conference on East-West comparative philosophy Chinese Culture University in Taipei and published in a conference volume entitled *Dong-Xi zhexue bijiao lunwen ji: di'er ji* 東西哲學比較論文集: 第二集 (Papers on East-West Comparative Philosophy: Second Collection) (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1993) and in *Ehu xuekan* 19(4) (Oct. 1993). Reprinted in *MXQ*, 459–466.

phy. What modern people call “analysis” is mostly the so-called logical analysis that is descended from Leibniz and Russell, which is very easy. But what is entailed in understanding dialectical synthesis is not logical analysis but analysis in the Kantian sense. Taking what is analyzed in the course of transcendental analysis and synthesizing it all together through a dialectical process and thus arriving at complete integration (*quanbu de da ronghe* 全部的大融合) is what is called “dialectical synthesis.”

In Chinese tradition, “dialectics” always presupposes a distinction between “spiritual cultivation” (*gongfu* 工夫)² and being-in-itself (*benti* 本體). As expressed in Kant’s philosophy, what is called “being-in-itself” here is the ideas of freedom of the will, immortality of the soul, and the existence of God. These three ideas (*linian* 理念) of Kant’s, looked at from the perspective of speculative reason or theoretical reason, are all empty concepts. That is, they are just concepts supplied by reason. That is something different from concepts supplied by the understanding, i.e. categories. In the speculative sense, ideas can only be “regulative principles,” not “constitutive principles.” Kant pays careful attention to this distinction, and it is only after understanding these two terms that one can truly understand the refinement of Kant’s philosophy. In Kant’s first *Critique*, he believes that since these three ideas cannot be constitutive, they should be described as “transcendent” (*chaojue* 超絕), not as “transcendental” (*chaoyue* 超越). “Transcendent” is contrasted with “immanent.” Those two words originally come from Aristotle’s criticism of Plato’s “Ideas” as transcendent rather than immanent, but the “ideas” that Kant is talking about (concepts of reason) are different from Plato’s “Ideas,” which are Forms. These three ideas of Kant’s are transcendent from the perspective of speculative reason, but in terms of practical reason, they can become immanent. That is, they can become concrete. Thus concepts which in speculative terms are transcendent, regulative, and negative can take on immanent, constitutive, and real significance in practice.

A little explanation is in order about what “immanent, constitutive significance” means. In Kant’s thought, the three ideas are able to become immanent and constitutive because of what in the third *Critique* is called “reflective judgment” (*fanxing panduan* 反省判斷). Here the idea of God’s existence can give rise to a “moral theology,” which is to say a moral proof of the existence of God. Since the Western tradition is a Christian one, Kant first proposes a “moral theology.” Moreover, he can only acknowledge a “moral theology,” not a

2 In this essay, *gongfu* is translated as “spiritual cultivation,” “spiritual effort,” or simply “effort.”

“theological morality,” which is a great change in Western theology.³ In contrast, in Chinese philosophy there is no theology to speak of. Confucian doctrine can only acknowledge a “moral metaphysics.” And just as Kant can only countenance a “moral theology” and not a “theological morality,” Confucianism can only acknowledge a moral metaphysics and not a “metaphysical morality.”⁴ From this comparison, we can see the commonality between Kant and Chinese Confucianism. This commonality is apparent in every facet, which is why I believe that for the purpose of reconciling Chinese and Western philosophy, Kant is the best bridge.

Kant divides the workings of human reason into “speculative reason” and “practical reason,” and this distinction is a great contribution to philosophy. The great accomplishments of Western philosophy are on the speculative side, whereas the Chinese philosophical tradition falls on the side of practical reason and does not even touch questions of speculative reason. The great shortcoming of Chinese culture is this deficiency in studying the speculative side, and the resulting failure to develop logic, mathematics, and science. But it has spoken very penetratingly on practical reason and the realm of being-in-itself. And since practical reason actually takes priority in the working of reason as a whole, I believe that only by truly understanding Chinese philosophy can one fully understand Kant. What a pitiable age this is, when modern Chinese not only fail to understand the Western tradition but also the Chinese tradition!

Discussions of practice in Chinese philosophy are always a search for both spiritual effort and being-in-itself together, in which substance is manifested through effort. And though spiritual effort and being-in-itself can ultimately merge with one another, in the course of practice there has to be a distinction between the two. Whereas “being-in-itself” is addressed in Kant by means of the three ideas, China only has a singular “being-in-itself,” not two or three or more. This notion of “being-in-itself” goes back a very long time, to the poem in the *Book of Odes* which praises King Wen: “The decree of heaven, how profound and unceasing! How shining it is, the purity of King Wen’s virtue!”⁵ The *Doctrine of the Mean* quotes this line and adds, “Its purity too is unceasing!”⁶

3 That is, theology is established on the epistemological basis of morality, not morals on the basis of theology. Put more simply, morality is nearer and more certain than the existence of God.

4 That is, Confucianism’s metaphysics must emerge from its ideas about morality. It may not try to derive its understanding of morality from any pre-existing metaphysical beliefs.

5 Ode 267 in Li Xueqin, *Mao Shi zhengyi*, 1284. The translation is based, with modification, on Wing-tsit Chan’s in *A Source Book on Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 109–110.

6 *Zhongyong* 26.

Here “unceasing” occurs twice, once concerning the “profundity and unceasingness” of heaven’s decree and once concerning the unceasingness of King Wen’s virtue. “Profundity and ceaselessness” is ceaselessness in its objective, absolute aspect. Its status is like that of God in Western philosophy, namely as the creative principle, but Chinese people do not speak of God as the creator of all things but rather of the ceaselessness of heaven’s decree. The ceaselessness of the purity of King Wen’s virtue is ceaselessness in its subjective, practical aspect, as the spiritual effort of a sage. The highest stage of spiritual effort is that of “the flowing of the heavenly principle” (*tianli liuxing* 天理流行), wherein spiritual effort completely manifests being-in-itself and the two merge together. This can be called “dialectical synthesis.” Looked at in this sense, the question of “dialectics” is a question of spiritual practice, not of being-in-itself.⁷

This view that “dialectics” belongs to the sphere of spiritual effort rather than being-in-itself is extremely wise! And it is the reason that traditional Chinese dialectics does not turn into “dialectical materialism,” for dialectical synthesis is a matter of spiritual effort. Only spiritual effort is so nimble. The variegation of that nimbleness is what Hegel calls the “cunning of Reason” (*lixing de guijue* 理性的詭譎). That cunning was absent from dialectics in the classical sense of the word, but became a momentous discovery in Hegel’s dialectical method. The Chinese ancients understood this great truth very thoroughly, and not just the Buddhists and Daoists, who expressed it with particular aptitude, but also Confucians. For example, at the end of the Ming, Wang Fuzhi wrote that when the first emperor of the Qin abolished enfeoffments and divided the country into centrally administered commanderies and counties, “heaven employed his selfish purposes for the general good.” That is, the emperor of the Qin was acting on his private political motives, but the heavenly Way took advantage of those private motives of his to realize the general good according to the heavenly principle by changing the system of feudal aristocracy to a centralized state. Was this not a step forward for the political system? Is Wang’s statement about “heaven employing his selfish purposes for the general good” not the most perfect explanation of what Hegel called “the cunning of Reason?” It is apparent that whatever is true is universal, so what Hegel discovered, Wang Fuzhi also discovered, and discovered it earlier.

And as for Daoism and Buddhism, they talked even more about it, and skillfully. Thus Laozi has his paradoxical (*zhengyan ruofan* 正言若反) language, and Buddhists are even more fond of using paradox to describe enlightened

7 That is, a dialectical advance is an advance from one *mind-set* or spiritual state to another, not a change in the universe itself.

wisdom or *prajñā*, as when they say, “*Prajñā* is not *prajñā*, and thus is called *prajñā*.”⁸ To learn *prajñā*, one must “take non-learning as learning, non-attainment as attainment.” If you think you know what *prajñā* is, then it is not *prajñā*, and if you approach it as something to learn, then you are not going about it well. This is similar to Confucius’ refusal to consider himself a sage.⁹ To consider oneself sagely is to be unsagely—this is a great paradox.

However, the workings of these paradoxes only become manifest in spiritual effort. As Chinese tradition has always understood, it is only in spiritual effort that Hegel’s “cunning of Reason” and “dialectical synthesis” can be brought about. There is no so-called paradox in existence itself, no so-called dialectic. Hegel’s greatest mistake was his confusion about this, and there were soon Western philosophers who grew dissatisfied with this aspect of Hegel. For example, Russell criticized Hegel for equating the “thinking process” with the “existent process”¹⁰ and ultimately dragging God into dialectics. Hegel’s *Greater Logic*¹¹ begins the dialectic from empty, absolute being, namely God, which through the dialectical process gradually concretizes and completes itself. In this way, the process of dialectics is the process of existence, thus becoming the most evil and dangerous kind of thought, able to throw the world into chaos. For originally, God is either a stable object of supplication or the being-in-itself experienced through spiritual cultivation; but Hegel brings God down and mixes him up in the dialectics of spiritual effort, whereupon the world is everywhere entangled in struggle. Such thought then engenders great chaos. This is the sort of thing that Mencius is thinking of when he talks about “growing in the mind and harming governance and one’s public affairs.”¹² The harm

8 Though this particular sentence is not attested in the Buddhist canon, the pattern is typical of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras.

9 *Analects* 7.33–34.

10 Mou uses the English phrases, but I believe he misattributes them. To my knowledge Russell did not use those terms, though in his Lowell lecture on “Logic as the Essence of Philosophy,” he did famously complain about Hegel’s conflating the “is’ of identity” and the “is’ of predication” (in *Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy* [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1914]). I suspect that, speaking as he is from memory, Mou may be thinking of John Dewey, who did use those phrases in his writings from roughly the same period, between 1900 and 1916. See Dewey’s *Essays in Experimental Logic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), Chaps. 5–7.

11 I.e. *The Science of Logic* (*Wissenschaft der Logik*). Mou was likely familiar with W.H. Johnston and L.G. Struther’s translation (London: Allen & Unwin, 1929).

12 An allusion to 2A.2. Van Norden (*Mengzi*, 41) translates the passage this way: “When these faults grow in the heart, they are harmful in governing. When they are manifested in governing, they are harmful in one’s activities” (生於其心，害於其政。發於其政，害於

was not yet apparent in Hegel himself, but with Karl Marx, the arising of dialectic from absolute existence settled upon material existence as “materialist dialectics,” whose emergence was not just the “source of tremendous chaos” but became actual chaos for the whole world and caused millions of heads to fall. Look at how many people died in China because of this! Mao Zedong was a great devil, and the source of his devilry is in Hegel.

In truth, existence is never caught in dialectics, and in fact the very expression “materialist dialectics” is incoherent, for if matter is all there is, then where is there room for a dialectic? Changes in matter are physical and chemical changes, not some supposed dialectic. The word ‘dialectic’ is not to be used any which way. Thus Chinese of past decades were pitiable people, understanding neither “materialism” nor “idealism,” and mistaking what the West calls idealism for either a “theory of mind-only” (*weixin lun* 唯心論) or “conceptualism” (*guannian lun* 觀念論), neither of which is correct. In Western philosophy, no matter whether we are talking about Plato’s idealism or Kant’s transcendental idealism or Berkeley’s subjective idealism, an “idea” always refers to some kind of object. It is not mind (*xin* 心) but rather an *object* of mind. Thus only China has “mind-only theory,” but it does not have idealism, and the West in turn has only idealism and no “mind-only theory.” Without understanding “mind-only theory,” there is also no understanding “*matter*-only theory,” whereupon people use “mind-only” and “matter-only” to mean whatever they please and do not seek truth and real understanding. Then there is only a cacophony of wild claims and propaganda and the whole country is as if insane. Did Mao Zedong understand anything about mind-only and matter-only? No, it was intellectuals’ leftism that brought the country down, and they did not understand mind-only or matter-only either. Only people possessed by demons or out of their minds could believe in materialism. No, “dialectical materialism” is an expression which makes no sense, and in a China without intellectual training, incoherence can end up getting people killed. Mao Zedong said he wanted millions of heads to fall, and indeed they did, and yet the intellectuals never woke up!

Furthermore, if like Hegel you drag existence into the dialectical process and speak of the dialectic as something concrete rather than as a process of spiritual cultivation, then it would never happen that “the dialectic finally undergoes its own dialectic.” That is, it would not transpire that the dialectical process would ultimately negate itself and end the dialectic. Hegel’s philosophy cannot say such a thing, because his absolute being and the myriad things which it creates as the process of existence is equated with the dialectical

其事). To make it more consistent with Mou’s thoughts, I have modified it slightly based on suggestions by Esther Su.

process, and so thesis, antithesis, and synthesis must go on forever, always in contradiction. Taking form in political consciousness, this means eternal struggle and slaughter, and thus what is born in the mind harms the polity and foments chaos for the whole world, enough to destroy everything that exists and more.

Since in China Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism correctly saw dialectics as a matter of spiritual effort, it was a virtual (*xuceng* 虛層) matter of the refinement of the spirit, not something to be grasped at and clung to in concrete existence. If I want a dialectic, I can continue the process endlessly; and if I do not want it, I can stop it immediately and cancel the process. That is, dialectics undergoes its own dialectic and everything returns to normal. And when I say it can be canceled, I am not just making this up. There really is a theoretical basis for saying that it can be canceled, namely the “perfect and sudden teaching” (*yuandun zhi jiao* 圓頓之教) of Chinese philosophy. There are good reasons for calling it “sudden” and “perfect”; this is not empty verbiage, and does not amount merely to Zhu Xi’s advice that “if you investigate one thing every day, in time there will come a day when it all suddenly makes sense.”¹³ The difference is that Zhu’s philosophy amounts to what Wang Yangming calls “seeking reason outside” (*xiangwai qiu li* 向外求理). There is an endless number of external things, and the work of investigating them is endless, and so there is no certainty¹⁴ of ever reaching that spiritual state in which it all makes sense. So Marxist materialist dialectics cannot arrive at a “perfect and sudden teaching,” nor can a Hegelian dialectics of the Spirit. Nor can there be any necessary guarantee of ever arriving at Zhu Xi’s sort of epiphany either. Of course, the practical philosophies of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism can also teach a “dialectical synthesis” in Hegel’s sense in the course of spiritual effort, in which “spiritual effort must never cease.”¹⁵ But at

13 A paraphrase of a passage in Zhu’s commentary to the *Great Learning* which for Mou exemplifies Zhu’s vision of spiritual progress as a process of gradual accumulation: “As for the long expenditure of effort, whereupon one day all will make sense, one will then grasp the surface and the interior of all things and comprehend the refined and the rough, and nothing will be left unclear to the vast workings of our minds. This is what the text means by the phrases ‘the investigation of things’ and ‘arriving at knowledge.’” (至于用力之久，而一旦豁然貫通焉，則眾物之表里精粗無不到，而吾心之全体大用無不明矣。此謂物格，此謂知之至也) (*Daxue zhangju* 6, in Zhong, *Sishu zhangju*).

14 *biranxing* 必然性, translated in most contexts as “necessity.”

15 See Mou’s commentary to his translation of a selection from Kant’s *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, in which he writes: “Even the very best people [such as sages] must inevitably stray, and so there can be no end to spiritual effort” (即使是最善者亦不能無違失，故工夫不可以已) (*YSL*, 69).

any moment they can also teach a perfect and sudden teaching, immediately abolishing a dialectic, realizing the being-in-itself, and manifesting a spiritual state in which “suchness is self-so” (*ruru zizai* 如如自在), one “roams carefree, wanting for nothing,”¹⁶ and “the heavenly principle flows along” (*tianli liuxing* 天理流行). At one and the same time, “spiritual effort never ceases” and yet without contradiction you are also “complete right here and now.”¹⁷ That is the true meaning of the dialectic of the spirit and the expression of what is highest in human wisdom. Dialectic in this sense will not lead to catastrophe.

Finally, let me raise two more examples to explain this idea of the dialectic of spiritual effort. Wang Yangming once said, “With the mind, all is real, and without it all is illusion.” But then immediately he added, “*Without* the mind all is real, and *with* it all is illusion.”¹⁸ Do these two statements seem contradictory to you? And if these plainly opposite sentences do not contradict one another, why not? If you truly understand these two sentences, then on the one hand you can understand the Chinese wisdom tradition, and on the other you can understand Kant’s moral philosophy, and also the true meaning of Hegel’s dialectic and his mistakes. Likewise with all the Buddhist sayings like “Greed is the same as the Way, and so are anger and delusion”¹⁹ and “Afflictions are

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- 16 *xiaoyao wudai* 逍遙無待. An allusion to the *Xiaoyao you* 逍遙遊 chapter of the Zhuangzi. See Ziporyn’s *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings with Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008), 5. In this trio of terms Mou is bringing together Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian expressions of the spiritual state of the perfect teaching.
- 17 *dangxia juzu* 當下具足. A phrase found, among a handful of other places, in Huineng’s commentary to the Diamond Sutra, in a reference to “the bodhi mind in which I am complete right here and now” (Z 509.25:881a21).
- 18 Wang Yangming’s *Collected Works* records this exchange between Yangming and his student Wang Longxi (Ruzhong): “Longxi mentioned Buddhist discussions of the ‘true determination’ of things and delusion. The Master said, ‘With the mind everything is real, and without it everything is delusion. Without the mind, everything is real, and with it everything is delusion.’ Longxi said, ‘Saying that with the mind everything is real and without it everything is delusion is referring to spiritual practice from the perspective of being-in-itself. Saying that without the mind everything is real and with it everything is delusion is referring to ultimate reality from the perspective of spiritual practice.’ The Master approved this.” (汝中舉佛家實相幻想之說. 先生曰：有心俱是實，無心俱是幻；無心俱是實，有心俱是幻。汝中曰：有心俱是實，無心俱是幻，是本體上說工夫；無心俱是實，有心俱是幻，是工夫上說本體。先生然其言。) *Chuanxi lu*, 381.
- 19 貪欲即是道，悲癡亦如是。Tiantai Zhiyi attributes this to the *Sarvadharmaṇvratīnirdeśa* (Chs. *Zhufu wuxing jing* 諸法無行經, T 650) (q.v. T 1911.46:18a29–b1), where the exact quotation is “貪欲是涅槃，悲癡亦如是” (T 650.15.759c13). Not surprisingly, this became a slogan in the Tiantai tradition, which looks for purity in vile, worldly things.

enlightenment, and *samsara* is *nirvana*.²⁰ What are we to make of these assertions? Are they the same as A, E, I, and O statements in logic?²¹ In logic, greed can only be greed. How can it also be the Way? Profundities like this are found all over the classics of Chinese philosophy. And in order to understand these subtle truths, one must first have some grasp of Kant's distinctions between transcendent and immanent and regulative and constitutive, as well as how transcendent transforms into immanent and regulative into constitutive, and also to grasp that these transformations are matters of reflective judgment rather than determinate judgment. And after understanding these, one must then achieve some clarity about the truth and limitations of Hegelian dialectic, whereupon full comprehension is finally possible.

These are the things that young people should be applying themselves to in the long term, and about that nothing more needs to be said. Thank you.

20 *fannao ji puti, shengsi ji niepan* 煩惱即菩提, 生死即涅槃. One or both clauses occur in the Chinese translations of the *Mahāyāna-saṃgrāha-bhāṣya*, *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra*, and *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra*, but more relevant to Mou's concerns is that they are repeated throughout the Tiantai commentarial tradition beginning with Zhiyi.

21 That is, universal affirmatives and negatives ("All S is P" and "All S is not P") and particular affirmatives and negatives ("Some S is P" and "Some S is not P").

PART 3

History of Chinese Philosophy



Confucian Moral Metaphysics¹

I recently retired from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and so it is that I have been able to come to Taiwan to speak all of you. Originally I did not want to speak, because in recent years I've found talking to be wearisome and to make my breathing labored, and hence I have not enjoyed giving speeches. But because you are such a friendly group and so very motivated to learn, I could not refuse. Teaching in Hong Kong for the last fifteen years, I have felt that the teaching style is different from that in Taiwan. In Taiwan I have found more idealism and a tendency for teaching to inspire students; in Hong Kong that does not happen. Thus I find that if you want to teach about moral ideals, one must not stray from one's own land.² During my time in Hong Kong, I had no choice but to draw my spirit inward and immerse myself in scholarly research. This may seem dour and passive, but actually even pure research can establish you as a scholar. During those fifteen years in Hong Kong, I wrote *Talent and Xuan Principle*, about the *xuan* metaphysics of the Wei-Jin, *Metaphysical Realities of Mind and Nature*, about Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism, and began *Buddha Nature and Prajñā*, about Sui-Tang Buddhism. A good treatment of those three periods can shed more light on Chinese philosophy.

My job now is to summarize, to give a comprehensive narration of the three core teachings of Chinese culture, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. This represents the distilled essence of my life's work. After all, I am no longer a young man, and we can all agree that China still does not have a good history of Chinese philosophy. Nowadays every school teaches classes on the history of Chinese philosophy, but they all stop with the pre-Qin period, partly because there is too much to cover and partly because they are not very good at it. By this point in my life, I would be able to teach something of the rest of the history of philosophy down to the end of the Qing and the founding of the Republic if I had to. But sadly, by the time I learned enough to teach all of that, it was time for me to retire. So what I would like to do now is give a summary of the major traditions, at which I will probably be able to do a better job. Because

1 "Rujia daode de xingshang xue 儒家的道德的形上學," *Ehu yuekan* 1.3 (September 1975). Originally the first of four guest lectures delivered in Taiwan at the end of 1974. Reprinted in *MXQ*, 209–221.

2 Mou was not from Taiwan originally and had lived there only from 1949 to 1960, but he remained an ROC citizen.

I will be giving a very distilled look at each system, all this may seem unfamiliar to you, but that is no matter.

I will talk first about Confucian moral metaphysics, and next time about the Daoist wisdom of nothing (*wu* 無) and then finally about Buddhist ontology. Even these topics will seem unfamiliar to you because I am using modern terminology to give a distilled explanation whose purpose is to explain what type (*xingtai* 形態) of system is embodied in each of the three great teachings, not to explain all their content in tortuous detail.

Where Confucianism is concerned, this means explaining what type of *metaphysics* it has. In discussing it under the heading of “moral metaphysics,” this means that to explain that kind of learning in this period in history, we must explain what type of doctrinal system exists in that tradition and point out what its central questions and theses are.

To begin with, then, I would ask everyone to silently recite two poems. The first is “The Teeming People” (*Zheng min* 烝民) from the *Book of Odes*:

Heaven gives birth to the teeming people / If there is a thing, there is a norm /

This is the constant people cleave to / They are fond of this beautiful Virtue.³

Mencius quotes this passage to prove the goodness of human nature and also quotes Confucius, who remarked, “Whoever wrote this ode understood the Way,”⁴ attesting to the poet’s great insight. The other poem is “Heaven’s Bequeath”:

How profound and ceaseless is that which is bequeathed by heaven!
An oh, how conspicuous is the purity of King Wen’s virtue!⁵

This poet is even more inspired. Let us then take these two poems as our framework, for they are the deepest source of the wisdom of the Chinese nation, its

3 天生烝民，有物有則。民之秉夷，好是懿德。 Translation by Bryan Van Norden (*Mengzi*, 150). Quoted in *Mengzi* 6A6, the passage first appears in the Ode no. 260. See Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed., *Mao Shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 (Correct Meaning of Mao’s Poetry) (Beijing: Beijing Daxue, 1999), 1218 or, more accessibly, in James Legge’s *Chinese Classics* (Hongkong, 1861–72), which is freely available on many internet sites.

4 This remark is not attested in the *Analects*.

5 維天之命，烏穆不已。於乎不顯，文王之德之純。 Li Xueqin, *Mao Shi zhengyi*, 1284, quoted in *Zhongyong* 27.

gushing wellspring,⁶ flowing ever down to us from its ancient beginnings, and they are easy to comprehend, requiring no great struggle.

Mencius quotes “The Teeming People” to communicate the goodness of human nature, and *The Doctrine of the Mean* quotes “Heaven’s Bequeath” to explain the heavenly Way as “that by which heaven is heaven.” Ever since the Confucian tradition began with Confucius as its revered teacher, later Confucians developed the tradition in accord with his teachings.⁷ In these two poems, we can see the roots of Confucian learning. When Confucius came on the scene, he proposed two concepts, humaneness and heaven. I can encapsulate his life-wisdom in one phrase, “practice humaneness to know heaven.”⁸ On the subjective level he was talking about humaneness and on the objective level about heaven. His concept of ‘humaneness’ was hugely significant, pointing out human subjectivity, whereby practicing humaneness reaches upward and achieves heavenly virtue. Had Confucius not introduced the concept of ‘humaneness’, the heaven described in the *Book of Documents* and *Book of Odes* might have turned into something like the Christian model, and so the fact that Chinese culture did not take a Christian-like form is also owing to Confucius.⁹ Later, Mencius appeared on the scene and opened things up more,

6 *yuanquan hunhun* 原泉混混. A reference to *Mengzi* 4B.16. Asked why Confucius praised water, Mencius explained: “A gushing wellspring never stops, night or day. It fills up a hole in the ground and flows on, all the way to the four seas. It does this because it has a source (*ben* 本), and this is why it is worth imitating. If it had no source, it would be like when the rainfall gathers in the seventh and eighth month and fills the channels in the fields, and then when they dry out, one can only stand and wait.”

7 In the *Analecets* 7.1, Confucius famously claims that he has not created any new teachings but merely passed down the teachings of the ancient sages, and Mou notes that in the Han he was accepted as merely a “medium” for the transmission of the teachings of the six classics. Nonetheless, Mou believes that there really was something special and important about Confucius: he was not merely a teacher of humaneness and propriety—there were many of those—but also began to develop the idea that humans’ humaneness provides a metaphysical connection to heaven. And this belated recognition of Confucius’ importance, Mou believes, is part of what made the “Neo-Confucianism” of the Song and Ming new and important (*Xinti yu xingtí*, vol. 1, 12–13).

8 *jianren yi zhitian* 踐仁以知天. See *YSL*, 21–24.

9 Mou’s wording in Chinese does not explicitly say “Christian-like” but rather reads, at a word-for-word level, “turn into a Christian model” (*zhuancheng jidujiao xingtai* 基督教形態). I have interpolated the “-like” because there is no indication that Mou means to say that without Confucius Chinese culture would eventually have become Christian. Rather, Mou’s “model” refers to a formal type, namely one in which the numinous wholly transcends human beings.

giving more explicit definition to the idea of humaneness as the goodness of human nature, which he explained in terms of the mind with its four sprouts.¹⁰ Thus Mencius' life-wisdom can be summed up in the expression "fathoming the mind to know one's nature and know heaven" (*jinxin zhixing zhitian* 盡心知性知天), meaning that fathoming one's own mind allows one to know one's nature and thereby to know heaven. Finally, in the *Doctrine of the Mean*'s teaching of utmost authenticity completing nature (*zhicheng jinxing* 至誠盡性), the subjective and the objective were taught to be a unity, inasmuch as the subjective mind was to be explained as unified with objective nature or subjective human nature as unified with objective heaven. Thus the teaching of the *Doctrine of the Mean* can be summed up as "utmost authenticity completing nature." And the Appendices to the *Changes* boil down to the phrase "plumbing spirit to know transformation."¹¹

Hence the whole Confucian tradition from Confucius to the Appendices emerges from a single root and then progressed gradually, reaching its ultimate completion in the Appendices' teaching of "exhausting spirit to know transformation." This doctrine became a tradition, known as the Confucian tradition (*Kongzi chuantong* 孔子傳統). The *Great Learning* only gives an example of an outline for practice and was crammed onto the list.¹² Of course we cannot say that it too is not pervaded by the Confucian spirit, but in basic orientation of Confucian life-wisdom, it cannot decide anything. Therefore we do not take it as our guide but instead follow that tradition springing from a single source, the tradition of harmonizing and reaching unto heaven. At the most, the *Great Learning* is something secondary.

Through this tradition we can have a look at Song-Ming Confucianism. The Song and Ming were preceded by a long errancy, and it was only in the Song and Ming that it was made right again. During those six long centuries from the Song through the Ming, Confucians relied on just a very few source texts, mainly the *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Analects*, *Mengzi*, and the

10 *siduan zhi xin* 四端之心. See Mencius 2A.6: "The feeling of compassion is the sprout of humaneness. The feeling of disdain is the sprout of rectitude. The feeling of deference is the sprout of propriety. The feeling of approval and disapproval is the sprout of wisdom. Having these four sprouts is like having our four limbs." Translation adapted from Van Norden, *Mengzi*, 46.

11 *qiongshen zhihua* 窮神知化. From the "Great Commentary." Li Xueqin, *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 305.

12 That is, Zhu Xi thrust it onto his reading list of essential Neo-Confucian works, where Mou believes it does not really belong. He thinks of the *Great Learning* as a marginal work to the true Confucian message and believes the Appendices to the *Book of Changes* should have taken its place on the list of Four Books.

Appendices to the *Changes*. They grasped all the important points in those five books, so that it would not be easy for us to surpass them at that. Their six hundred years of discussions of this handful of books naturally produced some profound doctrines, though people nowadays do not understand them and merely spout off ignorantly about them. Nowadays it is common for people to say that Song-Ming Confucians were ostensibly Confucian but in truth were essentially Buddhist (*yang ru yin shi* 陽儒陰釋), but that really is shallow. The actuality is that they were each developing from their own life-wisdom, their own roots and substance. What about that makes them crypto-Buddhist?

We can divide the Song-Ming Confucians into three lineages, and if we were to select one representative for the sake of convenience, then in keeping with today's title it would be Wang Yangming, and so we shall center our discussion around his idea of cultivating moral knowing (*zhi liangzhi* 致良知). When we hear the word "metaphysical" (*xing er shang* 形而上), this often conjures up thoughts of Zhu Xi's Supreme Ultimate (*taiji* 太極) as the epitome of something metaphysical, and on the contrary, people usually think of moral knowing as belonging to the School of Mind and not necessarily as something even more metaphysical than the Supreme Ultimate. However, even Zhu Xi's Supreme Ultimate cannot completely and fully represent the whole of Confucian metaphysics. For this is not just baseless speculation about metaphysics. If it were, then Zhu's ideas would be just fine. But here we are talking about "moral metaphysics," with "moral" serving as a very important adjective to "metaphysics," and not just any old metaphysics. This is "moral metaphysics" and not "metaphysics of morals."¹³

Let us use Wang Yangming's notion of cultivating moral knowing as an example for understanding Confucian "moral metaphysics." First let us express simply what moral knowing means. Based on a complete understanding of the concept, moral knowing should have a threefold significance: subjective, objective, and absolute. We can see the subjective significance in the first line of Wang Yangming's "Poem on Moral Knowing," which begins: "In solitary knowing, without sound or scent."¹⁴ This "solitary knowing" is moral knowing in its subjective significance, drawing on the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of*

13 Mou is making a distinction here like the one above between a metaphysics of morals (*daode di xingshangxue* 道德的形上學), and metaphysical account of what makes morals possible, and a moral metaphysics (*daode de xingshangxue* 道德底形上學), an account of metaphysics that takes morals as its starting point.

14 *Yong liangzhi shi* 詠良知詩. "In solitary knowing, without sound or scent, this is the foundation of Heaven and earth; [why] turn away from your own inexhaustible treasury to beg at doorsteps like a pauper?" (無聲無臭獨知時, 此即乾坤萬有基。拋却自家無

the *Mean*'s concept of vigilance in solitude (*shendu* 慎獨). The *Mean* speaks of being "careful of what is unobserved and wary of what is unheard," and the *Great Learning* speaks of vigilance in solitude in terms of authenticity in one's consciousness. This is the most inward kind of Confucian moral practice, the likes of which few other great philosophies teach.

And what is it that this "solitary knowing" knows? It knows right and wrong, what you yourself have determined to be right or wrong. Thus moral knowing is an inner court of law. That is moral knowing in its subjective significance. Without that subjective dimension, then we could not know how moral knowing manifests itself, for moral knowing of right and wrong can alert itself. Without that self-alerting, moral knowing is empty. It manifests in the here-and-now knowing of right and wrong. Kant called conscience (*liangxin* 良心) the inner court of law, just as Yangming does, but Kant left it at that, at the subjective significance of moral knowing. And although we could use the word "conscience" to translate *liangzhi* 良知 ("moral knowing"), that only gets at the subjective significance of moral knowing and leaves out its objective and absolute aspects, which are absent from Kant's idea of conscience. The subjective aspect consists of the activity of knowing right and wrong, but the objective aspect is more than that. What is described as an activity is the subjective significance, whereas the objective significance is explained as "mind as reason."¹⁵ The activity of moral knowing is mind and at the same time it is reason. If it were otherwise, then reason would be external to us.¹⁶ Saying

盡藏，沿門持鉢效貧兒。) Yao Yanfu 姚延福, ed., *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1992), 790.

- 15 *xin ji li* 心即理. The most common translation for the notoriously untranslatable *li* 理 is "principle," though there are certainly others. However, in this context Mou very deliberately chooses "reason" (*SJJ*, 399; "Immediate Successor of Wang Yangming," 116), and knowing that is important for appreciating the common ground that Mou thinks the Song-Ming Confucians share with Kant.

For recent contributions to the debate on the idea of *li* 理, see Stephen Angle, *Sagehood: The Contemporary Significance of Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 31–50; John Makeham, *Dao Companion to Neo-Confucianism* (New York: Springer, 2010), xxv–xxxi; Brook Ziporyn, "Form, Principle, Pattern, or Coherence? Li 理 in Chinese Philosophy," *Philosophy Compass* 3.3 (May 2008): 401–422 and *Ironies of Oneness and Difference: Coherence in Early Chinese Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 269–270 n. 2.

- 16 This is an important point to Mou because, like Kant, he wants morality to be "autonomous" (*zili* 自律). That is, he wants morality to be a law which the rational subject chooses for itself, rather than something imposed from without, for example by divine fiat. (See *SJJ*, Chap. 14). I am grateful to Esther Su for emphasizing this point with me.

that moral knowing is a principle entails that it is objective, universal, and necessary—that is what constitutes its objective significance. Kant did not agree with this, though, and that is why Kant's "conscience" is mere knowing and not reason, merely the subjective foundation for our capacity to sense the moral law. And what gives us the moral law is not conscience but free will.¹⁷ That means that mind and reason are two, just as in Zhu Xi, and conscience is just what senses the moral law. That is why I often say that Kant is an intermediate type between Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming; he is more advanced than Zhu Xi, but not to the point of Mencius and Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming.

Actually, reason is not the external object of moral knowing but is determined by moral knowing itself. Moral knowing is both activity and being, where the activity (*huodong* 活動) is its knowing of right and wrong and its objective significance as reason is why we say that moral knowing is being (*cunyou* 存有). According to Wang Yangming's teachings, this twofold significance explains what makes morality possible and opens up the world of morality. In Yangming's famous quatrain,¹⁸ each line is explaining why morality is possible and how it is practiced. The questions that the Confucian tradition takes on directly are why morality is possible (that is, the *a priori* basis for morality) and how to practice it. The goal of practice is to merge one's virtue with heaven and earth and become a sage; this is the central question of Confucianism.

But the significance of moral knowing does not end with just its subjective and objective significance. Those two just open up the world of morality; yet moral knowing also has an absolute (*juedui* 絕對) significance; that is, an ontological, metaphysical significance. Whereas its subjective and objective significances open up the world of morality, this one opens up the world of ontology. This absolute significance is explained in the second line of

17 *ziyou yizhi* 自由意志. In Mou's Kantian-inflected lexicon this refers to the aspect of reason which, as Mou believes, is "autonomous" or (more literally) "self-law-giving" (*ziliü* 自律), which is to say that it freely enacts a moral law for itself.

If I may supply for Mou a very concrete example, consider this: my mind is horrified at the thought of mistreating a child. Even *imagining* it saddens me and sickens me too much to continue. If we interpret this in Mou's way, it means that, in me, the innate moral mind freely chooses and affirms a moral code which absolutely forbids hurting a child. This is not compelled from without but rather is my own will.

18 The "teaching in four sentences" (*siju jiao* 四句教): "無善無惡心之體, 有善有惡意之動. 知善知惡是良知, 為善去惡是格物" (*Chuanxi lu*, 315). Mou translates it this way: "That which has no good and evil is the mind-in-itself. That which has good or evil is the activity of volition. That which knows good and evil of the activity of the volition is the *liang-chih*. And to perform good and get rid of evil is the rectification of things (or actions)." See his "Immediate Successor of Wang Yangming," 104.

Wang Yangming's "Poem on Moral Knowing," which says that moral knowing "contains the ground of heaven, Earth, and all beings." This moral knowing is not only manifested in our lives, for although it manifests in our knowing right and wrong, it is not limited by our individuality; it is also the foundation of all being in heaven and earth, all the things in the universe. This is moral knowing's absolute significance. It explains not just how morality is possible but also that moral knowing is the basis of all existence. When moral knowing says "should," it makes a decision from which action is produced. As soon as moral knowing decides, it must be put into practice, and in place of non-existence there comes to be existence. Taking it a step further, it is also thus with the multitude of things in the universe. Thus moral knowing is not only the basis of morality but also the basis of real, existing things. Yet what should be is not always what is, and so existence is actual (*xianshi* 現實) existence; from the perspective of moral metaphysics, moral knowing is not only a decision about what ought to be but a decision about existence. For even though its subjective and objective aspects are restricted to the domain of human morality, according to Wang Yangming when it comes to the mountains and rivers and everything else, moral knowing is the foundation of all existence. As he says, "there are no things outside of mind."¹⁹ This is not Wang's opinion alone but a matter of common agreement among Song-Ming Confucians: Everything is manifest in moral knowing. Apart from moral knowing nothing exists (this is going from existence to non-existence), and where there is moral knowing, only then does everything exist (this is going from non-existence to existence).

From here we can talk about the ontological significance of moral knowing. The word "ontology," as a reference to existence, is fairly vague but we can determine (*juedinghua* 決定化) it further and talk about the ontological significance that belongs to moral knowing.²⁰ For at this point we can say that all Confucianism, from Confucius himself to Wang Yangming (and even Cheng and Zhu talking about reason), contains a clear metaphysical significance. The place to find this is in what they say about "heaven," which for Confucians is consciousness of the transcendental. Any great teaching, of whatever form,

19 *xinwai wuwu* 心外無物. This doctrine appears throughout Yangming's teachings. For example, his *Instructions for Practical Living* record him saying: "There are no things outside of mind. If my mind generates a thought of serving my parents, then this service to parents is a thing" (心外無物. 如吾心發一念孝親, 即孝親便是物). (*Chuanxi lu*, 109. Also see *ibid.*, 36–37.)

20 *liangzhi di cunyoulun yiyi* 良知底存有論意義. Mou is making a distinction here like the one above, between a "metaphysics of morals," i.e. a metaphysical account of what makes morals possible, and a "moral metaphysics."

must necessarily have a consciousness of the transcendental, without which it could not continue to unfold. In modern times people have said that Chinese learning tends to take something entirely ordinary and present it as the words of sages. "This is ordinary fare," they say, "so why the hype?" But what is entirely ordinary for a sage may be easy to *talk* about, but it is far from ordinary for you or me. The Way is nowhere separate from the ordinary fare, but it is not *only* that. However, Chinese literati are very realistic people and have misused this commonplace-ness to deny the yearning for transcendence, for the idea of a transcendental heaven turns them off and frightens them. Gu Yanwu said that if even Zigong could not hear nature and the heavenly Way, ordinary people have no business opining about it,²¹ and for Gu this was a way of criticizing the Song-Ming Confucians. In this way modern people wear science like a protective amulet and dare not speak the name of heaven, for modern people always want to get rid of heaven. But how can anyone take away heaven? Phrases like "reaching upward and attaining heavenly virtue" and "if anyone knows me, perhaps it is heaven"²² are everywhere; how can they be gotten rid of? This really is a case of moral anarchy,²³ something that happens whenever clever people get confounded by vulgarity. But in truth, there is no conflict between science and heaven. Trying to take away heaven is like trying to get rid of one's own head.²⁴ Thus foreigners say that Confucianism is something finite, concerned only with mundane human relations (*renlun riyong* 人倫日用), and

21 Gu is one of the practical-minded figures of the late Ming who, Mou claims elsewhere, *could have* brought China to science and modernity in its own way, if only their inquiry had not been spoiled by the Manchus. Mou is paraphrasing from his "Letter to a Friend on Learning" (*Yu youren lunxue shu* 與友人論學書, in *Gu Tinglin shiwen ji* 顧亭林詩文集, 2nd ed. [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983]), where Gu reflects that the metaphysical abstractions emphasized by the Neo-Confucians were seldom even mentioned by Confucius himself. His point is to cast doubt on their validity and importance.

22 Both phrases refer to *Analects* 14.35, in which Confucius is in dialog with none other than Zigong (mentioned above by Gu Yanwu). Confucius exclaims, "Alas! No one understands me," whereupon Zigong asks what he means. Confucius elaborates: "I am not bitter toward Heaven, nor do I blame others. I study what is below in order to comprehend what is above. If there is anyone who could understand me, perhaps it is Heaven." (Translation by Slingerland.)

23 *wufa wutian* 無法無天. Lit. being "without laws and without heaven."

24 Here Mou's text adds "as in the popular saying about retracting one's head." In Chinese, any comparison to a turtle constitutes a supremely insulting epithet, and so a contemptible and craven person might be called "a turtle retracting his head" (*suotou wugui* 縮頭烏龜).

lacks a transcendental sense.²⁵ Let foreigners talk that way if they must, but we ourselves should not, for it harms Chinese culture. This must be made very clear: sages do not just sit around drinking tea.

When Wang Yangming clearly says, “This is the foundation of heaven and earth and the myriad things,” some people wonder how we are supposed to interpret his talk of “heaven and earth and the myriad things.” Modern people stubbornly insist that Wang could only have been going along with the traditional phraseology and that this phrase did truly reflect his own thinking. But his *Instructions for Practical Living* is full of this kind of expression; how can anyone say that he was just parroting familiar phrases? Moral knowing has an absolute sense and so does indeed imply a metaphysics, but in addition, because it also has subjective and objective senses, its metaphysical significance is entailed by moral practice. This sort of moral metaphysics is what we call a “practical metaphysics according to the perfect teaching” (*shijian de yuanyao xia de xingshangxue* 實踐的圓教下的形上學), and it has to be understood in terms of moral practice, of which the goal is to become a sage, a great person. The *Changes* says, “A great person is one who merges his virtue with heaven and earth, who merges his brightness with the sun and moon, who merges in orderliness with the four seasons, and who merges in fortune and misfortune with the spirits.”²⁶ Cheng Mingdao wrote, “Humaneness is being completely one with things.”²⁷ Mencius said, “To be so great that one transforms is what is meant by being a ‘sage’. For one’s sagacity to be beyond understanding is what is meant by being ‘spiritual’.”²⁸ Whatever the expression, it is necessary to practice this level, namely being necessarily one with heaven and

25 The foreigner foremost in Mou’s mind is probably Max Weber, who described Confucianism as lacking a sense of ethical tension between the realities of the world and the unreachable standards demanded by a transcendent deity. Since their founding “Declaration to the World on Chinese Culture,” New Confucians felt deeply wounded and maligned by this portrayal and expended a great deal of effort refuting it. (See the text of the Declaration in Feng Zusheng 封祖盛, ed., *Dangdai xin rujia* 當代新儒家 [Beijing: Sanlian, 1989], 1–52.) Tu Wei-ming offers a history of the criticism and a rebuttal in *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), 135–137.

26 大人與天地合其德，與日月合其明，與四時合其序，與鬼神合其吉凶 (Li Xueqin, *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 23). Mou quotes the passage with minor variation.

27 仁者渾然與物同體。The opening definition of Mingdao’s “Essay on Knowing Humaneness” (*Shi ren pian* 識仁篇) (SYXA, 540).

28 大而化之之謂聖，聖而不可知之之謂神。Mengzi 7Bc25. The translation is Van Norden’s.

earth and the myriad things. In Confucian terms, this is the perfect teaching.²⁹ The reaching of the highest realm of spiritual attainment through the process of practice entails a moral metaphysics, one in which practice takes humane-ness and moral knowing all the way to the level in which “there is nothing outside of mind,” at which point being-in-itself manifested through practice (namely humaneness or moral knowing) becomes absolute, universal reason. This is not baseless talk dreamed up in isolation from practice but rather comes through practical manifestation according to the perfect teaching. If it were otherwise, there would be no reality to metaphysics and one could say that being-in-itself was water, fire, wind, or whatever, but not that it is humane-ness and moral knowing. For where everything is guesswork, how can there be necessity (*biranxing* 必然性)? In Western philosophy, this metaphysical conjecture is what pre-Kantian metaphysics was, entirely dogmatic and nowhere possessing necessity. This is what we call “theoretical metaphysics” (*guan jie de xingshangxue* 觀解的形上學), since the original Latin meaning of ‘theo-retical’ is to stand to one side and objectively understand the object.³⁰ When Kant asked about the basis of such contemplation, all of this collapsed and so in Western philosophy after Kant, when one talks metaphysics one has to talk practice and build metaphysics on that foundation. Thus practice and theory become relative, just as in Confucianism. For this reason people call Kant Germany’s oriental sage and people with a Christian perspective do not care for him. But from his example we can see that there are commonalities within human wisdom. Kant with his Christian heritage called it “moral theology,” whereas we speak of “moral metaphysics,” or practical metaphysics according to the perfect teaching. This is necessary, not conjectural and arbitrary; nor is it overawed by science, since it and science have nothing to do with each other. Just as everything between heaven and earth has both root and branch, theory and practice can be established separately, and it is practice which is more basic and primary.

If we look at how this plays out in Wang Yangming’s teaching on the cultivation of moral knowing (*zhi liangzhi* 致良知), we can see that the perfect

29 *yuanjiao* 圓教. One of the most important and most difficult concepts that Mou borrowed from Tiantai Buddhist scholasticism. In the first instance, it means the highest and most adequate expression of a given tradition’s essential message.

30 The contemplative sense that Mou describes is entirely Greek. In the very rare instances when ‘*theoria*’ appears in Latin (e.g. in Aquinas and Descartes), it has the sense of a speculative account. My thanks to Joseph W. Hwang for his guidance on this point.

teaching's moral metaphysics gives us both an ontology of phenomena³¹ and an ontology of noumena (*benti* 本體). One might ask where these are to be found in Wang Yangming. They were not highlighted clearly by previous thinkers, but they are there nonetheless. We can find clues in Confucian references to "moral nature's knowing" (*dexing zhi zhi* 德性之知) and the "knowledge of sounds and sights" (*wenjian zhi zhi* 聞見之知), Daoist references to the "Dao mind" (*daoxin* 道心) and the "established mind" (*chengxin* 成心), and Buddhist references to "*prajñā*" (*bore zhi* 般若智) and "consciousness" (*shixin* 識心). Earlier thinkers did not regard knowledge of sights and sounds lightly, but their emphasis was on moral nature's knowing, as is made clearest in Zhang Zai, Cheng Mingdao, Lu Xiangshan, and Wang Yangming. Since the earlier Confucians focused entirely on the moral nature, even though they did not deny the knowledge of sights and sounds, they also never made it the subject of a body of learning and moreover never developed science. Without adequate attention to sensory knowledge, they were incapable of developing science and a body of learning like Western philosophy, which focuses on epistemology because it has a standard for knowledge, namely science. In this regard Kant can be very helpful for us. Science can only come about from real research; it is not enough to do propaganda for it and worship it. Since the founding of the Republic in 1911 we have only been doing propaganda about science, not scientific research; in that respect we still have a vacuum to fill. You probably all have some hazy impressions of what I mean by ontology of noumena since we have so much material to work with, from the *Analects*, *Mencius*, the *Book of Changes*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. But apart from that, we also have the ontology of phenomena, which is a more difficult matter. That is what Kant created with his enormous *Critique of Pure Reason*. That side of things may seem very unfamiliar to you, but it is extremely significant for us and you must all study it well—mere propagandizing is not enough. We have very little material on it; even Zhu Xi, who thought highly of knowledge of sights and sounds, could not produce an ontology of phenomena. For what Zhu grasped best was the supreme ultimate, a concept which cannot give us an ontology of phenomena since it belongs to the realm of morals, not of sights and sounds. The same is true of Daoism, which is very clear that "established mind" belongs to the realm of phenomena. (On "established mind," see Zhuangzi's "Equalizing Things.") The established mind is our habituated mind

31 For Mou, an ontology of "phenomena" includes not just a generic account of sensible particulars but also an account of the empirical and cognitive faculties that know them and reason about them. That is, Kant's metaphysics of experience. Here as elsewhere, I am indebted to Esther Su for her help.

(*xixin* 習心), not something good: “[T]o claim that there are any such things as ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ *before* they come to be established in someone’s mind . . . is like saying you left for Yue today and arrived there yesterday.”³² The established mind is treated as the measure of right and wrong, and so you have your notion of right and wrong, I have mine, and people argue without end. Zhuangzi’s “Equalizing Things” would like to stop all this righting and wronging and, to that end, get rid of the established mind. Thus the established mind could be the basis for an ontology of phenomena. What Zhuangzi calls the “eight virtues,”³³ the standards by which people talk (and not moral virtues), are based on the established mind. And the “Dao mind” is what Daoists seek and so can serve as the basis for an ontology of being-in-itself. It is necessary to think carefully about the spiritual state called the Dao mind, whereas Buddhism has been the clearest and most complete on this point and their analysis of consciousness is the most detailed and exhaustive: Consciousness is deluded discrimination (*fenbie* 分別) and the source of defilement and affliction, and therefore what is needed is to turn consciousness into enlightened cognition, or *prajñā*. The Buddhists are the clearest of all about the opposition between consciousness and enlightened cognition, but it is only that there is more material on this topic; it is not actually their main focus. The purpose of their discussions about consciousness is to explain affliction and liberation from affliction, not to erect an ontology of phenomena. If we could develop one, that would be a great contribution. In this age, no sect can be closed-minded, for each great teaching represents a very lofty kind of wisdom, and unless all of them can thrive once more, the demonic tribulations of the twentieth century will go unconquered—this has been the focus of my work as a teacher from the very beginning. It is only because the great teachings have retreated from engagement with the world³⁴ and stopped shedding light on it that Marx could swagger so. Tell me, could you ever resist Marxism with your *own* thinking? Hardly. In no time at all you would probably go Communist yourself.³⁵ Therefore it is very

32 未成乎心而有是非是今日適越而昔至也 (Cao, *Zhuangzi qianzhu*, 20). The translation is adapted from Brook Ziporyn’s *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings, with Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009), 11.

33 *ba de* 八德. A reference to *Zhuangzi*, 31. Mou thinks of these as rough, pre-systematic correlates to Kant’s categories of understanding or the “non-associated mental factors” (*citta-viprayukta-samskāras*) of Buddhist epistemology.

34 *tuiyin* 退隱. The metaphor is of a government official who has retired to his private hermitage, often because the world is in such a corrupt state that he despairs of his ability to reform it.

35 Mou is especially disgusted with intellectuals who were seduced by the fashionable Marxism of the 1920s and 30s or who, like Feng Youlan and Liang Shuming, stayed behind

beneficial to read some Kant. Back when the *Treatise Establishing Consciousness-Only* was translated,³⁶ people did not like reading it because of its complexity, yet this sort of thing absolutely must be developed. Ours is no longer an age of monastics but an age of laity, and sectarian gates must be thrown open. Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism each have materials to work with in order to develop the two levels of ontology, but it is not enough simply to think; we must study well.

In Wang Yangming's teaching about moral knowing, the word "things" (*wu* 物) has two meanings. The one that everyone knows is "that upon which intention (*yi* 意) is directed," referring to the cultivation of moral knowing (*zhi liangzhi* 致良知). When Wang's "four-sentence teaching" says, "performing good and getting rid of evil is the investigation of things," "things" means "that on which intention rests." If the intention is on serving one's parents or on study, then study or serving parents is the thing. This is what I call "thing as action" (*xingwei wu* 行為物), where the thing is a deed, a behavior. Thus the thing is not interpreted as being the parent or book itself, and the "investigation of things" does not mean the fixing of things themselves but rather correct behavior. So for example, where serving one's parents is the behavior in question, the correct behavior is filial piety. Thus Wang is in disagreement with Zhu Xi, for he explains "things" in terms of the cultivation of moral knowing and moral practice. The other meaning of "things" in Wang's thought is where it is defined as "what is affected by enlightened sensing."³⁷ When moral practice reaches the highest peak, it merges as one with heaven and earth and the myriad things and moral knowing becomes an absolutely universal reason; in the highest spiritual state, moral knowing functions at all times, so that the

on the mainland in 1949, made their peace with Communism, and changed their philosophy to accommodate it.

36 *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論 (T. 2154), a Chinese compilation of Sanskrit commentary on the *Yogācāra-bhūmi*, translated in the seventh century C.E. Mou thinks of this text, the high point of Yogācāra Buddhist epistemology in China, as the closest China came to developing an ontology of phenomena on its own.

37 *liangzhi mingjue zhi ganying* 良知明覺之感應 (*Chuanxi lu*, 250). This phrase is impossible to translate perfectly. Sébastien Billioud parses this closely, as "where clear-sightedness is aroused and responds" (*Thinking Through Confucian Modernity*, 146), but I have chosen to use Esther Su's more interpretive but also simpler translation here because of my stated intention to translate these essays in a way that will make their language and ideas only minimally alienating to the non-sinologue. However, for the sake of readers with a specialist's knowledge of Neo- and New Confucianism, I will occasionally refer in parentheses to the underlying Chinese compound so that they can more easily see Mou's Chinese in the admittedly simplistic rendering.

present functioning and the present intention are not sensible intention. In this state, intention melts into the clear-sightedness of moral knowing and becomes “intention without the form of intention.”³⁸

This is where Wang’s teaching becomes paradoxical. People sometimes assume that he gets his paradoxes from Buddhists or Daoists, but the truth is that Wang Yangming thought them up on his own. Paradoxes emerge in Wang’s teaching when it is enunciated from this ultimate level of realization, and since Buddhism and Daoism are the most given to paradox, Wang’s philosophy gets misunderstood as a derivation from Buddhism or Daoism. “Intention without the form of intention” was also taught by Lu Xiangshan’s great disciple Yang Cihu,³⁹ who spoke of “not giving rise to intention” (*bu qi yi* 不起意) by suppressing all wrong thoughts. The essentialness of the original mind (*benxin* 本心) is that it does not give rise to intention; intention is drawn back to the original mind and then issues forth in accordance with the original mind. At such a time, intention does not have the characteristics of intention, meaning that it is intention which does not give rise to intention, not that there is no intention there at all. Intention with the characteristics of intention arises and passes away, whereas intention without the form of intention cannot be described in such term because it comes from the original mind and not from causal relations; for the original mind is the birthless and deathless True, Eternal Mind (*zhenchang xin* 真常心), intention without the form of intention. This shows how profound Cihu’s experience was. What Buddhists and Daoists say, we may also say, and we must not shy away from doing so and limit ourselves to superficialities. The appearance of intention is that it sets mind and thoughts in motion, arises and ceases, and partakes of sensibility. But by means of the practical spiritual effort of cultivating moral knowing, intention is absorbed into moral knowing and becomes the operation of enlightened sensing (*liangzhi mingjue*), whereupon it no longer has the appearance of intention and is as Wang Longxi described: “intention without the form of intention.” Its affectiveness is perfect, meaning that is never stagnant, never obstructed, and also perfectly integrated and perfectly replete (*yuanrong, yuanman* 圓融、圓滿). Since this is paradoxical, as soon as Wang Longxi enunciated his “theory of

38 *wu yi zhi yi* 無意之意. This is an adaptation of Mou’s preferred English translation. I have substituted “intention” for Mou’s “volition” but retained the pattern “X without the form of X,” which he insists on as the best translation of Longxi’s four paradoxes. See Mou Tsung-san, “The Immediate Successor of Wang Yangming: Wang Lung-hsi and His Theory of Ssu-wu,” *Philosophy East and West* 23 (1973): 104 n. 2.

39 Yang Cihu 楊慈湖 (Jian 簡) (1141–1226).

the four withouts,"⁴⁰ everyone roared that he was doing Chan Buddhism and betraying the Confucian sages. But in truth, the sages expressed themselves very simply, and one cannot say that just because the sages did not say a particular thing then it must come from Buddhism or Daoism. The functioning of moral knowing is affectiveness, which is an old Confucian idea found throughout the *Book of Changes*. Saying that "things are what are affected by enlightened sensing" combines both deed and thing. When moral knowing's absolute significance manifests, it must also lead a life and act, and these actions are called deeds. The actions are precisely "completing oneself" (*cheng ji* 成己). At the same time, they open up the realm of existence (*cunzai jie* 存在界), and so the things in question include all objectively existing things, and this is precisely "completing things" (*cheng wu* 成物).

"Completing oneself is humaneness, and completing things is knowing. These are virtues of nature and the way to merge inner and outer."⁴¹ Things exist amid the creative feeling of enlightened sensing, but this is not the same as our ordinary understanding of objective, external things. The creative feeling and affectiveness of enlightened sensing presents itself as one body with all things and things present themselves in moral knowing, and hence moral knowing is a creative reason. The Daoist "established mind" can only understand objects, not create them, and so the creative feeling and affectiveness of enlightened sensing is not to be understood as this "horizontal" kind of subject-object cognition (*renzhi* 認知). Its activity is vertical and therefore it can be called creative. "The Way of heaven and earth can be perfectly expressed in a single phrase: Its appearance as things is not repeated; therefore its creation of things is unfathomable."⁴² "The decree (*ming* 命) of Heaven, how

40 Mou regards Longxi as a re-expression Wang Yangming's philosophy from the perspective of the highest spiritual state in his famous "teaching of the four withouts" (*sivujiao* 四無教), which states: "If one realizes that mind is a mind without good or bad, then intention is intention without good or bad, knowing is knowing without good or bad, and things are things without good or bad. For mind without the form of mind is concealed in profundity, intention without the form of intention is perfect in its transcendental responsiveness, knowing without the form of knowing is tranquil in itself, and thing without the form of thing is unfathomable in function" (若悟得心是無善無惡之心, 意即是無善無惡之意, 知即是無善無惡之知, 物即是無善無惡之物. 蓋無心之心則藏密, 無意之意則應圓, 無知之知則體寂, 無物之物則用神). See *Wang Longxi quanji* 王龍溪全集 (Collected Works of Wang Longxi) (vol. 1 (Taipei: Huawen, 1970), 89. Translation adapted from Mou Tsung-san, "Immediate Successor of Wang Yangming," 104–105.

41 成己仁也. 成物知也. 性之德也合內外之道也 (*Zhongyong* 26).

42 天地之道可一言而盡也. 其為物不貳則其生物不測 (*Zhongyong* 27). Translation adapted from Charles Muller's. <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/docofmean.html>, accessed Jan. 29, 2012.

profound and unceasing!"⁴³ Thus in the creative feeling of enlightened sensing, moral knowing presents itself as one with all things, without subject-object relations or a sense of an object, and to be aroused by and respond to something is to create it. Our cognitive minds (*renzhi xin* 認知心) can only understand objects, not create them, for an object is a thing which we confront. But apart from "object" we also have the word "e-ject," meaning a thing with which moral knowing has an affective relationship. This "e-ject" can be translated as "a self-so thing" (*zizai wu* 自在物). (Buddhists say that a buddha, a "thus-come one" [*rulai* 如來] rides upon thusness and coming and going and thus comes and goes self-so [*zizai* 自在]).⁴⁴ For Wang Yangming, a thing in the sense of that word that has to do with the creative feeling of enlightened sensing is a "self-so thing," not an object. Following this distinction, our first question must be, are such things phenomena or are they noumena, or things-in-themselves? They must necessarily be things-in-themselves, not phenomena. Chinese thought is fond of talking about "substance and function" (*tiyong* 體用), and sometimes substance and function can be explained as being-in-itself and phenomena, but not always. A thing in the sense of creative feeling and affectiveness, in its ultimate sense, is indeed a function, but not the kind of function which is an appearance. Thus we can see that the meaning of "function" is very broad and that we cannot apply a distinction between being-in-itself and appearances everywhere. It is only with the intrusion of the cognitive mind that we have appearances. But moral knowing is not the cognitive mind⁴⁵ and therefore we can apply such concepts as "being both substance and function" (*ji ti ji yong* 即體即用) and "non-duality of substance and function" (*tiyong bu'er* 體用不二). Of course appearances also have significance as function, as what we could call a "provisional function" (*quanyong* 權用). If we know things in the sense of moral knowing's affectiveness as things-in-themselves, that is ontology of the noumenal realm, and it is only when the cognitive mind is added in that we have ontology of the phenomenal realm. Therefore what Kant said about appearances was said in relation to humans. He has a wonderful statement in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that "God only creates

43 維天之命，於穆不已。Ode 267 (Li Xueqin, *Mao Shi zhengyi*, 1284), repeated in *Zhongyong* 27. The translation is based, with modification, on Wing-tsit Chan's in *A Source Book on Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 109–110.

44 乘如而來乘如而去。The expression appears in the *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳) (T2061.50.797c29). Its first part occurs Songyou's *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (T2102) amid a discussion of whether buddhas experience what Mou would call appearances (*xianxiang* 現象) (52.71b14).

45 Here Mou uses not "*renshi xin* 認識心" or "*renzhi xin* 認知心" but the Buddhist "*shixin* 識心," which for him is equivalent.

things-in-themselves, not appearances,”⁴⁶ which gave me a sudden epiphany. Thus things-in-themselves have an extremely lofty significance, speaking from the perspective of enlightened sensing (*liangzhi mingjue*). When Kant spoke about things-in-themselves he was speaking in relation to God, but in China it is different. Both the “established mind” and the “Dao mind,” both the “knowing of the moral nature” and the “knowledge of sounds and sights” can happen in our own minds. The subject of enlightened sensing is in our minds, something Kant did not understand.

We have reams of this kind of material, and for us it is entirely commonplace, whereas Westerners say that only what appears in front of God’s eyes is a thing-in-itself since God alone has intellectual intuition, not humans. Thus all Chinese people affirm, whether Confucian, Daoist, or Buddhist, that humans have this “intellectual intuition.” Take that away and all Chinese philosophy collapses into nothing more than a crazy dream. We have a clear idea of both appearances and things-in-themselves, whereas for Kant things-in-themselves only exist on “the other shore” (*bī'an* 彼岸). Buddhism says that “every sight, every smell is nothing other than the Middle Way,”⁴⁷ “one flower is a whole world, and each leaf a buddha,”⁴⁸ “at once empty, provisional, and middle”⁴⁹—such expressions are entirely common in China and known to most everyone, such that people have gradually forgotten their meaning. Obviously they are talking about things as things-in-themselves. In China this is so clear that one simply must affirm intellectual intuition, affirm that it is only humans who are able to become sages or buddhas, and therefore this point absolutely must be contended. It cannot be taken lightly. This is precisely two-level ontology, for which the Confucian representative is Wang Yangming, not Zhu Xi. Buddhists and Daoists approach it differently. To sum it up briefly, I feel that in our own time, if we want to understand Chinese learning and the orientation of Chinese wisdom, we have to make a comparison with the West. In that way, the advantages and shortcomings of each will become apparent, for of course

46 Apparently a paraphrase of *Critique of Practical Reason*, 102 (following the pagination convention of the Akademie edition). For more see Lee Ming-huei 李明輝, “Mou Zongsan zhexue zhong de ‘wu zishen’ gainian 牟宗三哲學中的「無自身」概念” (Mou Zongsan’s Concept of the “Thing-in-Itself”), *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan* 3 (1993): 547–570.

47 *yise yixiang wufei zhongdao* 一色一香無非中道. The formula is ubiquitous throughout Zhiyi’s works.

48 *yihua yi shijie yiye yi rulai* 一花一世界一葉一如來. A slogan widely but mistakenly attributed to the Huayan Sutra.

49 *ji kong ji jia ji zhong* 即空即假即中. Also found throughout Zhiyi’s texts.

Chinese and Western culture have their incompatibilities and need to shape each other in search of compatibility.

And now my last point, which is that we can divide philosophy into philosophical ratiocination (*sikao* 思考), which we can liken to an arrow's reaching its target (*zhi* 至), and philosophical wisdom, which is like the arrow's actually hitting the bullseye (*zhong* 中).⁵⁰ Chinese people excel in philosophical wisdom but lag in ratiocination, and Westerners are just the opposite (though Plato and Kant's philosophical wisdom was very lofty indeed). To illustrate with Mencius' words, "Whether an arrow makes it to the target is a matter of having enough strength, but not whether it hits the bullseye." Strength will get it there, but that does not guarantee hitting the target. For that you need technique and wisdom. Chinese people owe their lofty philosophical wisdom to develop it and "hit the bullseye," which of course also entails getting to the target. Ordinary people lack the wisdom of sages and worthies and cannot hit the bullseye, and so they must rely on ratiocination. But Chinese people are not good at this and so, in reality, they do not enjoy the benefits of hitting the mark and instead are left without enough power to get there. In contrast, Westerners have a complete sufficiency of strength and are completely capable within the domain they have reached, yet speaking from the highest perspective, they are off target. Hitting the bullseye entails that your arrow made it that far, but the opposite is not true. Westerners can get to the target but cannot hit the bullseye; that is, they have illusions, and it was these illusions that Kant's critiques were critiquing. Thanks to the wisdom of the sages, who hit the "bullseye" of the Way, Chinese people hit the target and did not suffer illusions; instead, everything was real (*shi* 實), by which I mean the reality created by the sages, not plain, ordinary reality. It was likewise in Buddhism and Daoism as well. This was the greatest critique of them all, and in the present age it calls for critically examining the teachings.⁵¹

Strictly speaking, the West only has idealism, not a true mind-only theory (*weixin lun* 唯心論).⁵² Ideas are a different thing from mind, no matter

50 The simile comes from Mencius (*Mengzi* 5B.1). Mou's original sentence reverses this order. I have put "ratiocination" before "wisdom"—and hence reaching the target before hitting the bullseye—in order to match the order in which Mou elaborates on this simile below.

51 *panjiao* 判教. Literally "categorizing the teachings," this is the name of a Chinese Buddhist genre of doxography in which one analyzes scholastic systematizations of the Buddha's teachings, clarifies their relationships to one another, and ranks them according to their doctrinal adequacy.

52 Mou elaborates in "Meeting at Goose Lake," in this volume.

whether we are talking about Plato's ideas or Berkeley's. Chinese people abhor the word "mind-only," but in fact it is only China which has a true mind-only theory. It is just that "mind" in this sense is not the Western notion of "idea" but rather what Buddhists call the "true, eternal mind" (*zhenchang xin* 真常心) and Daoists call the Dao mind (*daoxin* 道心) and Confucians call moral knowing. This kind of mind-only theory, in which everything is mind and nothing is outside of mind, implies an absolute realism (*juedui de shizailun* 絕對的實在論). Things as the affectiveness of enlightened sensing are things-in-themselves, which is to say real things, for only things-in-themselves are real things, real reality, whereas appearances are dispensible. The sort of wisdom that identifies mind as moral knowing and explains reality and real things as things-in-themselves is one in which everything is real and equal and without illusion.

Three Lineages of Song-Ming Confucianism¹

Today I would like to discuss Song-Ming Confucianism with all of you. People are usually familiar with the Cheng-Zhu lineage, often called the “School of Principle” (*lixue* 理學) and Lu-Wang lineage, or “School of Mind” (*xinxue* 心學). But this classification is extremely simplistic for talking about the richness of six hundred years of propagation of Confucian learning. And not only is it a very superficial understanding if one knows only of the Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang lineages, but people rarely understand exactly what it is that distinguishes the two. Throughout history, people have never been able to solve the problem of what is the same and what is different in the Zhu and Lu schools. Zhang Xuecheng once said that it is a problem which the world cannot do without yet cannot solve.² Superficially this is a pretty saying, but on close inspection it turns out to be sophomoric piffle. Zhang Xuecheng claimed to be aligned with the Lu-Wang lineage, but in truth he bore no relation to it; he regarded Dai Zhen³ as a Cheng-Zhu thinker, but Dai had nothing in common with that lineage either. Thus we can see that, after the Ming, few people understood the true content of these two schools of thought. This is also because the six hundred years of Song-Ming thought are crooked and tortuous, and so very few people can immerse themselves in it well enough to understand it. Hence teachers of the history of philosophy teach very thoroughly about the pre-Qin but then do not even touch the thousand-plus years of the Han through the Tang, because it is too hard to understand. Song-Ming Confucianism is more

1 “Song-Ming ruxue de san xi 宋明儒學的三系.” Lecture delivered December 15, 1974 at National Taiwan Normal University. First published in *Ehu Monthly* 1(7) (January 1976). Reprinted in *MXQ*, 249–265.

In this essay even more than others, I am particularly indebted to Esther Su for her several rounds of comments and corrections.

- 2 Qing dynasty scholar Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738–1801) represented a historicist turn in Qing views of the classical tradition and is best known for his statement that “the six classics are all histories” (*liu jing jie shi* 六經皆史). Mou is paraphrasing Zhang’s verdict that between Zhu and Lu there is “a similarity and a difference which, through immemorial time, is neither soluble nor dispensible” (*qianggu bu ke he zhi tongyi, yi qianggu bu ke wu zhi tongyi* 千古不可合之同異, 亦千古不可無之同異). See Zhang’s “Essay on Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan” (*Zhu-Lu pian* 朱陸篇) in *Wenshi tongyi* 文史通義 (Complete Explanation of Letters and History) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1988), 75–80.
- 3 戴震 (1724–1777). Historical-critical scholar of the *Mengzi* from whom Zhang Xuecheng drew inspiration.

familiar to people because it is China's indigenous learning, but it too is glossed over in just a few sentences. In teaching about Zhu Xi, for example, these classes explain his concept of "investigating things to fathom their principles"⁴ and then move on. On Lu Xiangshan, they say that he taught that "mind is reason" (*xin ji li* 心即理), but that is no easy concept either and certainly cannot be dealt with in a few sentences. In recent years I have concluded that it is very difficult to satisfy people with these cursory treatments and resolved to create a guide to Song-Ming scholarship.

The first thing I did was to get out the sources, such as Huang Zongxi's *Major Schools of Song and Yuan Confucians* and *Ming Confucian Scholars*,⁵ and gather the essential threads of each school of thought and outline all of them, which was an extremely demanding job. In making sense of the scholarship of the period, I settled on nine figures: four from the Northern Song (Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Mingdao and Cheng Yichuan, three from the Southern Song (Hu Wufeng, Zhu Xi, and Lu Xiangshan), and also Wang Yangming and Liu Jishan from the Ming. These nine figures are like the nine pillars of a building, and together they form one grand system which encompasses the scholarship of six hundred years. These nine men form the outline within which other figures are merely transitional and beyond which they did not advance. (Examples are the scholars who followed up on Zhu Xi's work, or Wang Yangming's.) These nine men each built upon the last and echoed one another. There was another figure in the Northern Song who was extremely important, Shao Yong,⁶ and was a good friend of the Cheng brothers, but he differed from them in the content of his scholarship. We would need to discuss him if we

4 *gewu qiongli* 格物窮理. A reference to section 6 of Zhu's famous commentary on the *Great Learning*, the *Daxue zhangju* 大學章句). See Zhong Zheduan 鍾哲點, ed., *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 [Line by Line Commentaries on the Four Books, Collected and Annotated] (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983).

5 *Song-Yuan xue'an* 宋元學案 and *Mingru xue'an* 明儒學案, magisterial survey histories of Confucian philosophy by Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (Lizhou 梨洲) (1610–1695), scholar and disciple of Liu Jishan 劉戡山 (one Confucians thinkers Mou esteems most highly).

Huang was a prodigious compiler and editor of the writings of Neo-Confucian writers major and minor, and his posthumous influence grew so great that Neo-Confucians were best known through Huang's anthologies and interpreted accordingly. In this piece, however, Mou is proposing a different narrative of Neo-Confucian history, which divides the main currents of Neo-Confucian thought not into two streams but three, adding alongside Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang schools a third typified by Hu Wufeng, better than either of the other two. Nevertheless, Mou honors Huang as one of the truly progressive political thinkers of China's early modern period. See his "The Rise of Buddhist Learning in the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Sui and Tang," in this volume.

6 Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011–1077). Best known for his numerological theory of cosmology.

were talking about history of philosophy, but not about the main lineage of the School of Principle since he belongs to a different domain.

The reason that we are now dividing these nine thinkers into three lineages is that we cannot describe the content of these six hundred years of thought in faithful detail when we merely divide them into Zhu and Lu lineages. The threefold division arises not from some prejudice of mine but from the material itself. In the beginning I myself did not know that I would divide things this way. You cannot arrive at solid conclusions about anything except by truly entering into the material. Granted, one may say that they are all similar in respect of their all being Confucians yet distinct in some respects. That is all very easy, but it solves nothing. Hence in speaking of similarities and differences, it is irresponsible to hold prejudices or to look only at the surface of things. If one truly enters into these materials, one will see that, even though it is not apparent from the outside, their doctrines fall by necessity into three lineages. This three-way division is analogous to that in Mahāyāna Buddhism. (In India there had been only two schools, Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka or "school of emptiness" (*kongzong* 空宗) and Asanga and Vasubandhu's Yogacara or "school of existence" (*youzong* 有宗). Since those two did not completely exploit the potential of Buddhist learning, later there arose the *tathagatatagarbha*-oriented True Mind school.)⁷ Only in this schema adequately depicts the complexity of the material.

I will talk for a moment about the process by which I sorted out the various thinkers. Since the beginning of the Republic of China in 1911, people have loved to talk about Wang Yangming. Wang Yangming's spiritual perspective is a lofty one and his notion of innate moral knowing⁸ is a difficult one, but because his writings are accessible and simple, ordinary people love to spout off about Wang Yangming and the cultivation of moral knowing (*zhi liangzhi* 致良知)

7 For want of good English equivalents, I have simplified three of Mou's terms in this parenthesis to "Madhyamaka," "Yogācāra," and "True Mind school." Mou actually borrows a trio of terms from Yinshun, namely *xingkong weiming xi* 性空唯名系 ("Empty Nature Mere Name system"), *xuwang weishi xi* 虛妄唯識系 ("False Imagination Mere Consciousness system") and *zhenchang weixin xi* 真常唯心系 ("Truly Eternal Mere Mind system"). See Yinshun, *Chengfo zhi dao: zengzhu ben* 成佛之道增注本 (The Way to Buddhahood: Expanded Edition) (Xinzhu, Taiwan: Zhengwen, 1994), 371 ff; *The Way to Buddhahood* (Boston: Wisdom, 1998), 302 ff.

8 *liangzhi* 良知. Wang takes the term from Mencius (7A.15) and makes it his own. In *Instructions for Practical Living* he explains: "The mind knows automatically. Seeing one's father, it automatically knows filial reverence... Seeing a child about to fall into a well, it automatically knows compassion. This is moral knowing. There is no need to seek it without. When moral knowing is active, there remains no more selfish thought to obstruct it" (*Chuanxi lu*, 40).

and the unity of knowledge and action (*zhi xing heyi* 知行合一). But in reality, the unity of knowledge and action is not the point of Wang's thought, nor can you talk about Wang in isolation. And the case of Zhu Xi is even more tricky because his system is so bloated and complex and hence cannot be summed up in a single phrase such as "fathoming principles in objects" (*ji wu qiong li* 即物窮理). Zhu continues the tradition of the Northern Song, and even though the thinkers of the Northern Song are the wellspring for the next six hundred years of Song-Ming learning, they are extremely hard to understand. This is why people are not willing to read them but instead jump straight in with Wang Yangming, and it does not work. Yes, the thinkers of the Northern Song are extremely complex and peculiar, which turns people off and causes them to prefer the clarity and ease of reading Wang Yangming, but there too one first needs preparation before one is ready. These days one can open Huang Zongxi's *Major Schools of Song and Yuan Confucians* and understand the chapter about Zhou Dunyi without trouble. There are texts there and the question is simply whether or not one understands them. Likewise, the chapter on Zhang Zai contains the whole of his book *Rectifying Ignorance* (*Zheng meng* 正蒙) and presents no problem. But the editing is terrible in the chapters on Cheng Mingdao, Cheng Yichuan, and Zhu Xi, the key Neo-Confucians and the namesakes of what is called the Cheng-Zhu school. Thus it is extremely hard to get a true picture of these three figures from Huang's *Major Schools of Song and Yuan Confucians* and always ends in pandemonium.

Huang Zongxi had always known that there were differences between the Cheng brothers and so he devoted separate chapters to each. The problem was that the only source available was the *The Writings of the Brothers Cheng* (*Er Cheng yishu* 二程遺書),⁹ which in many cases does not specify which sayings come from Cheng Mingdao and which from Cheng Yichuan. How then was Huang to write two different chapters on the two men's different styles of thought? All he could do was to muddle through, parsing them up willy-nilly according to no particular principle. This is why reading the chapter on Cheng Mingdao can make him seem incoherent, as though his writings are just a collage of pretty epigrams. But Cheng Mingdao was a great, towering figure. Are we to believe that what made him great and eminent was just this grab bag of pretty fragments? No, they can scarcely represent him. Thus we cannot find the true face of Cheng Mingdao in the chapter about him in *Major Schools of Song and Yuan Confucians*. And if Mingdao does not emerge clearly, then neither can Yichuan, as is apparent in the case of Feng Youlan, who misattributes

9 Cheng Hao 程顥 and Cheng Yi 程頤, *Er Cheng Yishu* 二程遺書 (Writings of the Brothers Cheng), Pan Fu'en 潘富恩, annot. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2000).

sayings by Mingdao to Yichuan.¹⁰ In fact, people sometimes decline to differentiate them at all and instead treat the two as a single person, as even Zhu Xi does. Zhu cannot delineate between Cheng Mingdao and Cheng Yichuan, and hence he cannot flesh out Mingdao and so treats the two brothers as a single Cheng. When he is unsure of the provenance of something, he attributes it vaguely to “Master Cheng”; otherwise, when he can be specific, he attributes it all to Yichuan. Thus when Zhu speaks of the sayings of the Master Cheng, he is actually taking his bearings by Cheng Yichuan and attributing everything to Yichuan, for it is from Yichuan that Zhu gets all of his more clear and distinct ideas. With his handful of fragments, Mingdao gets turned into the invisible man, represented by his brother or the collective “Masters Cheng.” But that is not all. Sometimes when it is entirely obvious that it is Mingdao who is speaking, Zhu Xi expresses dissent, yet he never shows any displeasure with Yichuan. When Zhu is dissatisfied with Mingdao’s fragmentary epigrams, he claims that Mingdao speaks in too lofty a way, too obscure and hard to understand. When Zhu says it is too lofty, what he really means is that he dislikes it, but because of Mingdao’s eminence Zhu is prevented from criticizing him and so instead merely calls him too high-flying. And when Zhu calls Mingdao obscure and hard to understand, that might appear to mean profound, but in actuality Zhu is calling him soft-headed and nebulous. Zhu Xi has an analytic frame of mind and cannot appreciate him. The extremely important “Essay on Knowing Humaneness” (*Shi ren pian* 識仁篇)¹¹ is indubitably Mingdao’s work, but when Zhu compiled the *Reflections on Things at Hand*,¹² shockingly enough he did not include it! He said the “Essay on Knowing Humaneness” was too lofty in its perspective and was not appropriate for the compilation, but in truth *Reflections on Things at Hand* includes other writings which are much less accessible than the standard of “things at hand” suggested by its title. Why should this one

10 Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895–1990). Prominent philosopher and historian of philosophy, author of the famous and influential *History of Chinese Philosophy* (*Zhongguo zhhexueshi* 中國哲學史) (1931–1934), which Mou criticized relentlessly. See Mou’s mentions of Feng in “The Rise of Buddhist Learning in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang” and “Objective Understanding and the Remaking of Chinese Culture,” included in this volume.

11 SYXA, 540–546.

12 *Jinsi lu* 近思錄. A reader for beginners compiled by Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137–1181) from works of the Northern Song Neo-Confucian masters. The title is a reference to *Analects* 19.6: “Zixia said: ‘Learning broadly and retaining what one has learned, being incisive in one’s questioning and able to reflect on what is near at hand—Goodness is to be found in this.’” (子夏曰: 博學而篤志, 切問而近思, 仁在其中矣.) (Translation by Slingerland.)

essay have been left out then? The truth of it is that Zhu Xi simply did not endorse the essay's way of explaining humaneness, which is so different from Zhu's tripartite division of mind, nature, and feeling (*xin xing qing* 心性情). Mingdao's "Essay on Knowing Humaneness" explains humaneness as entirely one body with all things, and in others of his recorded conversations he likens a lack of humaneness to numbness, as medical books do,¹³ and thus explains it as the opposite of unfeelingness. This is also the source of Xie Shangcai's idea of using feeling to teach humaneness (*yi jue xun ren* 以覺訓仁). Explaining humaneness as being one body with all things and explaining it as feeling are entirely coherent with one another, but they are also explanations that Zhu Xi does not like.¹⁴ From Zhu's tendency to treat the two Cheng brothers as a single person and simply ignore sayings that clearly came from Mingdao, we can see that his approach to Mingdao was one of respectful avoidance¹⁵ and indeed of willful negligence of whatever did not fit his portrayal. Since I felt

13 "Medical books call numbness of the hands and feet 'lack of *ren* 仁.' This is the best description [of humaneness, or *ren*] that there is. A person of humaneness takes the whole universe and everything in it as one body, with nothing which is not oneself" (SYXA, 17). Here Mou connects that saying, anachronistically but naturally, to Ming physician Xue Ji's 薛己 (1487–1559) *Case Studies in Medicine* (*yi an* 醫案 or *Xueshi yi an* 薛氏醫案) (Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao, 1997), the *locus classicus* for the phrase "insensitive as unfeeling timber" (*mamu buren* 麻木不仁). Xue used it to describe numbness of the skin, but it in later usage it denotes lack of emotion or empathy.

14 Elsewhere Mou expands on this:

"Cheng Mingdao attaches two meanings to humaneness. Humaneness is nothing other than the metaphysical reality of the Way (*daoti* 道體) from a subjective perspective, which can be identical to the Way itself from an objective perspective. This is humaneness spoken of as "oneness," and is the first meaning of humaneness for Cheng Mingdao. The second is "feeling"; phrased conversely, humaneness is not being numb. These two meanings form a single meaning. Having feeling, not being numb, and having resonance (*gantong* 感通) entail "oneness." "Oneness" comes from having resonance, so these two meanings are connected. But Zhu did not like either of them. Cheng Yichuan, whose thinking Zhu inherited, had said "feeling cannot teach humaneness," thinking that feeling is a matter of knowledge rather than humaneness, and that therefore feeling could not teach humaneness. This was Yichuan's mistake. Thinking that feeling is a matter of knowledge, he turned feeling into epistemological perception. That understanding is wrong. Since Mingdao clearly explained feeling as non-numbness, how could anyone understand it as perception? Of course perception cannot teach humaneness. Taking after Yichuan, Zhu Xi opposed both explaining humaneness as "oneness" teaching humaneness through feeling." (*Song-Ming ruxue de wenti yu fazhan* 宋明儒學的問題與發展 [Taipei: Lianjing, 2003], 200–201)

15 Literally "avoiding [the name of] a worthy" (*wei xianzhe hui* 為賢者諱), referring to a Confucian honorific custom of not using words which appeared in the personal name of someone in a position of revered authority.

something was out of place in the traditional account, I devoted myself to a recension of the chapter of *Major Schools of Song and Yuan Confucians* on Mingdao, with the idea that bringing Mingdao into focus would also shed light on his brother Yichuan. The result was seven fascicles of writings¹⁶ which I attribute to Mingdao, and likewise for Yichuan. I carried out this recension in a principled way, not just according to whim. I had to follow my sense of smell, as it were, for the documents are not easy to separate. Nevertheless, this kind of work is also a type of evidentiary scholarship, a kind based on doctrines rather than documents.

Clarifying Mingdao's ideas certainly does not detract from Yichuan's stature but actually makes plain the spirit in which Zhu Xi approached Yichuan. The texts which can be attributed to Yichuan are many, such as those talking about the ideas of "investigating things to fathom principles," "extending knowledge" (*zhizhi* 致知) and "advancing learning" (*jinxue* 進學) in the *Great Learning*.¹⁷ Mingdao did not teach about the *Great Learning*. It was Yichuan who began to do so. When Zhou Dunyi and Zhang Zai taught about self-cultivation (*gongfu* 工夫), they too did not teach about the *Great Learning*. This is not to say that they did not teach about self-cultivation at all, but they did not do so in terms of "investigating things to fathom principles." Placing self-cultivation in the *Great Learning* and taking "investigating things to fathom principles" as self-cultivation were Yichuan's emphases, and that is why Yichuan's work is distinctive and can be separated from Mingdao's. The chapters on Zhu Xi in *Major Schools of Song and Yuan Confucians* were poorly done as well, not because his writings are hard to distinguish, as in the case of the Cheng brothers, but because there are so many of them that they are threatening to people and hard to understand. Where Zhu really worked hard and where his thinking is mature is on the question of equilibrium and harmony (*zhonghe* 中和), but explanations of Zhu Xi have never grasped this fact and instead have merely relied

16 Roughly speaking, a "fascicle" (*juan* 卷) is a chapter. Traditionally, long Chinese works were divided into sections which could be bound separately as light, easy-to-handle booklets. Sinologists borrowed the word "fascicle" from the bookbinding trade to describe these floppy, thread-bound, soft-covered booklets, which one can still buy in highbrow bookstores. However, modern print editions are more durable and much more compact, so that the "fascicles" are just chapter-like divisions of sometimes only ten or twenty pages' length, like the ten "books" of Plato's *Republic*.

17 When Zhu Xi organized the scattered inheritance of the Northern Song masters into a coherent Neo-Confucian philosophical system and program of study, one important legacy was to promote a short text called the *Great Learning* (*Da xue* 大學) to high importance in the Neo-Confucian curriculum. Originally just one of forty-nine chapters of the *Record of Rites*, the *Great Learning* began to be treated as an independent unit in the eleventh century.

on arbitrary selections from his *Categorized Conversations*.¹⁸ The question of equilibrium and harmony is extremely complex, and when Zhu really began putting himself into his work at thirty-seven years of age, it was through a tortuous attention to that question. After settling that question, he then wrote his “Exposition on Humaneness.”¹⁹ In total, he expended ten years of painstaking effort on his “Explanation of Equilibrium and Harmony,” whereupon his thinking was fixed. Thirty-seven years of age—take note of that. At the time of the meetings at Goose Lake,²⁰ Lu Xiangshan was thirty-seven and Zhu was nine years his senior. He had already put in ten years of arduous work and solidified the framework of his thought, which then never changed throughout the rest of his life. Thereafter, all he did was to elaborate and deepen his existing philosophy. Thus it is important to understand that one must approach the study of Zhu Xi through these two questions. And when Lu was thirty-seven, his thought was fixed too, so the two could not get along. At the beginning Lu offered a poem, and Zhu could not answer it with a poem of his own; it took him three years to do so. Thus Zhu’s writings seldom mention the meetings at Goose Lake, but on Lu’s side they are seen as triumphs and described in detail in his recorded conversations, from which we can see that Zhu felt stymied by Lu and could not overcome him. When the two men met later at the White

18 For years scholars have remarked on the influences of Buddhist philosophy on Song Neo-Confucianism but have said less about the ritual, institutional, and literary influences. One of these latter was the enthusiastic adoption of the Chan Buddhist genre of “recorded conversations” or “recorded sayings” (*yulu* 語錄), in which a given master’s spontaneous oral teachings are supposedly captured, complete with conversational context. In Zhu Xi’s case, these amount to a whopping 140 fascicles, organized seventy years after his death by Li Jingde 黎靖德 according to topic, e.g. the *Analects* and other texts, “followers of the Chengs” and other figures, “ghosts and spirits,” “Buddhists,” “the present dynasty,” and “successive eras.” The resulting collection was called the *Categorized Conversations of Master Zhu*.

On *yulu* as a Confucian genre, see Daniel K. Gardner, “Modes of Thinking and Modes of Discourse in the Sung: Some Thoughts on the *Yü-lu* (‘Recorded Conversations’) Texts,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 50.3 (August 1991): 574–603.

19 *Ren shuo* 仁說 (SYXA, 1510–1511).

20 In 1175 Zhu Xi entered into a pair of debates with Lu Xiangshan at Goose Lake Monastery (*Ehu si* 鵝湖寺). This became perhaps the most fabled event of Neo-Confucian history, remembered as the moment when the movement diverged into a “School of Principle,” represented by Zhu, and a “School of Mind,” typified by Lu. As Mou sees it, the crux of the debate was the question of whether or not mind (*xin*) is identical to human nature (*xing*) or reason (*li*), and by answering in the negative, Zhu Xi erred so gravely that he cannot even be called a true Confucian.

Deer Grotto academy,²¹ it was a wonderful opportunity, for Lu's brother had died and Lu personally visited Zhu to ask him to compose an epitaph. This was an errand of familial piety and constituted an enormous expression of respect toward Zhu, and Zhu in return was extremely courteous to Lu. Under these circumstances, the two men were very able to talk. Zhu invited Lu to lecture at the White Deer Grotto academy, and Lu spoke very movingly on the passage in the *Analects* which says, "A gentleman understands rectitude, while a petty man understands profit,"²² with life-force and real existential feeling. It is a very ordinary passage, but in Lu's mouth it came to life and was very wise. Though it was not very hot, Zhu Xi was fanning himself continuously, and others in the audience were moved to tears. From this we can see how powerful it was, and later Zhu Xi praised Lu's lecture in a commentary. Such was the dignity of the ancients. Nevertheless the two could not talk their way to an understanding. If only they had not stopped at the level of courtesy and talked calmly from their very guts and delved into the inside of the question, perhaps they could have come to a mutual understanding. This is so unfortunate. As Mencius said, "Wisdom in relation to the worthy is destined," and even though he added, "A gentleman does not refer to it as destined," nonetheless this really is destiny.²³ When such worthy people cannot understand one another, it is a tragedy.

21 *Bailu dong* 白鹿洞. In 1179, Zhu revived a defunct classical academy begun in the tenth century at Lushan. In 1181 he was visited there by Lu Xiangshan.

Scholars have noted that Neo-Confucian academies took some inspiration from Chan monasteries, as remote communities of self-cultivation in places of natural beauty, and even described themselves using a Buddhist word, as "halls of practice" (*jingshe* 精舍). See John Meskill, *Academies in Ming China: A Historical Essay* (Tuscon: Association for Asian Studies and the University of Arizona Press, 1982); John W. Chaffee, "Chu Hsi and the Revival of the White Deer Grotto Academy, 1179–1181 A.D.," *T'oung Pao*, 2nd series, 71(1/3) (1985): 40–62.

22 *Analects* 4.16.

23 *Mengzi* 7B.24: "The mouth in relation to flavors, the eyes in relation to sights, the ears in relation to notes, the nose in relation to odors, the four limbs in relation to comfort—these are matters of human nature, but they are also fated. Nonetheless, a gentleman does not refer to them as 'human nature.' Benevolence between father and son, righteousness between ruler and minister, propriety between guest and host, wisdom in relation to the worthy, the sage in relation to the Way of Heaven—these are fated, but they also involve human nature. Nonetheless, a gentleman does not refer to them as 'fated.'" (口之於味也，目之於色也，耳之於聲也，鼻之於臭也，四肢之於安佚也，性也，有命焉，君子不謂性也。仁之於父子也，義之於君臣也，禮之於賓主也，智之於賢者也，聖人之於天道也，命也，有性焉，君子不謂命也。)(Translation by Van Norden.)

Even before Zhu had met Lu, he had heard people say that Lu was really a Chan follower.²⁴ Right up to Lu's death, people accused him of Chan leanings, of being an outsider rather than a true Confucian. Of course he did not understand Lu, tragically enough. Earlier I mentioned the importance of age thirty-seven. Wang Yangming was also thirty-seven when he awakened to the Way in Longchang.²⁵ Modern people may be relatively precocious, but even with real effort, we still need until somewhere in our thirties. Because I knew the importance of the question of equilibrium and harmony for understanding Zhu, I was then able to copy out the relevant passages of his work, at which point his thought became completely clear. But doing that copying was not easy, and it took me several tries before I arrived at an order that seemed natural. The question of equilibrium and harmony first arose in the *Doctrine of the Mean*,²⁶ where it is not difficult to understand, but Cheng Yichuan's explanations complicated it needlessly. When he discussed it with Lü Dalin,²⁷ he was tortuous and unclear and ultimately could do nothing more than tell Lü to go practice reverence, which amounted to teaching him nothing at all. But Yichuan did venture a number of opinions, which Zhu then inherited and developed, at the cost of a great deal of labor. Thus it was that it took me five or six hundred pages to re-edit Huang Zongxi's chapter on Zhu and lay bare Zhu's philosophy. With the Chengs and Zhu thus revealed, the initial clues to their philosophies now were apparent. Zhu had collapsed the two Cheng brothers into one, represented by Cheng Yichuan, and then collapsed Zhou Dunyi and Zhang Zai into Yichuan as well, and took him as the Confucian orthodoxy. However, on close inspection I found that Zhu was really only the heir of Yichuan, and

24 In the chauvinistic atmosphere of Neo-Confucianism, a common slur was to accuse one's opponent of excessive Buddhist influences and sympathies, especially when he emphasized the mind's capacity for sudden illumination and its non-separateness from the cosmos. The same reputation stuck to Wang Yangming as well. See "The Literati and Chan Buddhism" in Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

25 In 1508, after offending a powerful court eunuch, Wang Yangming was flogged publicly and banished to undesirable post in a remote area of Guizhou. The following year, according to tradition, he awoke in the night with a spiritual epiphany.

26 *Zhongyong* 1: "When delight, anger, sorrow, and joy have not yet arisen, this is called equilibrium. When they arise and all hit their proper target, this is called harmony. Equilibrium is the great basis of all under heaven, and harmony is its arriving upon the Way. Equilibrium and harmony being achieved, heaven and earth are in their places and the ten-thousand things are nourished." (喜怒哀樂之未發謂之中。發而皆中節謂之和。中也者天下之大本也。和也者天下之達道也。致中和天地位焉萬物育焉。)

27 呂大臨 (Yushu 與叔) (d. 1092). Student first of Zhang Zai and then of the Chengs.

that it was a mistake to conflate Yichuan with Mingdao, much less with Zhou Dunyi and Zhang Zai. Zhu revered Zhou Dunyi greatly, calling him a second Confucius, but the fundamentals of Zhou's thought have nothing to do with Zhu's. It is hard to believe that Zhu could so revere him while completely distorting him, but that is indeed the truth of the matter. This is because, taking his lead from Cheng Yichuan's thought, Zhu explained Zhou's concept of the supreme ultimate (*taiji* 太極) as equivalent to Yichuan's idea that "nature is reason" (*xing ji li ye* 性即理也). Yichuan reduced the rich implications of Zhou's, Zhang's, and Mingdao's realizations about the metaphysical reality of the Way (*daoti* 道體)²⁸ and the metaphysical reality of human nature (*xingti* 性體)—where "metaphysical reality of the Way" is a collective name for what unifies the cosmos and everything in it and "metaphysical reality of human nature" refers to that identical thing in the person of an individual—to mere reason. There is nothing wrong with calling this reason, but Yichuan depicts it reductionistically as *mere* reason (or "bare reason," or *dan li* 但理, to use a Buddhist word).²⁹ For Zhu to interpret Zhou's idea of the supreme ultimate (*taiji* 太極) as equivalent to Yichuan's simplistic "bare reason" was inaccurate. We can state that categorically. Furthermore, Zhu only read Zhou's *Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*, but in order to understand Zhou one must begin with his *Complete Guide to the Book of Changes*.³⁰ The *Explanation of the Diagram* only has a few sentences, and though it is

28 Scholars writing about Mou in Western languages vary nowhere more than in their choices about how best to render Mou's use of the pattern 'x-體' where x is a word such as *xin* 心, *xing* 性, *dao* 道, or *ren* 仁. Formidable interpreters have rendered the pattern as "ontological x" (Liu Shu-hsien), "substance of x" (Cheng Chung-ying), "constitutive x" (Sébastien Billioud), "essence of x" (Hans-Rudolf Kantor), "x as actuality" (Stefan Schmidt), "moral creative reality that is x" (Serina Chan), and "metaphysical reality of x" (Esther Su), and in one place Mou gives some support for "x-in-itself" ("Immediate Successor of Wang Yang-ming," 104 n.2; cf. his "Wangxue de fenhua yu fazhan 王學的分化與發展," *Xinya Shuyuan xueshu niankan* 14 (1972), 102).

In my estimation Su's "metaphysical reality of x" conveys the meaning best and I adopt it here, though reluctantly since it uses five or six times as many syllables as the pithy Chinese original. When it becomes unwieldy in a particular passage I selectively abbreviate it to "reality of x."

29 In Song Tiantai doxography, 'dan 但' is used to characterize metaphysical entities posited by other schools (normally Huayan) which are merely transcendent and not also immanent. (See Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, 116–127.) Mou's point here is that Yichuan portrays reason falsely as something which is fundamentally separate from any human being.

30 *Taiji tu shuo* 太極圖說 and *Yitong* 易通 or *Tongshu* 通書. See Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤, *Zhou Lianxi ji* 周濂溪集 (Collected Works of Zhou Dunyi) (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1936).

Zhou's work, my opinion is that he only composed it for fun. When Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan's debate turned to the *Explanation of the Diagram*, Lu lost because he had no interest in it and was not influenced by it. But it is a mistake just to look at the *Explanation of the Diagram*; you must understand the "supreme ultimate" of that text as the "metaphysical reality of authenticity" (*chengti* 誠體) of Zhou's *Complete Guide*. Zhu took the *Explanation of the Diagram* too seriously, as though it were holy writ. I believe that Zhou wrote it just for fun. The diagram itself comes from the Daoists, and on a subjective level I do not care for the diagram, which arouses no sense of beauty. Zhou Dunyi saw the diagram and, taking an interest, jotted down a few lines about it; hence his *Explanation* should be considered mere playful jottings. We can separate the *Explanation* from the diagram and look at it independently, in which case we find that it agrees with Zhou's *Complete Guide to the Book of Changes*, but we do have to take it in the context of the *Complete Guide*, for that book is clearer than the simple *Explanation*, and it is an unchanging principle that one must use what is clear to define what is unclear.

Zhu Xi was not wrong to say that the metaphysical reality of the Way is reason that makes the cosmos what it is and that reason is unitary. But in taking his explanation from Cheng Yichuan and simplifying it further, he turned reason into a "mere reason," with which he explained the Supreme Ultimate in Zhou Dunyi. Thus Zhu took Zhou's idea of the metaphysical reality of the Way and turned into mere reason. But in reading Zhou's *Complete Guide*, we see that he understood the metaphysical reality of the Way as the reality of authenticity (*chengti* 誠體), of spirit (*shenti* 神體), and as creative feeling,³¹ an approach which comes from the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the Appendices to the *Book of Changes*. Authenticity, spirit, and creative feeling are not mere principle. Even when Zhu said that authenticity is being genuine and without vanity and is real reason,³² he was still not completely conveying the message of the *Changes* and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. Authenticity is of a piece with spirit and creative feeling, so that apart from being reason, it is also spirit and

31 *jigan* 寂感. I follow Mou's own rendering here (q.v. *Song-Ming ruxue zongshu* 宋明儒學綜述 (Summary of Song-Ming Confucianism), Chap. 6, in *Song-Ming ruxue de wenti yu fazhan*).

32 A reference to the definition Zhu gives in his commentary to the *Doctrine of the Mean*: "Authenticity is a word referring to being genuine and without vanity (誠者真實無妄之謂)." Later Zhu continues, "All the things in the universe are the doings of the real principle, such that before there are things there must first be principle (天下之物皆實理之所為, 故必得是理然後有是物)." (*Zhongyong zhangju* 16, 25, in *Zhong, Sishu zhangju jizhu*).

also creative feeling.³³ But Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi teach that spirit and creative feeling are not reason but belong to mind, which belongs to matter-energy.³⁴ This may seem clear, but if you strip spirit, mind, and solitude and from the metaphysical reality of the Way, you starve it of meaning. Reason cannot then be creative and feeling, nor can it be active. Activity and quiescence would then become properties only of matter-energy, as in fact is the case in Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi. There is no defending them. Indeed, even if one did try to defend them by patching up, they might not even accept it. Thus they strip the ideas of creative feeling, spirit, and mind off from the metaphysical reality of the Way.

Note that, in general, spirit is indeed material, as for example with people's demeanor (*shenqi* 神氣), expression (*shencai* 神采), and also ghosts and spirits (*guishen* 鬼神), which are mundane (*xing'erxia* 形而下) things of *yin* and *yang*. But when we are talking about spirit in the authenticity, we cannot call that something material, for spirit in that sense is a moral term. Thus there is both mundane spirit and metaphysical spirit. Thus the Appendices to the *Changes* speak of "plumbing spirit to know transformation" and says, "It has to be the most numinous thing in the world . . . [It] allows one to make quick progress without hurrying and reach goals without forcing one's way."³⁵ Here we can see that spirit is not physical. Zhu Xi assumed that anything that is active must be material, so since spirit is active, he concluded that it is material. But he did not understand that sometimes activity is not material. To give an obvious example, God is not only pure form but also pure spirit. From this we can see that although he is active, his activity is not to be talked about in terms of matter-energy. Matter-energy can be active or quiescent, but the activity of

33 Here Mou illustrates with an elliptical quotation in parentheses that is from the "Commentary on the Appended Phrases" (*Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳), a commentary on the *Book of Changes*. The full passage, with the phrases that Mou quotes marked in italics, is: "Being utterly still it does not initiate movement, but *when stimulated it is commensurate* with all the causes for everything that happens in the world. As such, *it has to be the most numinous thing in the world*, for what else could possibly be up to this!" (寂然不動感而遂通天下之故。非天下之至神其孰能與於此。) (*Xici zhuan* 1.10.) Translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 63.

34 *qi* 氣. *Qi* in Zhu's sense has the sense of "psycho-physical stuff," but because it would be clumsy to render it that way consistently, I will generally translate it as either "matter" or "matter-energy" and simply ask the reader to keep in mind that, of course, Zhu is not using the word anything like Descartes' mind/matter dualism.

35 窮神知化. Li Xueqin, *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 305. 非天下之至神其孰能與於 . . . 不疾而速不行而至 (ibid., 284–285). Translation by Lynn, *Classic of Changes*, 63, 82.

God is not to be called either active or quiescent. Matter-energy can be created and destroyed, but God is neither created nor destroyed. Thus we can see that the activity of authenticity, of spirit, of creative feeling, is “active but not active, quiescent but not quiescent,” to use Zhou Dunyi’s words. Master Zhou said, “That which is active but not active, quiescent but not quiescent, that is spirit. That which is active and not quiescent, quiescent and not active, that is a thing.”³⁶ Things are material, and when matter-energy is active, it is “active and not quiescent,” and when it is quiescent, it is “quiescent and not active,” wherefore “things do not respond.” But in the case of the activity of spirit, it is “active but not active, quiescent but not quiescent, wherefore “spirit makes wondrous all things.” Zhu’s thinking here is linear, not illogical but rather *too* logical. It is not enough simply to think in a straight line; you have to really think about it. The activity of spirit does not have the determination of activity, for which reason you can also see it as quiescent, though it also does not have the determination of quiescence. Thus activity is not the opposite of quiescence here, nor is quiescence the opposite of activity. One has to understand this in a non-linear way and pay close attention to the texts.

From all this we can see that Zhou Dunyi and Zhang Zai and Cheng Mingdao thought about the metaphysical reality of the Way differently from Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi. Rather, their descriptions of it agree exactly with those of the pre-Qin Confucians, who clearly recognized the reality of the Way as a creative reality which gives birth to the myriad things. And obviously, in order to create, it must have mind, spirit, and creative feeling. So in carefully reading the foundational Confucian texts of the pre-Qin, it is apparent that Zhou and Zhang and Cheng Mingdao were right, and that Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi were manifestly disloyal to the texts when they stripped the metaphysical reality of the Way of creative feeling, mind, and spirit. Zhu only erred on this point; on other matters he was quite good. He was earnest and studious, after all, and certainly would not have gotten *everything* wrong.

And so the pre-Qin Confucians and those three early masters of the Northern Song described the metaphysical reality of the Way as activity, as well as being,³⁷

36 A reference to chapter sixteen of Zhou’s *Complete Guide*, where the order of the clauses is reversed: “動而無靜靜而無動物也，動而無動靜而無靜神也。” Mou’s next sentence refers to the next sentence in the passage: “Thus things do not respond, and spirit makes wondrous all things” (物則不通，神妙萬物). Xu Hongxing 徐洪興, annot., *Zhouzi tongshu* 周子通書 (Master Zhou’s Complete Guide) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2000), 37.

37 *ji huodong ji cunyou* 即活動即存有. This is one of Mou’s favorite taglines when speaking about Confucian doxography and, in particular, about Zhu Xi’s faults. Note that one of the reasons that Mou gravitates to Buddhist philosophy so much is that it gives him a ready-made language in which to describe what makes Zhu Xi wrong and Zhou, Zhang, and Mingdao right: he finds a perfect parallel between the way that Zhu reduces the basis

and indeed that is the original meaning of the reality of the Way. As being, it is represented as reason, and in its active aspect it is represented as mind and spirit. The metaphysical reality of the Way must possess these two aspects, but Zhu Xi interprets it as merely being, and not also as activity. Under his dichotomy between reason and matter-energy (*li qi* 理氣), the reality of the Way gets classified as principle, while creative feeling, mind, and spirit get classified as matter-energy. As for the metaphysical reality of mind, Zhu dichotomizes mind and nature (*xin xing* 心性), so that mind is separate from reason and one can no longer say “mind is nature is reason,” since the mind now is classified as material. Yet Mencius explains nature as original mind (*benxin* 本心), such that mind is precisely human nature. In contrast, Zhu analyzes Mencius according to a three-way distinction of mind, human nature, and feeling, or an equivalent two-way distinction between principle and matter-energy. In metaphysical matters he speaks of principle and matter-energy and in moral matters he speaks in terms of mind, human nature, and feeling, where mind and feeling are material and it is human nature which is reason. Under his view, then, mind is not the same thing as nature or reason, which is obviously contrary to Mencius’ teaching. Mencius taught that our original mind is identical to our true nature. This original mind is precisely reason; it can find its way by itself, feeling compassion when it ought to feel compassion and shame when it ought to feel shame. But when Zhu decides that mind is separate from human nature, it follows that it must also be separate from reason, which is obviously contrary to Mencius and hence at odds with Zhu’s own original intent.³⁸

Having clarified this point, we can now understand that Song-Ming Confucians are divided into three lineages:

Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Mingdao ----- Hu Wufeng Liu Jishan

Cheng Yichuan -----Zhu Xi

Lu Xiangshan Wang Yangming³⁹

of the Way from a living entity to real but disembodied principle, rather like a Platonic Form, and the way that Madhyamaka and Yogācāra Buddhists reduced buddha nature to a vacuous, abstract principle of emptiness. (See Clower, *Unlikely Buddhologist*, 192–194.)

38 That is, Zhu made Mencius one of his seminal authorities and meant to give fuller expression to Mencius’ teachings, not to reject or alter them.

39 The dotted lines represent gaps of centuries, after which the earlier figure’s teaching was recovered or revalorized by the later one. The dashed lines represent a much closer

Zhou, Zhang, and Mingdao, the three masters of the northern Song, form one group. They shared the same questions and attitudes, believing that the mind is identical to both human nature and moral principle and is both being and activity (which latter necessarily implies that mind is principle). Once this understanding of the metaphysical reality the Way is in place, naturally their model of self-cultivation becomes one of returning to moral alertness⁴⁰ and absolutely *not* Zhu Xi's model of trying to understand the metaphysical reality of the Way by "investigating things to fathom their principles." After all, since mind, human nature, and reason are one, what we need to do is examine ourselves and awaken naturally to the metaphysical reality of our own natures and immediately, existentially acknowledge it and manifest it. Consider, for example, believers in God. For them the determining factor is whether or not they believe; their belief does not come about from fathoming principles in objects. It is likewise with the metaphysical reality of the Way. It is not arrived at by investigating things to fathom principles either. You must "examine yourself

historical proximity, though not a person-to-person transmission, for Zhu and Hu were not even born until decades after their forebears' deaths.

- 40 *nijue tizheng* 逆覺體證. Sébastien Billioud (*Thinking Through Confucian Modernity*, 205ff.) suggests parsing the phrase in roughly this way: as denoting a process of being spontaneously and repeatedly called by the pricks of conscience out of moments "when we are still indulged in . . . selfish desires and interests" to return back (*ni* 逆) to the alertness or wakefulness (*jue* 覺) of our innate moral nature, which repeated self-alerting is a manifesting of the intellectual intuition which comprises both our innate moral nature and also the nature of the cosmos, this manifestation being represented in Mou's phrase with the binome *tizheng* 體證.

Put simply, then, the practice is this: when we lapse unawares into selfishness, we allow our innate moral sense to call us back to wakefulness. Mou places great importance on the fact that this process initiates and sustains itself, and when we are called back to moral alertness, the thing which calls us is something subjective (our innermost and truest essence, our moral awareness), but it is also something objective—namely morality itself, the ultimate reality—which is aware in us.

Billioud translates *nijue tizheng* as "retrospective verification", doing his heroic best to maintain literal fidelity to Mou's invented lapidary phrase, which is queer-looking even for Mou, and this is a successful rendering in the sense of suggesting both a finding of one's way back (namely to one's innate moral mind) and a presentation of a truth (namely intellectual intuition as an omnipresence which transcends subject and object). But there is so much to remember there that it may prove even more opaque than the Chinese phrase. In my re-translation of the phrase, I have rendered *nijue* as "returning to moral alertness," following an explanation of Mou's quoted in Billoud's pp. 207–208. As for *tizheng*, I have given up hope of a tidy translation and resorted instead to explanation, rendering it as "manifestation of intellectual intuition" or "of innate moral knowing."

and find yourself sincere,”⁴¹ “return home and seek for it,”⁴² “fill it out,”⁴³ and also you must also emphasize solitude vigilance in,⁴⁴ something discussed in the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* which is the locus of self-cultivation and is certainly not the same thing as “investigating things to fathom principle.” Thus their model of self-cultivation must be one of returning to moral awareness.

41 A reference to *Mengzi* 7A.4: “To examine oneself and find oneself genuine: there is no greater joy” (反身而誠樂莫大焉).

42 *gui er qiu zhi* 歸而求之. A reference to *Mengzi* 6B.2: “The Way is like a broad road. What difficulty is there in understanding it? The weakness of people is only that they do not seek for it. Return home and seek for it, and you will have more than enough teachers” (夫道若大路然豈難知哉. 人病不求耳. 子歸而求之有餘師). Translation by Van Norden (*Mengzi*, 160).

43 *kuo er chong zhi* 擴而充之. A reference to Mencius’ famous “child falling into a well” passage (2A.6): “Suppose someone suddenly saw a child about to fall into a well: anyone in such a situation would have a feeling of alarm and compassion... From this we can see that if one is without the feelings of compassion, disdain, deference, or approval and disapproval, one is not human. The feeling of compassion is the sprout of humaneness. The feeling of disdain is the sprout of rectitude. The feeling of deference is the sprout of propriety. The feeling of approval and disapproval is the sprout of wisdom. Having these four sprouts is like having our four limbs... In general, having these four sprouts [of humaneness, rectitude, propriety, and wisdom] within oneself, if one knows to fill them all out, it will be like a fire starting up, a spring breaking through! If one can merely fill them out, they will be sufficient to care for all within the Four Seas.” (今人乍見孺子將入於井, 皆有怵惕惻隱之心... 由是觀之, 無惻隱之心, 非人也. 無羞惡之心, 非人也. 無辭讓之心, 非人也. 無是非之心, 非人也. 惻隱之心, 仁之端也. 羞惡之心, 義之端也. 辭讓之心, 禮之端也. 是非之心, 智之端也. 人之有是四端也, 猶其有四體也... 凡有四端於我者, 知皆擴而充之矣, 若火之始然, 泉之始達). Translation adapted from Van Norden, *Mengzi*, 46.

44 *shendu* 慎獨. The *Great Learning* also uses the phrase: “What is meant by ‘being authentic in one’s consciousness’ is to not deceive oneself. So, for example, disliking a bad smell or enjoying a beautiful sight is called being at ease. Thus a gentleman must be vigilant in his solitude. Left to himself, there is no malfeasance to which a base person will not stoop; but upon seeing a gentleman he then feels disgust and tries to hide his wrong-doing and show what is good in himself. [But] when people see him, it is as though they see right into his heart, so what good is [his deception]?! This is what is meant by saying that authenticity on the inside is manifest on the outside. Thus a gentleman must be vigilant in solitude” (*Daxue zhangju* 7, in Zhong, *Sishu zhangju*). In the same vein, the *Doctrine of the Mean* says, “Thus a gentleman is careful of what is unobserved and wary of what is unheard. Nothing is more apparent than what is hidden, nothing more manifest than the subtle. Thus the gentleman is vigilant in his solitude” (*Zhongyong* 1).

In contrast, Cheng Yichuan takes the metaphysical reality of the Way, of human nature, as mere reason, merely being and not activity. When thinkers in that tradition talk about self-cultivation, they focus on the *Great Learning* and use that to decide their interpretations of the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Changes*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. Hence in every commentary that Zhu Xi ever wrote, he was just applying his interpretation of the *Great Learning*. Strictly speaking, it was not easy for someone like Zhu to wrap his head around the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Changes*, and the *Mean*. He defined humaneness, for example, as “the virtue of the mind and the principle of love,” thereby turning Mencius’ mind of compassion into nothing more than matter-energy and humaneness into mere principle. Yichuan had this shocking saying: “In nature there is only humaneness and rectitude. When did filial reverence ever enter into it?”⁴⁵ The reason is that, in Yichuan’s thinking, filial reverence is categorized as feeling. This is a very abstract way of thinking: filial reverence is the particular instance and nature is the universal principle. We could praise Yichuan for his capacity for abstract thought, but if filial reverence did not come from our nature, where *could* it come from?! Talking about filial reverence that way turns it into something external, in which case, if people suddenly want you to denounce your mother or father, they could seem to have reason on their side!⁴⁶ Hence one cannot throw around such talk loosely, for as clever as it may seem, it has real problems. As Confucius describes humaneness, it is the Way *and* reason *and* mind, in the form of a sense of unease.⁴⁷ Mencius also says

45 性中只有仁義，幾層有孝弟來。The actual quotation is slightly different. See *Er Cheng Yishu* 二程遺書, 231.

This question arises in commentaries to the first chapter of the *Analects*, in which Confucius calls filial reverence “the root of humaneness.” Cheng Yichuan considers the question of whether this means that filial reverence is then the epitome of humaneness, and he answers: “No. What Confucius is saying is that the practice of humaneness begins in filial reverence. It is an activity of humaneness, and in that sense one can say that it is the root of the *practice* of humaneness, but not that it *is* the root of humaneness. For humaneness is nature, and filial reverence is function. In nature there are only the four qualities of humaneness, rectitude, propriety, and wisdom. When did filial reverence ever enter into it?”

46 Mou is almost certainly referring to Communist “struggle sessions” of the fifties and sixties, in which the persecuted person’s relatives would be encouraged, indeed expected, to denounce him or her.

47 *bu an* 不安. A reference to *Analects* 17.21, in which Confucius responds to a question (which he later makes clear he finds quite philistine) about whether it is not quite enough to mourn one’s parents only one year, rather than three. Confucius responds “If you would feel at ease doing so, then go ahead” (*an ze wei zhi* 安則為之).

“Humaneness is simply being human. The Way is simply to harmonize with humaneness and put it into words.”⁴⁸ Confucius uses the feelings of ease or unease to describe humaneness, as when Zai Wo asks about the proper length of mourning. If a feeling of unease is not of the mind, then what is it? Mencius uses compassion as his example, and this compassion belongs to mind, but this mind is not material, not physical. Thus Zhu Xi gets decisive parts of the *Mencius* wrong. For example, in commenting on Mencius’ chapter on “fathoming the mind to know one’s nature and know Heaven” (*jin xin zhi xing zhi tian* 盡心知性知天),⁴⁹ Zhu gets it wrong and explains it in terms of “investigating things to fathom their principles” in the *Great Learning*. But in actuality, there can be no substituting other interpretations for what Mencius is talking about here. “Fathoming” (*jin* 盡) gives full expression to the idea of “filling out” (*kuochong* 括充). Zhu Xi takes “fathoming the mind” to refer to “investigating things to fathom their principles,” so that fathoming the mind is the *result* of knowing one’s nature and knowing principle. In truth, he has it backwards. He misunderstands “fathoming” not as meaning what Mencius calls “filling out” but rather as something epistemological. That chapter on “fathoming one’s mind” is one of Mencius’ key documents and its meaning is perfectly plain; it cannot possibly mean what Zhu Xi thinks it does. Zhu is incapable of understanding Mencius’ way of taking the “goodness of human nature” (*xing shan* 性善) to mean that humaneness and rectitude are found within (*renyi neizai* 仁義內在). But the whole reality and its grand function (*quanti dayong* 全體大用) according to Mencius’ teaching is laid bare in this chapter. As Lu Xiangshan said, “Confucius elucidated this Way by teaching about humaneness, and though his teaching was entirely seamless, Mencius laid it bare, whereupon there could be no more mystery.”⁵⁰ This “laying bare” refers to the full explication of this chapter of the *Mencius* in three levels: “fathoming the mind,” “preserving the mind” (*cunxin* 存心), and “waiting on destiny” (*si ming* 俟命). Not only did Xiangshan explain it well, but indeed only he could do so, because he was existentially suited to it; Zhu Xi was no good

48 仁也者人也，合而言之道也 (*Mengzi* 7B. 16). The translation is Van Norden’s (*Mengzi*, 188).

49 *Mengzi* 7A begins: “To fully fathom one’s heart is to understand one’s nature. To understand one’s nature is to understand Heaven” (盡其心者知其性也。知其性則知天矣). Translation by Van Norden (*Mengzi*, 171).

50 夫子以仁發明斯道，其言渾無罅縫。孟子十字打開，更無隱遁。 (*Xiangshan yulu* 象山語錄, in Yang Guorong 楊國榮, annot., *Xiangshan yulu—Yangming chuanxi lu* 象山語錄—陽明傳習錄 [Collected Conversations of Lu Xiangshan and Instructions for Practical Living of Wang Yangming] [Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2000], 22.)

at explaining the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, nor at the *Changes* and the *Mean* either. The pre-Qin Confucians developed from the beginning provided by the *Analects* and the *Mencius* onward to the *Changes* and the *Mean*, in continuous and natural progression; the *Great Learning* was thrust into that list from the outside. All it does is sketch an outline for practice, but it is not clear about doctrines beyond that. For example, it is not clear whether its talk of “resplendent virtue” and “supreme goodness” (*mingde*, *zhishan* 明德、至善) is a reference to principle, in the sense of “fathoming principle,” or to moral knowing. And what kind of knowledge is meant when the text talks about “investigating things and cultivating knowledge?” None of this is determined. Both the Cheng-Zhu school and the Lu-Wang school interpret “resplendent virtue” as the “shining moral nature” of mind and nature itself. However, in the *Book of Odes* and *Book of Documents*, “resplendent virtue” refers either to luminously virtuous conduct or a virtuous person. It is not talking about the inner source, namely mind and nature, but rather about the outward result. Hence the *Great Learning* cannot be taken as the standard. Although it is not exactly like Xunzi’s book,⁵¹ the Cheng-Zhu philosophy comes close to that of Xunzi and deviates from Confucianism’s pre-Qin orthodoxy. I call their brand of self-cultivation, centered around fathoming the principles in objects, the path of “following the senses” (*shunqu* 順取).⁵² Zhu Xi himself is extremely consistent. His superficial inconsistencies are only because he works with scriptural sources that have varied vocabularies, and when he shifts into the language of this or that text, the result can be somewhat unclear. But he himself is very clear.

51 Xunzi was a philosopher and social theorist of the 3rd century BCE. Mou associates him with the position that morality is not an innate sense (as Mencius says) but a learned behavior acquired through socialization. For Mou, then, Xunzi deviates far from the Mencian teaching, and inasmuch as Cheng-Zhu philosophy follows Xunzi’s thinking, it too is wrong-headed.

52 This is an incomplete rendering of the word, as often happens when translating Chinese binomes into English, and particularly when translating Mou, with his love of neologisms. A more precise translation would be “the path of following [the senses] and apprehending [sensible objects and forming empirical knowledge about them].” Elsewhere Mou describes the difference between the two approaches to cultivation this way:

“[Turning back from the senses and] returning to awareness (*nijue* 逆覺) means not following the trend of sensibility downward to sensible reality. [Rather], as soon as the moral mind manifests itself, you seize it and do not let it be deceived and tumble downhill, following the senses. This means turning back from the jumble of sensible reality, turning back and returning to awareness of the being-in-itself of one’s own life-force. This being-in-itself is our basic mind (*benxin* 本心), our basic humaneness.” (*Song-Ming ruxue de wenti yu fazhan*, 202)

Once we understand this approach, we can immediately identify what is distinctive in the Lu-Wang tradition. Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming did not follow in the footsteps of Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, the Chengs, or Zhu Xi, which is why Lu said, "I read the *Mencius* and understand it for myself."⁵³ Theirs is what is called the "school of mind." Simply put, they use the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the Appendices to the *Changes*, and the *Mean* as the context for the *Great Learning*, and their approach to self-cultivation is that of "returning to moral alertness." The reason for calling it the "school of mind" is that it, in keeping with the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, it teaches that the mind is identical to heaven, not just to human nature and reason. The mind is identical to heaven, right here and now, and in its absolute sense (*juedui yi* 絕對義), it is the stretching forth of one mind, extending all the way (*kuochong zhida* 括充至達) to the heavenly Way. It is not spoken of first in its objective aspect, as the metaphysical reality of the Way and human nature. Starting with the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, then, the mind as presented here simultaneously as the foundation of morality and also as the foundation of heaven and earth and the myriad things, rather than being explained in just an objective sense, as heaven and the metaphysical reality the Way. Since moral knowing (*liangzhi* 良知) creates heaven and earth and forms the metaphysical reality of the Way for heaven and earth and the myriad things, it is enough simply to speak of moral knowing. Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming both take this approach. As Lu said, "The myriad things are contained in all their tranquility in the small confines of the heart-mind. Overflowing, the mind issues them forth and fills the cosmos; that is nothing other than this principle."⁵⁴ Wang Yangming says, "There is nothing outside of the mind."⁵⁵ Cheng Mingdao also has a straightforward, incisive saying: "This very mind is heaven. Exhaust it and you know human nature; know human nature and you know heaven. You grasp it right where you are; you cannot look outside."⁵⁶ Here the mind is substituting for the heavenly Way, and in order for the mind to stand in for heaven it must take on an absolute sense, under which the moral order is the cosmic order and vice versa. The expression of moral knowing on the spot as filiality and reverence for elders and love is something that issues forth in response to circumstances, and the mind that is expressed

53 因讀孟子而自得之。Yang Guorong, *Xiangshan yulu*, 98.

54 萬物森然於方寸之間。滿心而發充賽宇宙無非此理 (Yang Guorong, *Xiangshan yulu*, 49). Mou quotes the final part as "莫非此理."

55 *xin wai wu wu* 心外無物 (*Chuanxi lu*, 109).

56 只心便是天，盡之便知性，知性便知天。當處便認取，更不可外求。 (*Er Cheng yishu*, 65; SYXA, 552. Mou quotes the passage in slightly different form.)

is an absolute one. For this to happen, sudden realization (*dunwu* 頓悟) is an absolute must (which is why people have likened Wang's philosophy to Chan Buddhism), for otherwise moral knowing would be limited by the particulars of the circumstances in which it is manifested. Thus, sudden awakening is indispensable for manifesting this universality and absoluteness. We must not see this as somehow taboo.⁵⁷ What this is doing is to use the *Analects* and the *Mencius* to determine the interpretation of the *Great Learning* and prevent it from leading one down a Xunzian path. Entering through the *Analects* and the *Mencius* is entering through the subjective. Tracing the mind and humaneness out to where they pervade reality completely is their objective side, which is what the Appendices to the *Changes* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* describe.

The tradition of Hu Wufeng and Liu Jishan focus on the Appendices to the *Changes* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* and return to the "mind and nature" (*xinxing* 心性) spoken of in the *Analects* and the *Mencius* to actualize the objective metaphysical reality of the Way and human nature. The key phrase in the intellectual framework of this tradition is "concretized and conspicuous," as in the *Doctrine of the Mean's* expression, "Having authenticity, this becomes concretized, and being concretized, it becomes conspicuous."⁵⁸ Neither the Cheng-Zhu nor the Lu-Wang school has such a teaching or a doctrinal framework. The six centuries of Song-Ming thought were just about those five books, the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the Appendices to the *Changes*, the *Mean*, and the *Great Learning*. Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, and Cheng Mingdao initially were interested in the *Changes* and the *Mean*, but in the pre-Qin they began from the *Analects* and the *Mencius* and then proceeded onward from there to the *Changes* and the *Mean*. Even if philologists now regard the *Changes* and the *Mean* as relatively late, they still follow the tradition of the late Zhou, so they cannot be lumped in with Han cosmology. Likewise, we all see Gu Yanwu, Huang Zongxi,

57 That is, Confucians must not reject the idea of sudden realization simply because it is associated with Chan Buddhism.

58 *cheng ze xing, xing ze zhe* 誠則形，形則著. A reference to that text's famous six-part ontocosmological formula: "Having authenticity, it is expressed; being expressed, it becomes conspicuous; conspicuous, it becomes resplendent; being resplendent, it brings movement; with movement there is change; and with change, there is transformation. It is only the epitome of authenticity that can transform the world" (誠則形，形則著，著則明，明則動，動則變，變則化。唯天下至誠為能化) (*Zhongyong* 23). As in the passages above concerning "vigilance in solitude," the belief here is that the inner becomes the outer, that human virtue cannot help but be outwardly apparent and, moreover, efficacious in the world. Mou writes about this as a Confucian form of "final" or teleological causation (*mudi yin* 目的因) in *SYL*, 19–25).

and Wang Fuzhi as figures of the late Ming, and even if they could also be reckoned as men of the early Qing, no one could lump them in with the scholarship of the Qianlong-Jiaqing period a century later. Their scholarly approach is so unlike that of the mid-Qing. Likewise, even though the Appendices to the *Changes* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* are later products, one cannot identify them with the cosmocentric theory of the Western Han. The *Changes* and the *Mean* represent the upward development of the *Analects* and the *Mencius* into a perfect teaching (*yuanjiao* 圓教). People must develop to the stage of joining virtues with heaven and earth;⁵⁹ this is necessary and incontrovertible. Thus it is necessary to reach the stage where there is nothing outside the mind, which then encompasses heaven and earth. Such a theory teaches that mind, human nature, and humaneness are not just the root of morality but also of the cosmos and all things and necessarily forms a “moral metaphysics.” This must be entailed by a perfect teaching, for the mind of a great person must join its virtue with heaven and earth and pervade heaven and earth.

Some people have misunderstood me to be saying that Confucianism only became complete with the development of the *Changes* and the *Mean*. “What about the works of Confucius and Mencius?” they ask. “After all they said about humaneness and the mind, do you mean to say that, lacking the *Changes* and the *Mean*, they were incomplete?” But that is a misunderstanding. Being complete is not a matter of how much or how little someone has said. This has to be clearly understood. The three masters of the Northern Song were speaking from the pinnacle of Confucianism’s development, so they were interested in the *Changes* and the *Mean* because they first had to speak objectively about the metaphysical reality as Way and as human nature. But this does not mean that they were fixated on cosmology⁶⁰ (that is, explaining morality through

59 *yu tiandi he de* 與天地合德. A common trope among Neo-Confucians that has its genesis in the “Exalted Lineage” chapter of the 2nd century BCE work *Huainanzi* 淮南子. See Gao Xiu 高誘, *Huainanzi zhu* 淮南子注 [*Huainanzi Annotated*] (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1965); John S. Major, et al., *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

60 This is a slightly free rendering. More literally, we can translate Mou’s phrase *yuzhou-lun zhongxin* 宇宙論中心, which he uses adjectivally, as “cosmology-centric.” As he tries to make clear in the parenthesis which follows it, his point is that even when Neo-Confucians talked cosmology, they were not doing so out of a wonkish interest in cosmology for its own sake but as a vehicle for talking about their real interest, which was a pragmatic concern morality. In much the same way, professional bodybuilders make a serious study of endocrinology, not because of an abstract interest in the life sciences but because it aids them in their real interest, which is manipulating body composition.

metaphysics). Nor were they using cosmology to build their theory of morality,⁶¹ for their theory of morality necessarily presupposed Confucius' and Mencius' teachings about subjectivity. They were not making up their own teachings but were carrying forward Confucius' and Mencius' teachings to their final and perfect conclusion. No, what was really guilty of being cosmologically centered was the dogmatic, pre-Kantian metaphysics. It will not do to robotically apply Western concepts here.

After speaking objectively about the metaphysical reality as Way and as nature, it was necessary to work back step by step to Confucius and Mencius. With Zhou Dunyi [the Neo-Confucian theory of] the objective aspect was now completely established, but [the portrayal of] the subjective aspect remained thin and weak. Still, his model of spiritual practice remained one of "returning to moral alertness" and his teachings about authenticity, spirit, and moment (*ji* 幾) were very profound. . . .⁶² Thereupon, Zhang Zai covered both the subjective and objective sides, but still the subjective side was obscured by all his talk about the "supreme void" (*taixu* 太虛), "supreme harmony" (*taihe* 太和), matter-energy and the rest of the objective aspect. Finally, Cheng Mingdao acknowledged the unity of subjective and objective and no longer separated them. For this reason, Mingdao became the model of the perfect teaching. However, eschewing analytic explanation as he did,⁶³ his work seemed jumbled and unintelligible, not at all like Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi with their

61 What Mou has in mind here is an approach to morality in which one would subscribe to a theory of the universe and then let that theory determine one's ideas of right and wrong. An example of this (mine, not Mou's) would be a social Darwinist, who saw the world as a place of pitiless competition and concluded from this that the weak deserve to be conquered by the strong, or a Leninist, who believed that the world was destined for a classless society and so thought any means justified in order to hasten its advent.

Mou's approach to metaphysics is the opposite. He takes what he believes to be our innate moral sense, what one might call the voice of conscience, as the realest thing of all, and tailors his metaphysics, his theory of the general order of things, to elaborate that belief.

62 I have omitted the following sentence: "我們可用主客來表示周濂溪, 虛線表示虛歎 (We can use the subjective and objective to describe Zhou Dunyi and a dotted line to represent his shortcomings)." Mou was apparently referring to a diagram that he had been drawing on the blackboard.

63 *fenjie shuo* 分解說. That is, Mingdao preferred to speak in paradox. On Mou's specific views concerning paradox and discriminating language, see his "Place of the Tiantai Tradition in Chinese Buddhism" in this volume, and Clower, *Unlikely Buddhologist*, 77–78, 229–240.

two-way distinction between reason and matter-energy and their three-way distinction among mind, nature, and feeling. Nor was it like Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming, in whom the subjective aspect gobbled the objective one right up.

In the Southern Song, the first person to digest the Northern Song learning was Hu Wufeng. Hu was Zhu Xi's elder⁶⁴ and was in the lineage of Xie Shangcai,⁶⁵ who had been a student of Cheng Mingdao. Zhu, for his part, opposed Xie's equation of humaneness with moral awareness (*jue* 覺). Zhu handled this regrettably.⁶⁶ In truth, Xie's doctrine of developing humaneness through moral feeling came from Cheng Mingdao's teaching that humane-ness means not being numb to moral sentiment, but although Zhu Xi treated Mingdao with a distant civility, he was not so polite with Xie Shangcai and criticized him. Since Hu Wufeng belonged to Xie's lineage, Zhu wrote an eight-point critique of his book,⁶⁷ but this was still polite deliberation compared with the way he treated Hu's students, whom he scolded without a trace of civility. In truth, they all held an identical position, but Zhu Xi assumed a different attitude toward them all, and at bottom it all came down to Zhu criticizing Mingdao. None of Zhu's eight objections to Hu Wufeng's book were on target, but Hu's eldest disciple, Zhang Nanxuan,⁶⁸ knuckled under and took Zhu's side. Hu's other disciples held fast to their master's teachings, but they lacked enough philosophical talent and in addition did not live very long, and so their school was subdued by Zhu Xi. Zhu had such great energy that no short-lived opponent could successfully promote his school over Zhu's.

64 Hu was born in 1102 and Zhu in 1130.

65 謝上蔡 (Liangcuo 良佐) (1050–1103). Teacher of Hu Wufeng's father, Hu Wending 胡文定.

66 To conform better to the customary English order of exposition, I have placed this sentence *before* the clause "In truth, Xie's doctrine of developing humaneness through moral awareness came from Cheng Mingdao's teaching that humaneness means not being numb to moral sentiment." In Mou's text it comes afterward.

67 *Zhiyan yiyi* 知言疑義 (Doubts About Hu Wufeng's *Understanding of Words*). See SYXA, 673–683.

Chen Yingrui 陳盈瑞 writes that Zhu took Hu's doctrine of human nature to be like Gaozi's naturalism and "hence viewed Hu as a 'rebel' among the Neo-Confucians." *Songdai wangba sixiang yanjiu: yi xinxing guandian wei zhuzhou de tantao* 宋代王霸思想研究——以心性觀點為主軸的探討 (Song Dynasty Thought on Kingship and Hyranny, Focusing on the Concept of *Xinxing*) (Ph.D. diss., National Cheng-chih University [Taiwan], 2006), 95 n. 18.

68 張南軒 (1133–1180).

Still, Zhu Xi did not understand Hu Wufeng's doctrinal framework correctly. We can approach Hu's way of first speaking objectively about metaphysical reality of the Way and human nature through the example of his understanding of the "profound and ceaseless" (*wumu buyi* 於穆不已).⁶⁹ The metaphysical reality of the Way, as it flows in an individual person, is called being-in-itself as human nature. The two have the same content, but we distinguish between them in speech. In first speaking objectively about being-in-itself as Way and human nature, we only come to understand its formal significance. We discover being-in-itself as Way and human nature as the profundity of the spirits (wherefore it is also called the "metaphysical reality of profundity" [*aoti* 奧體])⁷⁰ and as that by which heaven and earth are established. (Hu is clearly saying this in response to the Buddhist teaching that the world is "as if a mirage, a ceaseless flux").⁷¹ And where do we find the particular, real significance that makes profundity profound? That makes creative feeling what it is? That makes the spirit spirit? Where do we find that particular, real significance? Any objective treatment must be limited at first to a treatment of just formal significance. All such realities as profundity, creative feeling, and spirit must eventually be understood in terms of Confucius' idea of humaneness and Mencius' idea of mind and human nature. That is, they must come back and be understood subjectively, and they must be expressed concretely through the subjective work of moral practice by means of returning to moral awareness. Confucius' "teaching" (*jiaoxun* 教訓) for us—it would be disrespectful to the sage to call it his "thought" (*sixiang* 思想)—is to practice humaneness to know heaven. "A sincere humaneness, a bottomless depth, a heavenly vastness"⁷²—that is

69 *wumu buyi* 於穆不已. A reference to the beginning of an ode to King Wen of the Zhou in the *Book of Odes*, quoted in the *Doctrine of the Mean*: "The Odes say, 'How profound and ceaseless is that which is bequeathed (*ming* 命) by heaven!', meaning that by which heaven is heaven. 'And oh, how conspicuous is the purity of King Wen's virtue!' it says, meaning that which makes King Wen so refined (*wen* 文), purely and unceasingly." (*Zhongyong* chap. 23; cf. Ode 267 in Li Xueqin, *Mao Shi zhengyi*, 1284).

70 Mou is referring to tag line of Hu Wufeng's which says, "Human nature is the profundity of the heaven, earth, and spirits" (*xing ye zhe, tiandi guishen zhi ao* 性也者天地鬼神之奧) (*SYXA*, 30).

71 *ruhuan ruhua* 如幻如化. A ubiquitous trope in Perfection of Wisdom sutras (e.g. T 220, 223, *passim*) and elsewhere in the Buddhist canon.

72 A reference to *Zhongyong* 33: "Only one of the greatest authenticity can weave the great warp of all under heaven, can establish its great basis, can know the transformation and nourishing of heaven and earth. And what supports him in this? His utterly sincere humaneness, his bottomless depth, his heavenly vastness. If even he were not keen and

the only way to realize *in concreto* that which was described objectively in the terms “metaphysical reality of Way” and “of nature.” It is only through Confucius’ idea of humaneness and Mencius’ idea of mind and human nature that one can grasp the reality of the objective reality of Way and nature. Otherwise, they are just a lot of high-flown talk without real meaning. So although teachings about the reality of the Way and nature are not cosmocentric, and although they do not subordinate morality to cosmology, they have only formal significance and for their real meaning we must return to the subjective mind, using the mind of humaneness to manifest it. When Hu Wufeng writes about “mind manifesting nature and completing our natures,”⁷³ by “manifest” he means to give it form and make it conspicuous. Zhu Xi, naturally, does not say such a thing because he thinks mind is a separate thing from principle. Mind, for Zhu, means the cognitive mind, and its job is to grasp the principle by means of investigating things; there is no unity of mind and reason for Zhu. Yet it is only if mind and principle are one that we can use the subjectively explained mind and nature to truly and concretely manifest the objectively explained metaphysical reality of Way and nature.

Hu Wufeng, then, follows the approach of “mind manifesting nature,” derived from Cheng Mingdao’s idea of the “profound and ceaseless” reality of profundity. In his “Understanding of Words,” he asked why the sages from Yao and Shun to Confucius taught only about mind and not nature, and he answered, “Mind is that which knows heaven and earth and masters the myriad things, so as to complete its nature. Its nature is that by which heaven and earth and the myriad things are established.”⁷⁴ The objectively explained nature needs the subjectively explained mind in order to be revealed. When Hu writes that mind “knows heaven and earth,” he is using “know”⁷⁵ not in the ordinary sense of the word but rather means that it governs them, just as in imperial times the title for governor of a county or prefecture literally meant

understanding enough that his sagely knowledge could extend to the heavenly virtue, who then could know that?” (唯天下至誠為能經綸天下之大經，立天下之大本，知天地之化育。夫焉有所倚？肫肫其仁，淵淵其淵，浩浩其天。苟不固聰明聖知達天德者其孰能知之？)

73 *yì xīn zhù xìng, yì xīn chéng xìng* 以心著性，以心成性. This is Mou’s characterization of Hu’s position.

74 心也者，知天地，宰萬物，以成性者也。(SYXA, 673)

75 At this point Mou adds “in sense of ‘*qian* knowing great beginnings’” (*qian zhi da shi* 乾知大始), a quotation from *Xici* 1.1. I have withheld it from the main text for the sake of ready intelligibility by the non-sinologist.

the “knower” of the jurisdiction.⁷⁶ Through the fathoming of one’s mind and the completion of one’s nature, heaven and earth and the myriad things are established. And when Hu writes of “completing nature,” he means that it takes manifest form.⁷⁷ If one can fathom one’s mind, this makes manifest the content and significance of one’s nature and brings it to completion, because metaphysical reality of Way and nature exists transcendentally (*benyou* 本有). It was Zhang Zai who first developed this idea of “completing our nature” in the sense of making it manifest, and Liu Jishan also spoke of “concretizing and making conspicuous.”

Hu Wufeng and Liu Jishan together bookended the period after the Northern Song, one at the beginning and the other at the end, Hu’s philosophy having been suppressed by Zhu Xi and later even misinterpreted in Huang Zongxi’s *Major Schools of Song and Yuan Confucians* as a forerunner of the School of Mind (*xinxue* 心學). At the end of it all, Liu Jishan served as a final witness⁷⁸ for the Song-Ming Confucians, for the Ming dynasty being now vanquished, Liu refused all food for more than twenty days and finally died. His way of thinking was the same as Hu’s, for he wished to correct the excesses of Wang Yangming’s philosophy. Those excesses can be summed up in two phrases: “untethered loftiness” (*xuxuan er dang* 虛玄而蕩) and “rampant feeling” (*qingshi er si* 情識而肆).⁷⁹ The first refers to the excesses which occurred in the Wang Longxi

76 *zhixian*, *zhifu* 知縣, 知府. Wang Yangming famously interprets “knowing” this way in *Instructions for Practical Living* (*Chuanxi lu*, 37).

77 Again, a reference to the famous cosmological formula from *Zhongyong* 23.

Mou then adds, “and not the sense of *cheng* as the coming into being of something which previously did not exist” (非本無今有之成). I have left this out of the main text because this ambiguity does not exist in English.

78 *jianzheng* 見證. Mou is using the word in its Christian sense.

79 This is a loose translation based on the underlying passage from Liu’s “Discussions on Realizing the Teaching” (*Zhengxue zaijie* 證學雜解), to which this paragraph is actually an unannounced commentary. (Cf. Mou, *Song-Ming ruxue*, 219–220.) Liu complains that though Wang Yangming saved the Neo-Confucianism of his own day from error and dead scholasticism, “In the present day, everyone clamors about moral knowing to the point of excess. The radical ones take it for mundane feeling (*qingshi* 情識), with the result that everything is good in their opinion, and the hyper-pure ones polish it up into something stratospherically lofty, perverting it the way that heterodox [Buddhists and Daoists] do.” (今天下爭言良知矣, 及其弊也, 猖狂者參之以情識, 而一是皆良, 超潔者蕩之以玄虛, 而夷良于賊). Dai Lianzhang 戴璉璋 and Wu Guang 吳光, eds., *Liu Zongzhou quanji* 劉宗周全集 (Complete Works of Liu Jishan), vol. 2 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubai chu, 1997), 325. I am grateful to Sébastien Billioud for his opinion on this passage.

line of Yangming's school, and the second to those in the Wang Gen line. For moral knowing (*liangzhi* 良知) is like a watery pearl of dew, free and unstag-nant, hard to hold onto, and once you fail to grasp it, and no sooner do you reach for it than it begins to slide downward. When the Taizhou school claimed that moral knowing was everywhere, were they not being too daring? Even Buddhists did not talk casually about the bodhisattva path. Wang Yangming himself was not guilty of excesses, but without deep practice it is no easy matter to understand what sort of thing moral knowing is, and thus it is not grasped in a single try. Liu Jishan aimed to correct these excesses of his followers, and he thought that Wang Yangming's way of explaining innate moral knowing in terms of voidful, perspicacious awareness⁸⁰ was lofty and inspiring on the one hand but also too abstruse. And so Liu thought that, apart from just talking about knowledge as voidful, perspicacious awareness, it is also necessary to speak of "knowledge concealed in the will."⁸¹ Will is a compass giving deep direction. It is deeply buried, and when Liu explains the notion of "vigilance in solitude" in terms of will,⁸² it is a deep and distant will that he speaks of. But will also belongs to mind (and thus when the *Great Learning* explains vigilance in solitude in terms of sincere will, it is doing this in terms of the metaphysical reality of mind, something within the scope of mental awareness), and so it is necessary to gather will and moral knowing (*yizhi* 意知) inward again to the reality of nature or profundity. This is like the way that "vigilance in solitude" is explained in the *Doctrine of the Mean*, which is in terms of the reality of nature, which is the "profound and ceaseless" reality profundity. This is a process of gathering inward, layer by layer. Thus even though this system also speaks of mind and innate moral knowing, it must also affirm the majesty of nature and heaven (where heaven stands for the reality of the Way), the reverence accorded objective nature. The subjective mind (that is, moral knowing) needs the transcendental nature (that is, heaven) to stabilize it and make it stand up, for otherwise it will run amok endlessly. Thus this spiritual practice (*gongfu* 工夫) is very deep, and the significance of the metaphysical reality

80 *xuling mingjue* 虛靈明覺. I am indebted to Sébastien Billioud and Esther Su for their suggestions about how to render this difficult compound.

81 *zhi cang yu yi* 知藏於意. Mou adds parenthetically, "Here, *yi* does not have the sense of [conscious] intention (*yinian* 意念). Rather, it corresponds to free will (*ziyou yizhi* 自由意志)."

82 *yigen* 意根. The word itself is a Buddhist one, a translation of the Sanskrit '*manendriya*', which in Buddhist epistemology refers to consciousness conceived as a sixth sense organ (*gen* 根) whose function is awareness of mental phenomena.

of human nature must be made manifest by subjective will and knowledge. On the one side, the reality of human nature streams inside and makes the subjective mind and moral knowing objective; conversely, mind and moral knowing, with their subjective significance, can manifest nature and heaven, giving subjectivity to the objective. The result is something which is both objective and subjective. Amid this process of making manifest, there is a majesty to heaven and nature, and because this process is never-ending, that majesty can be preserved. But the reality of the Way is both active and existent,⁸³ and so too is the moral mind and moral knowing (*xin zhi* 心知), and therefore moral mind and moral knowing have an absolute and universal possibility of spontaneously manifesting nature and heaven. This is spontaneous awakening (*dunwu* 頓悟), and it is in spontaneous awakening that we can say that the subjective moral mind and knowing and the objective nature and heaven can spontaneously unite.⁸⁴ Of course, some have claimed that they are *not* united.⁸⁵ Being united requires that moral mind, will, and moral knowing on the one hand and nature and heaven on the other all be both active and existent, *contra* both Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi on the one side and Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming on the other, and hence this became an independent doctrinal system.

However, both the Lu-Wang line and the Hu-Liu line essentially belong to the same circles, and ultimately they can be grouped together as a common tradition, though they still have to be understood separately. It is quite a different question what this larger tradition has in common with the Cheng-Zhu line, and the answer is much more complex than simply saying that they both engage in learning and admire virtue. In Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi there is fundamental error, and they must not be lumped in with the rest of the tradition. If Zhu had been guided and corrected by his teachers and friends he

83 *ji huodong ji cunyou* 即活動即存有. Mou frames an entire critique of Zhu Xi in these terms. See John Berthrong, *All Under Heaven* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), Chapter Four.

84 Originally a Buddhist trope, the notion of sudden enlightenment takes on a Confucian significance in Mou in discussions such as this one, where the lesson is that our innate moral sense is not simply a happenstantial feature of our personalities but actually unites us with the cosmos.

85 This is an interpretive rendering. Mou's wording is vague: "It is also possible to say that, in the process of making manifest, they are not united" (在形著之過程中, 亦可說不合一). Given what follows, I take Mou to be referring specifically to the Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang traditions said, not to a possibility that Mou himself endorses.

could have awakened. Granted, there is value in simply engaging in learning, but what I am talking about is something different, namely having an unerring understanding of the metaphysical reality of the Way. For learning inner sageliness, the essential practice is returning to moral awareness; engaging in learning is just its handmaiden.

The Rise of Buddhist Learning in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang¹

Editor's note: The first part of this text appears fragmentary. A record of one of Mou's lectures as taken down by a student, it seems to have lost some of the smoothness of Mou's actual speech in transcription. It is worth noting that Mou's rural Shandong accent made his speech difficult to understand, so that even his own graduate students needed a period of acclimation.

Part I: Phases in the Development of Chinese Culture

I plan to deliver this course as neither a specialist on Buddhism nor a Buddhist disciple, but rather from the standpoint of the history of Chinese philosophy. In the history of Chinese philosophy, one of the periods is that of the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Sui and Tang,² and as far as philosophy goes, its intellectual focus was on Buddhism. Thus this stretch of history is not to be ignored, otherwise there is no way to give a continuous history of philosophy; it will be left inexplicable. However, this period in the history of philosophy is normally very hard to get straight, because doing so requires absorbing a whole new cultural system. That is speaking broadly. Putting it more narrowly, it requires absorbing a whole new great teaching (*da jiao* 大教), and this teaching's scriptures are vast and complex and also full of technical vocabulary, and the unfamiliarity of all these varieties of technical vocabulary makes them difficult to understand.

How then are we to make sense of this period in the history of philosophy? First let us reflect on a few phases in the development of Chinese culture.

1 *The Pre-Qin: The Original Model of Chinese Culture*

It suffices to say that, if we talk about Chinese culture from its beginnings, then the pre-Qin phase³ forms the original model.

1 "Jiang Nanbeichao Sui Tang foxue zhi yuanqi 講南北朝隋唐佛學之緣起." Mou's first lecture in his course on "Buddhist Scholarship of the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Sui and Tang" at National Taiwan University in the 1976–77 academic year. First published in *Zhexue yu wenhua* 4.10 (Oct. 10, 1977).

2 Together, these dynasties cover the period from 420 to 907 C.E.

3 That is, up to the late 3rd century B.C.E.

2 *The Han: Classical Studies*

The classical learning of the two Han dynasties⁴ inherited the Confucian classics of the pre-Qin and coordinated it with *yin-yang* thought to build the great empire of the Han dynasty. Thus Han learning was a kind of scholarship which involved learning the classics for practical purposes. On this point we need not tarry longer.

3 *The Wei-Jin: Xuan Metaphysics*

Han classical learning created the Han empire, but by the end of the Eastern Han it could go no further and so it was necessary for “the path to switch back up the mountain,” so to speak, and this switchback first took the form of the “*xuan* metaphysics” of the Wei-Jin.⁵ In the development of history, the spirit it manifested was one in which “the rain waters were spent and the ponds cold and clear.”⁶ In marrying pre-Qin Confucian classics to *yin-yang* theory to build the Han empire, Han classical learning had already completed its historical mission. But it also had a very vulgar and eclectic air to it, so that by the end of the Eastern Han it could go no further. Therefore a switchback was needed, a sort of purgation, and the *xuan* metaphysics of the Wei-Jin acted as the purgative.

1) Pure Criticism → Pure Conversation → Wei-Jin *Xuan* Metaphysics⁷
This purgative medicine, *xuan* metaphysics, first emerged in scholarship by way of the Pure Criticism⁸ of the late Eastern Han, as expressed in the “disaster

4 The period from 206 B.C.E. to 220 C.E. In Chinese it is common to refer “the two Han dynasties (*liang Han* 兩漢)” because an interregnum lasting from 9 C.E. to 25 C.E. separated the original dynasty, subsequently dubbed the “Western Han,” from the “later” or “Eastern Han.”

5 A period named after two of the successor kingdoms that emerged after the dissolution of the Han empire. There is more than one way of reckoning the boundaries of this period, but for our purposes we can take it as lasting from 220 C.E. to 420 C.E.

6 *lao shui jin er han tan qing* 潦水盡而寒潭清. The image is of late autumn, with the streams drying up and the weather growing cold with the approach of winter. Mou is quoting from Tang poet Wang Bo’s “Farewell at Prince Teng’s Tower” (*Teng Wang ge xu* 滕王閣序).

7 This heading and other laconic headings like it may be notations of what Mou wrote on the chalk board.

8 *qingyi* 清議. A protest movement of scholar-officials, schooled in Confucian classics, to stem the abuses of the court eunuchs. Though it was put down, it is considered the forerunner of the “Pure Conversation” of the Wei. See Alan K.L. Chan, “Neo-Daoism,” 304, in Bo Mou, ed., *History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008).

of the proscribed cliques.”⁹ Where Pure Criticism had been political in nature, it later evolved into Pure Conversation (*qingtán* 清談), which in turn evolved into the Daoistic *xuan* metaphysics.¹⁰

2) Deviation (*qichu* 岐出) and Opening (*kai* 開)

In addition to describing Wei-Jin *xuan* metaphysics as a switchback in the path of the development of Chinese culture, we can also describe it as a deviation, a turning off to the side. In the development of Chinese culture, this deviation is an “opening.” The development of Chinese history and culture is a development of great openings and great syntheses (*da he* 大合). These times of “opening” are sometimes very long, but duration alone does not qualify them as “great.” For that, they must also constitute a “deviation,” a turning far off to one side, as it were; only then can they be called “great openings.” It is only through history that we can define the content of a “great opening.”

3) Deviation “Opening”—Preliminary “Opening”

Wei-Jin Pure Conversation and *xuan* metaphysics were a preliminary (*chubu de* 初步的) “opening,” and the content of this opening (the content of Pure Conversation) is the Daoist “*xuan* principles” (*xuan li* 玄理). Daoism is indigenously Chinese, but it is not the mainstream of the culture, and so this was a deviation. This deviational “opening” was the preliminary “opening.”

4 *The Period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Sui and Tang: Buddhism*

1) Great Opening—Absorbing and Digesting Buddhism

Following that preliminary “opening,” that turning off to the side based on China’s indigenous Daoism, the turn grew even larger. That preliminary “opening” had not been a very distant one, because Daoism was indigenously Chinese, but the veering aside to absorb Buddhism—to receive a major teaching from India—took it far afield indeed.

9 *dang gu zhi hu* 黨錮之禍. A pair of incidents in the court of the Eastern Han, in 166 and 168, in which groups scholar-officials were framed as seditious cliques by rival court eunuchs and suppressed. Mou views the incidents as examples of the difficulty intellectuals had under traditional Chinese autocracy with engaging in politics without either selling their integrity or paying with their lives (*SJJ*, 191–192).

10 I have amended this sentence slightly for clarity.

2) 'Absorb' and 'Digest' Are Terms of Historical Reflection

We are applying the terms 'absorb' and 'digest' to this stage in the historical development of Chinese culture retrospectively. If we were to inhabit the standpoint of the people of that time, looking at Chinese politics and society of the period, of course we would not be willing to deviate in this way; from here we can say that these six or seven hundred years were the period of Buddhist conquest.¹¹ No nation is willing to be conquered by others, so if we were of the Chinese nation of that age, we would not be willing either. But willing or not, there was no other choice. If the evolution of history forces something to be so, what other choice is there? This is why we say that 'absorb' and 'digest' are words that we latter-day people apply historiographically.

Well then, did we succeed at absorbing it? Did we manage to digest it completely? Yes, we brought it in and digested it completely. And that is no easy thing, to swallow down something so foreign and digest it entirely.

5 *The Song and Ming: Song-Ming Confucianism*

1) Preliminary "Synthesis" (*he* 合)

In the history of the development of Chinese culture, this phase is called a "synthesis." The earlier deviation was called an "opening," but the later arrival of Song learning and its return to the Chinese mainstream (Confucianism) is a "synthesis." However, this "synthesis" is just a preliminary "synthesis." Calling it a "preliminary synthesis" is a way of saying that it was not a complete synthesis or, putting it less kindly, not a completely healthy synthesis. It particularly emphasized the cultivation of inner sageliness (*neisheng* 內聖) and was too withdrawn. All that was discussed during the six hundred years of Song-Ming Confucianism was Confucian inner sageliness, and hence it was just a preliminary "synthesis."

2) Meanwhile, a Subsidiary "Opening"

Because Song-Ming Confucianism was only a preliminary synthesis slanted toward inner sageliness, not a wholly complete and healthy synthesis, amid this synthesis there emerged another "opening." This was an opening at a secondary level because it was an opening amid the synthesis. The spirit of this period was mainly one of synthesis, as in the phrase "great openings and great syntheses," but amid this great "great synthesis" which was fixated on inner

11 The image of conquest is not an unusual one, and indeed Mou was probably aware of Erik Zürcher's *Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972). It is also worth noting that it is more than just an image and that, after the Han dynasty, the north of China was ruled more often than not by foreign Buddhist conquerors.

sageliness, there thus emerged another opening which was subsidiary, secondary. This subsidiary opening can be divided into a few phases.

6 *The Late Ming: Exemplified by Gu Yanwu, Huang Zongxi, and Wang Fuzhi*

1) *The Opening Up of Political Studies (kai waiwang 開外王)*

The opening represented by Gu, Huang, and Wang¹² inherited the correct philosophy of inner sageliness while developing the study of outer kingliness (*waiwang* 外王). This was the spirit of the late Ming and early Qing, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If the Ming had not died and this positive and healthy spirit had been allowed to develop, it would have been able to bring forth a seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century Western kind of civilization.

2) *"The Life of the Nation was Set Back and the Life of Chinese Culture was Warped"*

The spirit of Gu's, Huang's, and Wang's developments in the study of outer kingliness emerged out of the Confucian philosophy of inner sageliness, but after the Manchus took over China, their spirit, longings, and purpose could go no further and were bottled up again. Thus Huang Zongxi wrote an essay entitled *Waiting for the Dawn*,¹³ whose mood is mournful and desolate. In order for Chinese culture to develop in a healthy direction, it should move forward from inner sageliness to outer kingliness. It is unfortunate that the Ming dynasty died when it did. After that, China was taken over by the Manchus, who at that time were barbarians, and their conquest of China was extremely unwelcome to Chinese people. Therefore opposition to the Qing dynasty¹⁴ and Ming restorationism occurred repeatedly, with Taiwan as a base for the opposition.¹⁵ Even

12 Gu Yanwu 顾炎武 (1613–1682), Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 (1610–1695), Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619–1692) are often named as the luminaries of the Ming-Qing transition. Mou refers to them by their literary names, Gu Tinglin 顧亭林, Huang Lizhou 黄梨洲, and Wang Chuanshan 王船山.

13 *Mingyi daifang lu* 明夷待訪錄. Literally, "A Record of Awaiting an Enlightened Monarch." The title is a clever one. *Mingyi* happens to mean "dawn," "enlightened monarch," and also "the Ming monarch." Here I have used the title given to the work by William Theodore DeBary in his translation, *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince* (New York: Columbia, 1993).

14 The dynasty established by the Manchus in 1644, and also China's last imperial dynasty.

15 The implication is that the island of Taiwan played then the same role that Mou feels it plays now, a redoubt for the champions of true Chinese culture trying to take back the mainland from tyrants.

so, they could not succeed. The Manchus' three hundred years of domination had an enormous influence on China, which can be summed up thus: "The life of the nation was set back and the life-force of Chinese culture was warped." The setback to the life of the nation influenced the life of Chinese culture, making it abnormal. "Life" is originally a concept of bloodlines and biology, but when you are talking about a country, then it is a cultural concept. Talk about a "nation" (*minzu* 民族) cannot be of an empty, deracinated nation. Without a country and a culture, there can be no nation. So for example, the reason Hong Xiuquan was defeated is that his nationalism was the nationalism of a deracinated nation.¹⁶ Given that he opposed the Qing in the name of the nation, he should not have vilified Confucius too. Hong razed temples to Confucius and burned the Four Books and Five Classics, and in doing so destroyed his own culture. And without one's own culture, what point is there in empty talk about "the nation?" Therefore he was defeated. Therefore the life of the nation and the life of the culture must be joined together in order to be healthy, and without being joined together, neither can be healthy. Because the Manchu take-over of China created such disruption for the Chinese nation, the life of the culture, spiritual life, and the direction of scholarship could not develop along their normal course. Thus it was that Gu, Huang, and Wang's desire to open up a Confucian politics based on Confucian ideals could not be put into practice and, on the contrary, was bottled up, with massive effects. From this impossibility of further developing a proper politics came the next step—the evidentiary research of the Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns.

7 *Evidentiary Scholarship of the Qianlong and Jiaqing Reigns (1736–1820)*

1) *"Qing Learning," not "Han Learning"*

Though it was a second step, the evidentiary scholarship of the Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns¹⁷ still was political in spirit, in terms of its origins. However, amid

16 Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814–1864) launched the Taiping Rebellion, a religiously-inspired prophetic movement which attempted, among other things, to replace the Confucian classical examination curriculum with one based on their own Biblically inspired scriptures. An extremely diverting account is available in Jonathan Spence's *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York: Norton, 1996).

17 Philological scholarship emphasizing linguistic investigation and textual criticism that would have been felt familiar to biblical and classical scholars in the Germany of that day. Its practitioners were "political in spirit" for a couple of reasons. First, they were "confident that [their researches] would lead to greater certainty about what the true words and intentions of China's ancient sages had been and, hence, to a better understanding of how to live" and how to govern the country well (Jonathan Spence: *The Search for Modern China* [New York: W.W. Norton, 1990], 103). Second, the Qing throne exhibited a

the trauma to the life of the nation, this spirit became warped. The result was not the continuation of that spirit but its distortion. The evidentiary scholarship of the Qianlong-Jiaqing period was “Qing learning” (*Qing xue* 清學), which is to say, scholarship of the Qing dynasty according to the scholarly trends of the Qing dynasty. The scholarship and scholarly trends of the Qing had as their precondition a state of twistedness. The people of the Qing called their evidentiary scholarship “Han learning” (*Hanxue* 漢學), but this was wrong. Han learning is not the same thing as Qing learning. Han learning was the classical scholarship of the Western and Eastern Han, learning for doing in order to construct the great Han Empire. In the main, the spirit of the Han was one of scholarship as an aid to politics and politics as an aid to the economy. Qing learning was different. Its evidentiary scholarship was not “Han learning”; they merely dignified it with that title in order to raise their own status.

2) *Qing Scholarship Was Neither Simple (pu 樸) Nor Practical (shi 實)*
 The Confucian scholarship of the Song and Ming only paid attention to the “inner sageliness” side of things and not to the practice of “outer kingliness,” and a conversation about outer kingliness entails questions about “meritorious achievements” (*shigong* 事功). Therefore Gu, Huang, and Wang’s wish to develop “outer kingliness” was also a desire to open up the area of “meritorious achievements.” This was a normal and healthy development. But with the Qianlong-Jiaqing turn to evidentiary scholarship, the emerging topics of outer kingliness and meritorious achievements were also altered. How so? The evidentiary scholars claimed that the philosophy of inner sageliness was useless, empty talk of the “mind and nature” (*xinxing* 心性) and not good, honest study. Qing learning was “simple learning,” they claimed, “practical learning,” and thus it was that developments in philosophy of outer kingliness and meritorious achievements were perverted into “Qing learning.” ‘Simple learning’ and ‘practical learning’ are fine words, but with the perversion of outer kingliness and meritorious achievements into evidentiary scholarship, there was nothing simple or practical about it. Those are ways of saying something is pragmatic. If the Song-Ming Confucians’ philosophy of inner sageliness really was empty, useless talk, then by the same token, what was Qianlong-Jiaqing evidentiary scholarship good for? Meritorious work still did not emerge out of

paranoid vigilance for books, plays, and poems thought to conceal coded anti-Manchu sentiments between their lines and exacted terrifying punishments from dozens of authors. Much as behind the Iron Curtain of the twentieth century, writers fearful for their necks gravitated to “safe” subjects like philology.

it, and moreover even their basis, the great political aspiration for outer kingliness and the lofty Confucian ideals, sunk away forgotten. The *Shuowen* and *Erya*¹⁸ are the *Shuowen* and *Erya*, they do not produce meritorious achievements. Can those books count as meritorious achievements? This is a case of reading books to death and of dead reading; in this respect they were not the equals of the Song-Ming Confucians. The Song-Ming Confucians like Wang Yangming and Lu Xiangshan had real practical ability; they could do things. It was merely that they did not have an opportunity to do them.

So Qing learning may have been called “simple, practical” learning, but it was neither of those things and on top of that had no use. So just what should we say was the nature of this kind of scholarship? We cannot call it “Han learning,” nor can we call it simple and practical scholarship. No, its exact character was that it was the learning of pet intellectuals (*qingke* 清客).

1) The Learning of Pet Intellectuals (*qingke* 清客)

What is a “pet intellectual?” These were people kept as companions for aristocrats and society folk, and their job requirements were that they be good at composing parallel prose¹⁹ and know a lot of literary anecdotes. Thus calling them “pet intellectuals” is a way of saying that they were idling sycophants,²⁰ and theirs was the learning of idling sycophants. This phrase, “idling sycophants,” is a very inelegant one, for it means bringing shame on oneself. Among Chinese intellectuals there is much of the idling sycophant, even now, even among those who earn foreign Ph.D.’s and stay abroad for however long. For example, those masses of pinko opportunists (*touji de tougongfenzi* 投機的投共分子) who sprung up when Nixon visited Beiping are idling sycophants.²¹ Idling sycophants are shameless, and the intellectuals of the Qing belonged to

18 Reference works for classical philology.

19 A highly mannered literary style which was one of the targets of Mou’s heroes, the Neo-Confucians of the Song, who championed what they called “classical prose” (*guwen* 古文). Note, however, that Mou himself just quoted from a parallel prose composition by Wang Bo several paragraphs above.

20 *bangxian* 幫閑. The phrase literally means just a “helper in leisure” but, as Mou notes, in actual usage it is meant pejoratively. Lu Xun’s (1881–1936) famous essay, “Helper Literature and Toady Literature” (*Bangmang wenxue yu bangxian wenxue* 幫忙文學與幫閑文學), links the phenomenon of the salon toady with political decadence. In Lu Xun 魯迅, *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 (Complete Works of Lu Xun), rev. ed., vol. 7 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 2005), 404–406.

21 Under the ROC, the old capital was renamed Beiping, and long after 1949 that name remained current in Taiwan. Mou’s resentment toward “pinko opportunists” also extends

just that kind of trend. In old Beijing the households of the royalty kept many of them. These people had no money of their own, no food, and no business to go about, so they all come to the houses of royalty, which frequently would set out dozens of tables of food for them and had great libraries of books for them to read. When it was time to go they would even give them a little money to see them home. Is this not the life of a pet intellectual?

At this point we should note: It is hard to be a Chinese intellectual. If one wants to keep one's status as an intellectual without humiliation, without being trampled on, without being slaughtered, one must think hard: "Which road shall I take to preserve myself?"²² The problem of these idling sycophants is one that does not occur in modern Western liberal democratic countries. But in China it does. A couple of years ago when I was in Hong Kong, it just happened to be the time that Nixon visited the mainland, whereupon all kinds of important Ph.D.'s and professors jumped on the opportunity, all shifting with the wind and changing sides. Therefore when Hong Kong's New Asia College²³ asked me to give a talk, I figured that speaking out then was going to offend people. But who else was going to do it? "Fine then!" I thought. "If they want a talk, I'll give them a talk." And so on that occasion I spoke about this problem, in a lecture entitled "The Destiny of Chinese Intellectuals." Since the time of the first Qin emperor,²⁴ if Chinese intellectuals have not been humiliated they have been murdered. And if you think that turning coat and becoming someone's pet sycophant will save you, you are wrong. That cannot save you either.

to intellectuals who chose to stay behind on the mainland in 1949, including prominent philosopher Feng Youlan.

- 22 This attention to the political predicaments of philosophers is one of several ways in which it is profitable to compare Mou Zongsan to another cultural conservative who has attracted attention on the Chinese mainland, Leo Strauss, who wrote about the Western countries before the final victory of Enlightenment values when intellectuals *did* have to think carefully about how to stay on the right side of the authorities. See Strauss's essay "Persecution and the Art of Writing" in the book of the same name (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). Also see Thomas Metzger's comparison in *Cloud Across the Pacific*.
- 23 A college dedicated to the propagation of traditional Chinese learning, developed from an after-hours school founded in 1949 by historian Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895–1990) and others. By the time Mou joined the faculty there in 1968, New Asia had been incorporated into the Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- 24 In 221 B.C.E. he became the first ruler in to unite the Chinese cultural area under one regime. Most famous in the West for building the Great Wall, he is also remembered in China for suppressing books that deviated from the government-sponsored syllabus and burying scholars alive.

You will be subject to disgrace just the same. Is Feng Youlan not the perfect example of disgrace?²⁵ Anyone can see this.

Among Chinese intellectuals, the only ones who could really stand their ground as intellectuals, or at least not become parlor toadies, were the Confucians of the Song and Ming. They were not your ordinary intellectuals. People assume that any intellectual was a Confucian scholar (*rujia* 儒家), but in reality a Confucian scholar is something different from an ordinary intellectual. Only a Confucian scholar can stand firm in his status as an intellectual and refuses to become a pet intellectual. As just one example, Cheng Yichuan²⁶ was a very haughty man. He was not a *jinshi*,²⁷ just a simple scholar, meaning that he was not someone of renown, just a learned man, yet he was the teacher to the emperor. However, having become teacher to the emperor, he used his position as teacher to put limits on him. That is no parlor toady. Sometimes people criticize the Song and Ming Confucians as useless, saying, "They kept their hands up their sleeves²⁸ and did nothing except talk about the nature of mind, and if disaster fell they used their own death to send a message to the ruler."²⁹ But at least they could die to send a message to the ruler! Can today's pinko intellectuals do that? Today they bend this way, tomorrow they will bend that way; can they "die to send a message to the ruler?" So a Confucian scholar is a Confucian scholar, and an intellectual is an intellectual. They are two different things. Thus when the incipient interest in the philosophy of outer kingliness turned into the evidentiary scholarship of the Qianlong and Jiaqing

25 Feng freely quit his job in the United States and returned to Beijing to live under the new Communist government, and he later recanted much of his earlier work and reconfigured his ideas along Marxist lines. Mou despised Feng for both his scholarship and his politics and attacks him at length in "Objective Understanding and the Remaking of Chinese Culture," included in this volume.

26 程伊川 (Yi 頤) (1033–1107). One of two brothers central to the Neo-Confucian movement of the Northern Song dynasty. In the main Mou does not think highly of his teachings, but we see here that he approves of his character.

27 *jinshi* 進士. A "presented scholar," the highest academic degree granted under the imperial exam system.

28 In their pockets, as it were.

29 This widely repeated sentiment comes from Yan Yuan 顏元 (1635–1704), founder of one of the Qing movements to put Confucian learning to more practical use, who wrote in his "Essay on Preserving Learning" (*Cun xue bian* 存學編, "Confucians (*ru*) since the Song and Yuan have made themselves like women. It is shameful. With nothing to do they stick their hands up their sleeves, and then when crisis strikes they die as a message to the ruler. That is their idea of exemplary conduct." (宋、元來儒者卻習成婦女態，甚可羞。無事袖手談心性，臨危一死報君王，即為上品矣。) See *Xizhai si cun bian* 習齋四存編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2000), 90.

reigns, that was clearly the scholarship of the pet intellectual. Later, in peaceful times, the epigonic literary poseurs (*fuyong fengya* 附庸風雅) of the day would recite ancient bone oracle script on the one hand, intellectual in the extreme and utterly dry, but on the other hand they were also extremely emotional. Writing parallel prose and studying bone oracle script are two exactly opposite kinds of scholarship. That is how it was back then. If you could satisfy both kinds conditions at the same time, you could be one of these salon companions. If I kept you as a salon companion, it would be to play chess with me, not so that you could declaim important truths. What would I want that for? The great truths would be over here with me. I would already know them, because I was the one with the power! No, your role would just be to play chess with me, not hold forth on great truths. That is what a pet intellectual does.

8 *The Late Qing and Early Republic*

1) No Ideas Means No Life

The reason the intellectual trends of the Qing were like this was not that Chinese people wanted it this way. It is because, with the taking over of China by the Manchus, the life of the nation was set back and the life of the cultural was twisted, causing things to fall into such a state. So after the taking over of China by the Manchus and the evidentiary scholarship of the Qianlong and Jiaqing years, Chinese intellectuals could no longer think and had no ideas. I often say, “No ideas means no life.” Intellectuals of the late Qing and early Republic were indeed clever in a wily sort of way (*gui congming* 鬼聰明)—full of tricks, clever, quick, and cunning—but they had no ideas. So in the face of matters of national importance, when problems arose, they had no way of responding. Coming out of the scholarly trends of the Qing, intellectuals of the late Qing and early Republic had no ideas and hence no life. Saying they had no ideas means that they did not know how to think; when they encountered a stimulus, they responded directly. A stimulus, a response. Out of this emerged the Communist Party. That was the only way the Communist Party could conquer the mainland. So what enabled the Party and Marxism to conquer the mainland? It was Chinese people’s own depravity (*xiepi* 邪僻). They became possessed and fell into depravity. Once that happened, life could no longer sustain it. Only then, with no ideas and no wisdom, could the Communist Party enter.

2) Great Deviation and Great Decadence (*duoluo* 墮落)

The foregoing has been the story of our philosophy of inner sageliness, this preliminary but imperfect and not completely healthy synthesis, which then gave rise to a secondary opening and from an interest in outer kingliness

veered off into the Qianlong-Jiaqing evidentiary scholarship and then still later turned into the conquest of the mainland by Marxism and the Communist Party. Is that not a “great deviation?” It truly is. And yet even this developed out of the life of the Chinese nation. We are all Chinese, descendents of the Yellow Emperor. This is not some other nation we are talking about. No matter what, we are all family. We may call them the black sheep of the family, but even the black sheep are descendents of the Yellow Emperor! So this is a great deviation and a great decadence. Looking at this decadence from the perspective of the whole of Chinese culture, if we talk about it in terms of “opening” and “synthesis,” then this is also a “great opening.” This great opening is a decadent opening. When we are finally able to overcome this great deviation, this great decadence and great ignorance,³⁰ and bring about a “synthesis,” only then will it be a higher synthesis. We will not say that it will be the highest synthesis. In comparison with another phase of history, then it would be alright to call it the highest synthesis. But if we know that the world will never have a highest synthesis, then it is enough just to say that it will be “higher.” Speaking for the moment from our current phase of history, the preliminary synthesis was not complete (*yuanman* 圓滿) enough. When we get to a higher synthesis, when it is complete, then in the great flow of history and time, that stage will be the highest synthesis. Thus both expressions are alright. Generally speaking it will be the higher synthesis.

9 *The Present Mission*

This higher “synthesis” is what we call the third epoch of Confucianism. For the most part it is a “great synthesis.” From the turn that began in the Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns up to the appearance of the evil teaching of Communism has been a “great opening,” and vanquishing the evil of Communism will be a “great synthesis.” This is the present mission in the development process of Confucian scholarship, and it is the mission taken up by this era. This is the mission of the third epoch. From the pre-Qin Confucians to the Han was the first epoch. Song-Ming Confucianism was the second. Where does this third epoch fall? On your shoulders. On my shoulders. This is the mission of our age. On this, you young people absolutely must resolve yourselves. You must understand this point. Having understood it, only then will you have faith (*xinnian* 信念). Only then can you establish it as your great ambition. And only by understanding this can we further solidify our faith. No muddling along uncertainly.

30 *wuming* 無明. Buddhist term (Skt. *avidyā*) for the “unknowing” which is the cause of non-enlightenment and suffering.

When I get to this point, I often feel terrible regret, for this too has been a failure of education in Taiwan these last twenty-some years. Think of your classmates who graduate and go to America to get a degree and never come back. And then as soon as Nixon visits Beijing they waver and throw in their lot with the Communists. The ones in America even turn leftist. It is not that by going leftist they become Communists, but they do turn into cheerleaders for the Communists. Why does this happen? It is because people are practical. Their survival instincts make them opportunistically seek gain and avoid harm. Even before the enemy arrives their legs go rubbery. This comes from not having any faith. If you can understand this, then you will clearly see this evil can certainly be overcome and that in fact the day is not far off now. This is the third epoch in the development of Confucianism.

We talked most about all these truths twenty years ago, in the decade from 1949 to 1959, in the era of the *Democratic Review*.³¹ But I have not discussed it much in the last twenty years. Even so, against the background of this outline, I have been putting it together anew, understanding the scholarship of each period from the inside. Once we have understood the scholarship of each period from the inside, we need to expend effort on piecing its spirit back together. When we discuss all those truths that we discussed above, since they are questions of historical culture their spirit is being developed further (*fayang* 發揚). But of course they cannot develop forever, so we must piece together their spirit again. Therefore for the last twenty years I have been focusing on “understanding them from the inside” (*neizai liaojie* 內在瞭解). First I clarified the Wei-Jin phase and then the Song-Ming phase,³² and in the last few years I have studied the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Sui and Tang. After explaining that phase it will be possible to continue on talking about the rest of the history of philosophy. I have also put quite a bit of work into this, and last year I finished writing it up as a two-volume work which will probably be published next year (1977).³³

31 Xu Fuguan's Hong Kong-based New Confucian magazine of political theory, *Minzhu pinglun* 民主評論.

32 Mou published his researches on the Wei-Jin as *Talent and Xuan Principle* (1963) and those on the Song-Ming as the three-volume *Metaphysical Realities of Mind and Human Nature* (1968–69). This was later followed in 1979 by *From Lu Xiangshan to Liu Jishan*.

33 This was Mou's *Buddha Nature and Prajñā*.

Part II: Buddhist Philosophy of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang from the Standpoint of the History of Philosophy

So I will not be talking about the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang from the standpoint of a specialist in Buddhism. What do I mean by a specialist in Buddhism? An example is the Japanese kind of buddhological research.³⁴ They give special regard to comparing various editions of a text, to historical evidentiary research and philology, and they discuss the original Indian Buddhism and Nikāya Buddhism.³⁵ Being a philological, text-critical kind of research, it requires a knowledge of languages, many languages. First you have to know Sanskrit, and also Pali and Tibetan, and of course written Chinese. But these days they are not all that interested in Chinese; what they mainly require is Sanskrit, Pali, and Tibetan. The reason is that they suspect that back when China absorbed Buddhism there were problems with the translations, and so the reason that they study Sanskrit now is precisely to match the texts up and discover any divergences or inappropriate or mistaken translations. Apart from these languages, one must also read others such as German and English. There is a limit to the energies of a single person; Japanese people must have a special genius for reading foreign languages. But no matter how great one's genius, in my opinion, to read a language with mastery is very, very hard. After all this time I still have not mastered English. And Chinese, I must be pretty good at that! I am Chinese, I read it every day since I was a boy, and nevertheless I cannot venture to say just how well I have mastered it. So when someone claims, "I know *x* number of languages," it is a sham; the person is just bragging. That is not how scholarship is done. Yes, of course it is a good thing to know more languages, but not after the fashion of the Japanese. By the time you have learned all those languages, you will be nearly dead! How will you learn about Buddhism then? Therefore I do not particularly trust these experts. It is not that I deny their worth; of course they have their value. If they can get good at languages and point out the inappropriate or mistaken passages in the translations of Kumārajīva and Xuanzang³⁶ or put a new face

34 That is, the largely philological, text-critical and historical-critical style of research practiced under the label of *bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 仏教学研究.

35 The various sectarian forms of Indian Buddhism which grew up starting in Aśoka times, in the third century B.C.E. Though only one of these sects survives, the Theravāda, they remain of interest in order to reconstruct the history of later forms of Buddhism.

36 Kumārajīva (344–413) created the scriptural translations which are most widely used among Chinese Buddhists, and Xuanzang 玄奘 (d. 664) was probably the most technically

on Buddhism by means of their translations, that is wonderful! Never mind whether this new Buddhism would have any value or not—perhaps it would have none whatsoever, but let us set that aside for the moment. The point is that I believe it would be very difficult to make any new discoveries. We cannot say that the translations are absolutely free of errors, nor that they are entirely the same as the original texts. But take Xuanzang's Sanskrit as an example. Even supposing we were to send you to Japan for a few years to study Sanskrit, could you surpass Xuanzang? He stayed in India for seventeen years. Could you beat that kind of Sanskrit with two or three years of studying in Japan? Could you surpass Kumārajīva? Hardly!

Nor am I teaching about Buddhism from the standpoint of a Buddhist disciple or monk. That is why I say that I am taking the standpoint of the history of Chinese philosophy to understand this period, which we have a responsibility and a duty to do, and to explain it.

Someone might ask: "Since you are neither a specialist nor a Buddhist, how can you discuss Buddhism? And supposing you could, would what you said have any existential reality (*cunzai de zhenshixing* 存在的真實性)? Since you are not a monk, how can you really understand the truths spoken by the Buddha?" My answer is simple. To understand a thing, I do not have to believe it, nor does believing a thing does necessarily mean truly understanding it. And how can what I say have existential reality? Standing amid the pulse³⁷ of this great life which is the Chinese nation, I am speaking "existentially." The absorption of Buddhism in the Northern and Southern Dynasties is precisely its absorption by the people of the Chinese nation, and at that time the people of the Chinese nation did so with their life. And today I am standing amid the great pulse of the life of the Chinese nation, and this great pulse is joined with my own life. My own life and this great pulse can respond to each other (*xiang huying* 相呼應), and this response is an "existential response." Amid this existential response, I can feel why our life must be this way—why it must have this "opening." Amid this existential response, I have a kind of existential feeling, and in this there is truth. I can feel that the life of our nation must have "opening," and I can feel how it can have "synthesis." This opening and this synthesis are felt from the standpoint of the history of philosophy, of the existential response of the life of the individual and the life of the nation. Such a feeling must certainly have existential reality. At the very least I can feel why

punctilious Buddhist translator, as well as making himself famous in Chinese folklore for his exploits as a traveler.

37 *da dongmai* 大動脈. Technically, the aorta.

I must deviate. For example, suppose I want to see a movie today; that is me having a desire to see a movie. Or if, to put it more decadently, supposing you say that you feel a desire and you need to have this thing, something that you know perfectly well is not right. Yet this “need” in the utterance “I need . . .” is an earnest need (*zhenqie de xuyao* 真切的需要), just like a smoker’s need for a smoke. Isn’t there reality in your having that feeling? I can feel that this is an “opening,” which means that the entirety of my life is not just going to linger here forever, on my wish to see a movie or have a smoke. I know that is not right and I want to look at another aspect on a higher level.

The foregoing is just an example. The absorption of Buddhism is not the same as having a smoke. My life can feel a great many things. When in urgent need, I might feel drawn to Christianity, but when the whole life of China is in concert with its great pulse, then even though I may feel a momentary need for Christianity and find it appealing, still this will be just an “opening.” And since I know this is an “opening,” my talking about this “opening” will have truth (*zhenshixing* 真實性). I will not be stopping here at this opening; I can still pull it back in for a “synthesis,” and then my life can go up a level.

But never mind the truth of “opening” and “synthesis,” I am speaking from the standpoint of the history of philosophy. I am not teaching as an “outsider”; that is no good, and neither is teaching as a buddhological specialist any good. Such experts may have read a lot of sutras, but they still cannot teach about this phase in the history of philosophy. They may have familiarized themselves very well with a particular sutra or treatise or studied it in great philological detail, but they will not necessarily have an integrated understanding of the whole development linking Kumārajīva all the way to the appearance of Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan, and that unbroken development must be understood. So although I am not a Buddhist disciple or specialist, I can still occupy the standpoint of the history of Chinese philosophy and the great pulse of the life of the nation and respond with it. Therefore I have existential feeling, and in this feeling there is existential truth. Having this truth, I do not need to be a Buddhist. It is not as though only Buddhists can truly understand Buddhism. That is not how it is.

Part III: Several Levels on Which to Discuss the Buddhism of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang

Usually when a discussion of the history of philosophy gets to this period, there are several levels on which to discuss it. First we can cover it on a general level

as a first step. For example, we will first talk a little bit about the six schools and seven lineages.³⁸ The six schools and seven lineages are fairly simple, but if you want to get into more detail, that is very laborious because it gets so philological. For this, let me recommend Tang Yongtong's *History of Buddhism of the Han, Wei, Western and Eastern Jin, and the Northern and Southern Dynasties*,³⁹ which is a must-read. One must read it in order to understand the early phase of the Chinese reception of Buddhism. It does very detailed textual criticism but it cannot actually teach Buddhist doctrine. It does excellent philological work on the six schools and seven lineages and is best at discussing Daosheng,⁴⁰ but Daosheng will not be included in this course. Moreover, Sengzhao was also a disciple of Kumārajīva's, "the first in understanding emptiness."⁴¹ Daosheng was also a student of Kumārajīva, but not long after he arrived in Chang'an, where Kumārajīva was, he turned around and went back south. Daosheng's and Kumārajīva's spirits were not too consonant. What Kumārajīva taught was the school of emptiness (*kongzong* 空宗), a kind of *prajñā* learning. Daosheng felt the doctrine of emptiness was not quite enough so he felt an affinity with the doctrine of the nirvana buddha nature (*niepan foxing* 涅槃佛性) and, having profound realization about the doctrine of buddha nature, was the first to understand it. He was the first to declare that "all sentient beings have buddha nature, all sentient beings can become buddhas, and even *icchantikas*⁴² have buddha nature." At that time, there was no sutra which could be used as evidence for that statement, for the six-fascicle version of the Nirvana Sutra, the one available in China at that time, did not include such a statement. However,

38 *liu jia qi zong* 六家七宗. The six schools were early interpretations of *prajñā-pāramitā* doctrine in fourth-century China. The one associated with Dao'an 道安 (312–385) divided into two, yielding a total of seven "lineages."

39 *Han Wei liang Jin nanbeichao fojiaoshi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (Changsha: Shangwu, 1938). Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 (1893–1964) was a professor of philosophy at Peking University for most of Mou's time in that department. Mou quotes from his book extensively in *Buddha Nature and Prajñā*.

40 竺道生 (d. 434). Best known for interpreting the Nirvana Sutra to mean that all sentient beings have buddha nature without exception.

41 *jie kong diyi* 解空第一. Traditionally this epithet belongs to the Buddha's disciple Subhūti (e.g. T125.2.795c22–25). However, according to a later commentator, Kumārajīva was so impressed with Sengzhao's (384–414) explanation of emptiness in his commentary to the Vimalakīrti Sutra that, making a play on the words of that text, "he sighed, 'Among the people of Qin [China], the first in understanding emptiness is Sengzhao'" (T1780.38.892a19–20; cf. T1775.38.349c14–15).

42 A being who, in some Indian versions of Buddhist scholasticism, was thought to lack the potential for enlightenment.

Daosheng clung to his position and thereby created a public uproar in Buddhist circles. Later, after the forty-fascicle version of the sutra was translated and reached the south of China, it did indeed contain that statement: that “all sentient beings have buddha nature, all sentient beings can become buddhas, and even *icchantikas* have buddha nature.” Thus Daosheng came to be hailed by his contemporaries as someone who “saw the light on his own” (*gu ming xian fa* 孤明先發). Daosheng’s presentation of the buddhadharma emphasized the idea of buddha nature, which was missing from Kumārajīva’s school of emptiness. At that point Kumārajīva had not yet read the Nirvana Sutra, but being a wise person he agreed that Daosheng’s idea made sense in principle, whether or not he happened to have seen it in the sutras.

In the first phase of the history of Buddhism, these are all important figures. After the six schools and seven lineages comes Daosheng, and Tang Yongtong presents the evidence about him best, and in great detail. Covering Sengzhao is easier because there are texts of his that have survived, namely *Sengzhao’s Treatises*,⁴³ which use parallel prose to discuss the profound principles of the Buddhists. It is beautifully written and is worth a look. Sengzhao was called “first in understanding of emptiness” and belongs to the school of emptiness, so we will not cover him in this course either. All of this is common knowledge about the first phase of Buddhist history, and you can read it for yourselves in Tang Yongtong’s book. In covering this period, any ordinary history of philosophy will cover all of the above, and that is sufficient. If one wishes to go a little further, there is also basic Buddhist doctrine:

1. The four noble truths (*si di* 四諦): suffering, arising, extinguishing, and the way.
2. The twelve conditions (*shi'er yuan* 十二緣): ignorance, mental formations, consciousness, name and form, the six sense bases, contact, sensation, craving, appropriation, becoming, birth, and old age and death.
3. The three seals of the dharma (*san fayin* 三法印): All formations are impermanent; all dharmas are without self; nirvana is quiescence.

These are just some basic doctrines. If these do not feel like enough, we could go on to talk about the school of emptiness (*kongzong* 空宗). A foundational idea of Buddhism is that of “dependent origination and emptiness of self-nature” (*luanqi xingkong* 緣起性空), which is a way of saying that something is arisen from the twelve conditions. The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna took this idea and universalized it and carried it through to its logical conclusions, saying

43 *Zhao lun* 肇論 (T1858).

that all dharmas whatsoever arise from causes and conditions and therefore have no self-nature and hence are called “empty of self-nature.”

The very name “school of emptiness” implies that there is a “school of existence” (*youzong* 有宗).⁴⁴ The school of existence is that of the “the characteristics of dharmas” or “consciousness-only” (*weishi faxiang* 唯識法相). The school of emptiness teaches about the nature of dharmas, which is to say emptiness, but does not go so far as to teach about the characteristics of dharmas. Therefore the school of existence emerged and grouped the characteristics of dharmas under the heading of “consciousness-only” and then went on to explain that. This was the consciousness-only or Yogācāra school (*weishi zong* 唯識宗).⁴⁵

We can talk a little bit about consciousness-only here. In Yogācāra there are eight consciousnesses. There are the first five consciousnesses, the sixth or cognitive consciousness (*yishi* 意識), the seventh consciousness or *manas*, and the eighth of *ālaya* consciousness. The first five consciousnesses are the ones that emerge here and now in the senses of hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch. Calling them the “first” (*qian* 前) five consciousnesses refers to the fact that they are right here and now (*dangqian* 當前). These can be traced back to the sixth consciousness or cognitive consciousness.⁴⁶ Tracing back further, next comes the seventh consciousness, the subconscious or preconsciousness, what is called the *manas*, and finally the eighth or *ālaya* consciousness. . . .⁴⁷

The school of emptiness and the school of existence are originally Indian, but in absorbing Buddhism, China did not simply absorb what came from India. Instead, while it absorbed Indian Buddhism, China also continued developing it, and this where the Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan schools come from. Buddhism’s absorption could not simply cease with the schools of emptiness and being, and so Tiantai did not view either of them as the last and final word, but only as a beginning. Looking at things that way is the only to understand that Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan represent a further Chinese development in

44 In *Buddha Nature and Prajñā* Mou specifically avoids this pair of terms. However, they were and are common shorthands in discussing Buddhism in Chinese, even if they are misleading, and that is probably why Mou resorts to them in this lecture.

45 In what follows I will use ‘Yogācāra’ interchangeably with ‘consciousness-only’ when that is used as the name of the school.

46 Here Mou gives the English word ‘consciousness’ in parentheses as a translation for the whole compound *yishi*, since it is this which, phenomenologically, corresponds to ordinary waking consciousness.

47 I have omitted two extraneous sentences of Mou’s original text here.

Buddhism. Development is what the history of philosophy is. If one could not make clear the entire process of a particular development, then one would not be doing proper history of philosophy. It is not enough simply to teach about a few commonly agreed upon doctrines (*tongyi* 通義). Those do not count as history of philosophy. A real explanation of development requires an explanation of its inner workings,⁴⁸ the things which are interrelated but not identical. It is a hard thing to do history of philosophy at this level, which is why I have been hard at work on this for the last seven or eight years.

But even though I spent seven or eight years on this project, my first education about Buddhism came years ago back on the mainland when I was with Xiong Shili. At that time it was all just half-understood gossip to me, and following that I neither wrote essays on the subject nor even read any books. When teaching the history of philosophy, all I could do was to summarize the six schools and seven lineages, explain basic Buddhist doctrines, talk about the emptiness school's doctrine of dependent origination and emptiness of self-nature, and say a little about Yogācāra. The existing literature out there was no help in understanding either. The books out there on Huayan and Tiantai are largely unreliable and could not help me understand them. No one could tell me about those inner workings and lines of thought, and so I went on unable to understand.

The Japanese have also put a lot of effort into this, and yet they cannot give more than a preliminary explanation either. The Japanese are not good enough at penetrating into doctrine, but they know a lot about philology and bibliography, so that they would not mix texts up and "call a deer a horse." Concerning the Tiantai tradition, for example, Chinese people are not even clear on what texts are representative Tiantai works and so in this respect Chinese are still far behind the Japanese and do not measure up. When Feng Youlan wrote about Tiantai,⁴⁹ he used the wrong texts. Feng used the *Mahāyāna Dharma Gate of Cessation and Contemplation* as his example of a Tiantai text.⁵⁰ That text falsely claims Huisi as its author but is not really Huisi's

48 Literally its "joints" (*guanjie* 關節), though the word also has connotations of hiddenness.

49 In his *History of Chinese Philosophy* (*Zhongguo zhexueshi* 中國哲學史), which first began to be published in 1931. Mou disparages Feng frequently. See especially "Objective Understanding and Chinese Culture," where he is especially harsh to Feng.

50 *Dasheng zhiguan famen* 大乘止觀法門 (T1924). The text is traditionally attributed to Nanyue Huisi 南岳慧思 (515–577), who was teacher to Tiantai Zhiyi, the founding authority of the Tiantai lineage. This paragraph becomes hard to follow, but the

work. The doctrine it teaches is that of the *Awakening of Faith*,⁵¹ which does not match with that of the Tiantai school. The Huayan school bases itself on the *Awakening of Faith* and belongs to the larger Yogācāra tradition, but the Tiantai school does not. Its founding patriarch, Master Zhiyi, did write a book entitled *Mahā Cessation and Contemplation*,⁵² and *mahā* does mean “great,” so you could indeed translate the title as *Great Cessation and Contemplation* and interpret it as meaning “complete and sudden cessation and contemplation,” as opposed to “lesser cessation contemplation.”⁵³ “*Great Cessation and Contemplation*” sounds similar to “*Mahāyāna Dharma Gate of Cessation and Contemplation*,” and most people do not understand the differences in their internal systems. They just see that Huisi was Master Zhiyi’s teacher and think that the *Mahāyāna Dharma Gate of Cessation and Contemplation* was written by Huisi and so they treat it as a Tiantai book. But this is completely wrong and prevents the Tiantai spirit from being expressed. Huisi was Huisi of Nanyue. Even though he was Master Zhiyi’s teacher, and even if that book were authored by Huisi, it still ought to be called the Nanyue teaching and not the Tiantai teaching. Master Zhiyi settled on Tiantai Mountain, and so his is called the Tiantai teaching. The doctrines of the two are very different. Whereas the first takes its lead from the *Awakening of Faith*, Master Zhiyi of the Tiantai school was not part of the Yogācāra system and never even mentioned the *Awakening of Faith*. Thus Feng Youlan’s chapter on Tiantai in his *History of Chinese Philosophy* goes into the trash can. There are so many Tiantai texts, all right there in the Buddhist canon, but nobody reads them, nor is anyone able to read them.

thrust is to criticize Feng Youlan for treating his sources naively and uncritically and not understanding them well enough to tell like from unlike. The picture of Feng that emerges is of a sloppy scholar who enjoys a high reputation nevertheless because his readership is undiscerning. In “Objective Understanding and the Remaking of Chinese Culture” Mou summarizes his verdict this way: “The existence [Feng’s] book, even without its being universally recognized by East and West as a representative work [on Chinese philosophy], shows that Chinese people of this era are so lame that they are a disgrace to our ancestors and a disgrace to the whole world. It is a humiliation for all the people of China.”

51 *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論 (T1666 and T1667).

52 *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (T1911).

53 *yuandun zhiguan* 圓頓止觀 and *xiao zhiguan* 小止觀. These are the names of two types of Tiantai meditation practice. *Xiao zhiguan* is also the common name of a text based on a lecture by Zhiyi which teaches that practice, of which the full title is “Essentials of the Method of Practicing Cessation and Contemplation Seated Meditation” (修習止觀坐禪法) (T1915). *Yuandun zhiguan* is the kind of meditation taught in the *Mohe zhiguan*.

Even on the Japanese side nobody can use the *Mahāyāna Dharma Gate of Cessation and Contemplation* to explain Tiantai. And we are no good either. Even now, the popular book on the streets about Tiantai is still the *Mahāyāna Dharma Gate of Cessation and Contemplation*. This is just wrong and shows how lame Chinese intellectuals are. So when I say there were no books out there for me to read, I am not making that up or talking recklessly. They themselves had not even sorted the texts out, so how could they help me or make me understand?

From this period, Tiantai is the hardest to understand. People love to talk about Huayan and Chan, but at the same time few people get what they are about. The main point for us right now is how they are all interconnected and yet different from each other. Why is a given thing labeled Huayan or Tiantai? Why is Tiantai different from Huayan? Why is it different from the school of emptiness and the school of existence? Where do their differences lie? We will clarify these questions and arrive at a clear and definite explanation. In America Chan Buddhism is very popular right now, but you cannot discuss Chan on its own. Talking about Chan by itself is intellectualized, salon Chan.⁵⁴ Even though Chan is called a “separate transmission outside the teachings” (*jiaowai biechuan* 教外別傳), it is a “separate transmission outside the teachings *within* the teachings.” What do I mean by that? Before the Chan tradition, the absorption of Buddhist doctrine had already reached its culmination in Tiantai and Huayan and could go no further. And since it could go no further, following the conclusion of its natural process of development, it was inevitable that a Chan tradition should appear and simplify it and put it into practical application. This is the natural tendency. But the Chan tradition still presupposed that one knew those earlier teachings, and so it is a “separate transmission outside the teachings *within* the teachings.” “Separate transmission outside the teachings” cannot be taken out of context.⁵⁵ If it is taken out of context, then is that not the same thing as intellectualized salon Chan and complete nonsense Chan? That is why we cannot talk about Chan by itself.

All of the foregoing have been things that were developed out of the schools of emptiness and being that China inherited from India, the absorption of which was a process taking six or seven hundred years. And what, in that process, was Hīnayāna? And Mahāyāna? What criterion made the Mahāyāna the “greater”

54 *mingshi Chan*, *wenren Chan* 名士禪、文人禪. A much more literal rendering would be “scholarly Chan, *literati* Chan,” but it does not succeed at communicating the impression of café pseudo-intellectuals and bad amateur philosophy.

55 *longtong* 籠統. More literally, “wantonly, in a slapdash way.”

vehicle and the Hīnayāna the “lesser” vehicle? There are so many of these systems—Mahāyāna, Hīnayāna, the many systems within the Mahāyāna—but both the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna were taught by the Buddha. Why would the Buddha sometimes teach something greater and sometimes something lesser? Superficially that seems to be a conflict, but it was all taught by the Buddha. How could he be wrong? After all, whatever the Buddha said must be well founded; it cannot be wrong. China did not merely absorb the Buddhist schools of emptiness and being, it absorbed everything. And after absorbing it, it had to give order to all the various systems. This was called “critical examination of the teachings.”⁵⁶ Critically examining the teachings is an important kind of inquiry. If you cannot grasp each system’s character, its essence, then you cannot do critical examination of the teachings. Critically examining the teachings requires a comprehensive understanding of each system so that you can differentiate how this sutra, this system, is dissimilar to that one. So examining the teachings belongs to the “digestion” level of learning. After China finished absorbing Buddhism, it continued and developed it further, on the “digestion” level, and produced Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan.

What we will be discussing here, then, is what happened after the original Indian religion, the basic level, had been transmitted to China and was carried on to the “digestive” level and developed further, explaining the interconnections and the different inner workings of each system. That is to say, only an explanation of the critical examination of the teachings will count as a satisfactory history of philosophy for this period. Note that in this word, *panjiao*, the *pan* means “to analyze” rather than “to criticize,” because after all, these teachings were spoken by the Buddha. How could we criticize them? So what it means is to *classify* the teachings, to sort them out, each into an appropriate place, and therefore classifying the teachings calls for broad learning and also for objectivity. Without broad learning, how can you arrive at a comprehensive

56 *panjiao* 判教. A genre of Buddhist scholasticism that was one of the most important innovations of the Chinese tradition, and one that Mou appropriated into his own philosophical work. In the Tiantai lineage in particular, it refers to a technique of reading apparently contradictory Buddhist teachings as a dialectical progression of closer and closer approximations to a “perfect teaching” rather than as mutually incompatible contenders.

Cheng Chung-yi (Zheng Zongyi 鄭宗義) gives a wonderful treatment of Mou’s appropriation of *panjiao* concepts in “Paihuai zai juehui yu duoyuan zhi jian: lun Mou Zongsan xian-sheng de ‘panjiao’ 徘徊在絕對與多元之間—論牟宗三先生的「判教」” (Hesitating Between Absolute and Plural: On Mou Zongsan’s *Panjiao*), in Feng Tianyu 馮天瑜, ed., *Renwen luncong 2006 juan* 人文論叢 2006 年卷 (Essays in the Humanities: 2006) (Wuhan: Wuhan Daxue, 2007), 239–257.

understanding of the whole system? And without objectivity, if everyone were just to classify in his own way, how could that work?⁵⁷ So it calls for extremely lofty wisdom and is not an easy thing. The lectures in this course will cover this process of development.

57 Mou's idea of "objectivity" calls for a publically available standard that can be applied by anyone, but not a refusal of normative evaluation. See Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, 209–212.

The Place of the Tiantai Tradition in Chinese Buddhism¹

My topic for today, “the place of the Tiantai tradition in Chinese Buddhism,” was given me by Mr. Lan Jifu.² To begin with, I would like everyone to understand that it would be hard to convey the full doctrine (教義 *jiaoyi*) of the Tiantai tradition in such a short time. All I can do is to give a summary. But the only way for me to undertake this is to suppose that everyone here is already fully acquainted with the development of Sui and Tang Buddhism and the doctrine of the Tiantai tradition itself.

It is a very difficult thing to understand the long-term development of Chinese Buddhism throughout the five or six centuries extending from the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589) to the Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907). Truly thorough study of it is an endless process, but even so, there is still a place for a narrative overview. [However,] this overview can only amount to a heuristic convenience, not a full account.

And even if one has a rudimentary understanding of Buddhism’s development from the Northern and Southern Dynasties to the Sui and Tang, it is still a difficult thing to then go on and understand the entire Tiantai system because of the multitude of documents involved and the depths of its doctrines, making it even harder to understand than other schools. All I can do today is to give a sketchy narrative overview based on my own understanding.

To begin with, let us get a bird’s eye view of the Buddha’s various dispensations of the dharma. After his enlightenment the Buddha taught for forty-nine years. According to the critical examination of the teachings (*jiaopan* 教判) of the Tiantai figure Zhiyi,³ this consisted of five periods:

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- 1 “Tiantaizong zai Zhongguo fojiao zhong de diwei 天台宗在中國佛教中的地位.” Lecture delivered in May, 1978 at Taipei branch of Foguangshan monastery. Originally published in *Foguang xuebao* 3 (August 1978). Reprinted in *MXQ*, 287–294.
 - 2 藍吉富 (b. 1943), Taiwanese historian of Buddhism.
 - 3 Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顗 (538–597), remembered as the founding figure of the Tiantai tradition. As is common among Chinese Buddhists, Mou refers to Zhiyi as “Wise One” (*zhizhe* 智者), the honorific title he was granted by his patron, Emperor Yang of the Sui.

1. The “Flower Garland” (*Huayan* 華嚴, Skt. *Avataṃsaka*) period, when the Buddha preached the so-called Perfect Sutra.⁴
2. The Āgama (*ahan* 阿含) period, also called the Deer Park⁵ period, when the Buddha taught the Lesser Vehicle (*xiaosheng* 小乘, Skt. *Hīnayāna*), or what is called primitive Buddhism (*yuanshi fojiao* 原始佛教).
3. The universal (*fangdeng* 方等, Skt. *vaipulya*) period, when the Buddha taught the universal Mahāyāna sutras.
4. The Perfection of Wisdom period,⁶ in which was taught the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra.⁷
5. The Lotus and Nirvana period, of the Lotus Sutra and the Nirvana Sutra.⁸

These five periods of preaching encompassed the entirety of the Buddhas’ teachings, and their content underwent a sort of development over the long process of their absorption and digestion in China. The Tiantai perfect teaching (*yuanjiao* 圓教) should be approached from two aspects, corresponding to the two ways in which the Buddha preached the dharma: through discriminating explanation (*fenbie shuo* 分別說) and non-discriminating explanation (*fei fenbie shuo* 非分別說). We have to grasp these ideas before we can understand the Tiantai tradition. So in trying to gain an overview today of the place of the

4 That is, the Flower Garland Sutra (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經, Skt. *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*). Instead of following a modern historical chronology, which would tell us that the Flower Garland Sutra only began to be composed five or more centuries after the historical Buddha, Mou follows the traditional Chinese Buddhist periodization by Tiantai Zhiyi. According to that myth, upon awakening the Buddha first spoke the Flower Garland Sutra over a period of two weeks to advanced bodhisattvas, only to find that even they could not understand its profound doctrines. Thereupon he started all over with his preaching and began by dispensing his most basic teachings.

On Mou’s use of Zhiyi’s periodization scheme, see *FB*, 619–624. In English see Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, 70ff.

5 After the deer park in which the Buddha is said to have delivered his (historically) earliest teachings.

6 *bore* 般若. Here Mou is using this as a contraction of *bore boluomi* 般若波羅蜜 (Skt. *prajñā-pāramitā*), a distinctive genre of Buddhist sutra which dwells on the sixth and highest of a bodhisattva’s “perfections,” the Perfection of Wisdom.

7 There is a large body of Perfection of Wisdom sutras, but as becomes clear below, Mou is speaking specifically of the *Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom in 25,000 Lines* (*Mohe bore boluomi jing* 摩訶般若波羅蜜, Skt. *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra*), commonly called the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra (*Da bore jing* 大般若經, *Dapin bore jing* 大品般若經, or, as Mou also calls it here, simply *Bore jing* 般若經).

8 To give them their complete titles, these are the Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Dharma (*Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經, Skt. *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*) and the Great Parinirvana Sutra (*Daban niepan jing* 大般涅槃經, Skt. *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra*).

Tiantai tradition in Chinese Buddhism, what I want everyone to understand is not the content of the five periods of the Buddha's preaching, which is a bottomless subject which we cannot possibly cover now. And you may already know a little about it in a hazy way. No, our purpose right now is not to convey all that content but to make you all understand that when the Buddha taught, sometimes he was using discriminating explanation and sometimes he was using non-discriminating explanation.

What is meant by "discriminating explanation?" In modern language, it is explaining in an analytic (*fenjie de* 分解的) fashion. And what is meant by "non-discriminating explanation?" It is explaining in a non-analytic fashion. For example, some of the five periods of the Buddha's preaching belong to the Mahāyāna and others to the Hīnayāna. Making this kind of distinction is a discriminating explanation. When the Buddha first began teaching the dharma, he was always speaking in an analytic way. Had he not, he would not have been able to establish a teaching or begin to guide us. In the beginning he turned the wheel of the dharma and taught the Four Noble Truths. Later he also taught the twelvefold chain of conditioned arising and the three seals of the dharma, all of which are discriminating explanations. Also, the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna have distinctions within them. The Hīnayāna differentiates between arhats and *pratyeka-buddhas*,⁹ and the Mahāyāna has its *ālaya*-arising system and *tathāgatagarbha*-arising system¹⁰ and its Madhyamaka system. All of these are discriminating explanations, or analytic explanations.

In the Mahāyāna, the *ālaya*-arising system takes the road of psychological analysis (*xinli fenxi* 心理分析), also called a *a posteriori* analysis (*houtian de fenjie* 後天的分解), the so-called empirical analysis.¹¹ The *tathāgatagarbha*-arising system takes the road of transcendental analysis (*chaoyue de fenjie* 超越的分解). These two systems adhere exactly to the meaning of the word "analysis" (*fenjie* 分解). In the case of Madhyamaka, it is not so simple. The Tiantai tradition calls this system a "common teaching" (*tongjiao* 通教), which is to say, a common teaching (in the determinate sense) shared by the whole Mahāyāna. When the Tiantai tradition refers to it as a common teaching, we

9 A being who attains a level of enlightenment like that of a full buddha but who chooses not to teach. Even in the Indian tradition, *pratyeka-buddhas* are a nebulous category about which not much is said.

10 *laiye yuanqi* 賴耶緣起 and *rulaizang yuanqi* 如來藏緣起. Ontological theories associated with the Yogācāra and Huayan schools. Mou sketches both briefly below. For fuller treatment see Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, 103–123.

11 *jingyan de fenjie* 經驗的分解. "Ālaya-arising" (*laiye yuanqi* 賴耶緣起) and "tathāgatagarbha-arising" (*rulaizang yuanqi* 如來藏緣起) are traditional terms for theories about where conditioned things come from that are associated with the Yogācāra and Huayan schools. See Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, Chapter Four.

could say that it is that which is supposed to be taught from the common teaching, something with a determinate (*xianding* 限定) meaning, which is to say, a particular doctrinal determination.

But from another point of view, Madhyamaka (*zhongguan xue* 中觀學) can be a method of contemplation or viewing (*guanfa* 觀法) without determinate significance, the so-called “middle view” (*zhongguan* 中觀), the formula for contemplating or meditating on (*guanzhao* 觀照) dependent arising and emptiness of own-nature. As is said in Nāgārjuna’s *Middle Verses*, “Dharmas born by dependent arising are precisely emptiness, and fictitious naming (*jiaming* 假名, Skt. *prajñapti*), and the meaning of the Middle Way.”¹² This is the basic spirit of the *Middle Verses*. The *Middle Verses* has twenty-seven chapters, each one attacking one or another form of grasping (*zhi* 執), but in actuality its meaning is very simple, though very important. It only has one point, a way of viewing without determination (*xiandingxing* 限定性). This way of viewing without determination is commonly held, by both the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. It is used throughout the whole Mahāyāna, no matter the particular system. And though the Hīnayāna may contemplate emptiness through the dissection of dharmas (*xifa* 析法), Hīnayāna at the level of the common teaching could view emptiness as embodied in dharmas (*tifa* 體法) without that changing the fact that it is Hīnayāna.¹³ The kind of contemplation which is found throughout Buddhism is precisely the way of viewing without determination. But apart from that, the *Middle Verses* also has its own particular doctrines, and it is in view of these that it belongs to what Tiantai calls the “common teaching,” meaning that it links up with both the Tripitika teaching¹⁴ and also with the separation teaching and perfect teaching. Linking up with the Tripitika teaching is its positive significance, and linking up with

12 因緣所生法，我說即是空，亦為是假名，亦是中道義。A reference to Nāgārjuna’s *Middle Verses* (Skt. *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*; Chs. *zhonglun* 中論, T. 1564; cf. T. 1565–1567). Mou’s wording does not match the standard translation Kumārajīva exactly (cf. T. 1564.30.33b11–12), but the alterations do no violence to the sense of Kumārajīva’s text and have ample precedent among major Chinese Buddhist scholastics, including Zhiyi.

13 Following the Tiantai scholastics, Mou distinguishes between a lower or cruder understanding of emptiness as consisting in a thing’s being made of composite parts, which one then imaginatively “dissects” in meditation, and a higher or more refined understanding of emptiness as “embodied” in things just as they are, even without being analyzed into their components, simply by virtue of their being involved in processes of dependent arising. (On Mou’s understanding of the two approaches to emptiness, see Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhistologist*, 95–96.) Mou’s point here is that where a particular teaching stands in the hierarchy does not depend on the particular kind of contemplation that it teaches.

14 *zangjiao* 藏教. The teachings of the Hīnayāna.

the separation teaching and perfect teachings is its negative significance. So the “common teaching” has determinative significance; but where contemplation is concerned, it is a shared dharma and does not have determinative significance.¹⁵

This Middle View kind of contemplation comes from the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra. The Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra contains an enormous number of fascicles, but the meaning is extremely simple. (You must understand the character of the *Prajñā* Sutra correctly. It occupies a special place among the Buddha’s teachings. If we do not correctly understand its special character and place, we will not be able to understand the development of Buddhism in China or, as a consequence, the Huayan and Tiantai critical examinations of the teachings.) It is like the *Middle Verses*, which for all its twenty-seven chapters is very simple in terms of contemplation, its message being “Dharmas born by dependent arising are precisely emptiness, and provisional naming, and the meaning of the Middle Way,” and “Neither born nor destroyed, neither eternal nor curtailed, neither identical nor non-identical, neither coming nor going away.”¹⁶ This is merely the kind of contemplation known as embodying emptiness. Likewise, the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra is hugely voluminous, but it can be summed up in a sentence: “expressing the true determination of all dharmas without abandoning fictitious names.”¹⁷ The entire sutra does not go beyond repeating this message over and over. This is what is called “true determination perfect wisdom” (*shixiang bore* 實相般若): “The ‘true determination’ is but one, namely no determination; this is suchness.”¹⁸ In the expression “one reality,” “one” is not being used in contradistinction to

15 In this difficult paragraph, Mou has been distinguishing the “common teaching” as that which is truly pan-Buddhist, namely the teachings on the emptiness of all dharmas, and the common teaching as a particular body of philosophical opinions, typified by Nāgārjuna, which are distinct from the Tripitika teaching (to which it is superior) and also from the separation and perfect teachings (to which it is subordinate).

16 Here too, Mou alters Kumārajīva’s wording. Where Kumārajīva translates “不來亦不出” (T. 1564.30.1b14–15), Mou gives the phrase as “不來亦不去.” Again, the semantic difference is minute, and it has precedent in the translations of Prajñāruci (T. 1565) and Prabhākaramitra (T. 1566). The Tiantai writer Jingxi Zhanran 荆溪湛然 (711–782) also renders the passage this way (T. 1912.46.353c6–7).

17 不壞假名，而說諸法實相。The *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* gives the term as “不壞假名而說諸法相” (T. 223.8.277b *passim*).

18 實相一相，所謂無相，即是如相。I am indebted to Hu Yi-hsien for her suggestions about handling this trickiest of Mou’s slogans. Mou uses it frequently in his writings as a paradigmatic *prajñā*-type statement—he even wrote it calligraphically on a scroll which he presented to one of his students as a gift—but it is not a word-for-word quotation from any

“two” or “three” but rather has the sense of “non-reality,” in effect saying “there is no determinate reality.” We can see the special character and spirit of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra here, namely that it is speaking non-discriminatingly, whereas other Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna scriptures speak discriminatingly. The Mahāyāna has two great systems, namely the *ālaya*-arising and *tathāgatagarbha*-arising systems, and these are both discriminating explanations. The common teaching (Nāgārjuna’s common teaching with determinate meaning) is also discriminating. As for the *Middle Verses*’ way of contemplation, which is its shared dharma (*gongfa* 共法), it is a non-discriminating explanation without determinate meaning. And the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra, with its teaching of “expressing the true determination of all dharmas without abandoning fictitious names” and its talk of “the one true determination, which is no determination,” is also a non-discriminating explanation. And so Nāgārjuna, in the *Great Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom*,¹⁹ explains the Buddha’s expounding of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra by saying, “The Buddha explains Perfection of Wisdom by means of “a different dharma gate.”²⁰ So when the Buddha was explaining the Perfection of Wisdom, he was using a different dharma gate, a separate and special kind of dharma gate, namely a non-discriminating explanation. In contrast, in other sutras than the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures, he uses “the dharma gate of ones, the dharma gate of twos, the dharma gate of threes . . . through the dharma gate of innumerables”;²¹ these are all discriminating explanations. On this point, the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna says something profound, namely that any dharma expressed in terms of a “dharma gate of one, two, three . . . or innumerables” is a “disputable dharma.”²² Putting it in

Buddhist canonic or para-canonic text that I have been able to locate. See *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, 82 n. 57.

19 *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論. T. 1509. Mou accepts the traditional Chinese view, shared by few academic buddhologists, that the *Treatise* was written by Nāgārjuna. See *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, 94–95.

20 *yi famen* 異法門. T. 1509.25:62b6–c11. In this case “dharma gate” means a way or approach for explaining the dharma.

21 See *FB*, 12–15. That is, the Buddha gave the cut-and-dried, detailed explanations of how the universe is, the sort of explanation that Mou dubs “discriminating,” using the favorite Buddhist device of the numbered list, or *mātrkā*. Familiar examples are the three seals of the dharma, the four noble truths, the five skandhas, the six sense-bases, the eight parts of the noble path, and the twelve steps in dependent arising.

22 *zhengfa* 淨法. See T. 1509.25.62b. Also see *FB*, 3–15 and Mou’s introduction to his translation of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, in Mou 2003, vol. 17. On deciphering the exact meaning that Mou attaches to “dispute,” see Clower, *Unlikely Buddhologist*, 239–242.

modern terms, whatever is expressed in a discriminating fashion is a disputable dharma. And anything which is a disputable dharma is a provisional explanation (*fangbian shuo* 方便說) or partial dharma (*quanfa* 權法).

Any system built in a discriminating fashion, with discriminating explanations, no matter how perfect or comprehensive it might be—even a system as great as Kant's or Hegel's—is also a “disputable dharma.” It is by nature disputable, even if on the surface or in practice you cannot find the flaw. By its nature, it relies on discriminating explanation, and what is built from discriminating explanation is always a disputable dharma, meaning that it is provisional and partial.

When you use a discriminating style of exposition, there is no logical necessity (*luoji de biranxing* 邏輯的必然性). When we say that Perfection of Wisdom is expressed through a “different dharma gate,” the word “different” means that it is special and distinct from other dharma doors. It is an indisputable (*wuzheng* 無諍) dharma door, separate from the “other sutras” which use the “dharma gates of ones, twos, threes . . . or innumerable.”²³ The teachings of the “other sutras” are disputable dharmas. (An example is the Yogācāra (*weishi* 唯識) school, with its theory of eight consciousnesses, in which each must necessarily have a certain number of mental components (*xinsuo* 心所, Skt. *caitta*). According to Ouyang Jingwu²⁴ of the Inner Studies Institute, none of these can be changed, though now it appears that this need not be the case.)

The Perfection of Wisdom is an indisputable dharma. An indisputable dharma is not dogmatic and not discriminating; and a non-discriminating dharma has nothing in particular to say (*shuo wu suoshuo* 說無所說). So for the Perfection of Wisdom, there is nothing to be said (*wu yi fa keshuo* 無一法可說), and hence “*prajñā* is not *prajñā*, and this is what is meant by *prajñā*.”²⁵

Whatever is expressed in discriminating fashion is erecting something; it has the character of a system. It clearly tells us about certain concepts and conceptual lists (*fashu* 法數). But whatever is expressed in non-discriminating fashion erects nothing, and so it is not a system and does not possess the

23 In this case “other sutras” (*yujing* 餘經) means those Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna scriptures other than the *Perfection of Wisdom* sutras which teach in “discriminating” terms.

24 歐陽竟無, courtesy name of Ouyang Jian 歐陽漸 (1871–1943), founder of China Inner Studies Institute (*Zhina neixue yuan* 支那內學院) and the principal champion for the reconstruction of Yogācāra Buddhist thought in the Republican period.

25 Another of Mou's favorite doctrinal formulae: “*bore fei bore, shi zhi wei bore* 般若非般若, 是之謂般若.” It does not appear in this form in the Taishō canon. Bodhiruci's translation of the *Diamond (Vajracchedika) Sutra* includes the first two clauses, but not the third (T. 236.8.754a and b). Paramārtha's translation includes the complete idea, but worded slightly differently (T. 237.8.763c17–18).

character of a system. Thus there is not a single dharma to be established by Perfection of Wisdom. In explaining the Perfection of Wisdom, the Buddha wanted to use spirit of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras to merge and eliminate (*rongtong taotai* 融通淘汰) discriminating dharma doors of the “other sutras” and return them to their true determination.²⁶ Thus Perfection of Wisdom sutras belongs to the digesting (*xiaohua* 消化) level of sutras. Here digesting does not have to do with food. Whereas the “other sutras” talk about dharmas,²⁷ the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra speaks from a higher level, in non-discriminating fashion. It has nothing to say, establishes not a single dharma, and hence is a sutra belonging to a digestive level.²⁸ Therefore it is “indisputable,” where this “indisputability” is something necessary. If I were to say, “The sun rises in the east,” you could argue with me. But if I were to say, “The sun rises not in the east, nor in the west, nor the north or south, but rises where it rises,” then that would be unarguable, since that sentence has no definite content. It amounts to saying nothing. Hence it is indisputable and tautologically necessary.

What we have said up to now about the Mahāyāna and Hinayāna and their discriminating and non-discriminating exposition still does not explain Tiantai. Next let us look at the *ālaya* and *tathāgatagarbha* systems, and then the Huayan system of *dharmadhātu* arising. The Huayan perfect teaching derives its doctrinal support from the *Awakening of Faith* and belongs to the *tathāgatagarbha* Pure True Mind system. That is, it is a system built using the transcendental analytic approach. The Tiantai tradition classes this *tathāgatagarbha* system as a “separation teaching,”²⁹ and the Huayan tradition calls it the “terminal teaching” (*zhongjiao* 終教). The terminal teaching is not the perfect teaching. Based on the *Awakening of Faith*’s *tathāgatagarbha*-arising system, the Huayan tradition goes a step beyond the sudden teaching (*dunjiao* 頓教) and introduces a perfect teaching. Here, the perfection in question comes from the perfect fullness and inexhaustibility (*yuanman wujin* 圓滿無盡) and perfect integration without barriers (*yuanrong wu'ai* 圓融無礙) of the Buddha’s dharma body (*fashen* 法身, Skt. *dharmakāya*). In the Huayan tradition’s system of “dharma world-arising” (*fajie yuanqi* 法界緣起), the “dharma world” in question is the realm of innumerable adornments

26 *shixiang* 實相. By “true determination” is meant *no* determination at all.

27 Lit. “have dharmas that can be spoken of” (*you fa keshuo* 有法可說).

28 That is, what we might call a meta-level.

29 *biejiao* 別教. In Tiantai commentary, ‘*biejiao*’ is an overdetermined label that carries a range of connotations, as Mou is aware. However, because of Mou’s ontological interests, foremost in his mind is the sense of a deep separation between buddhahood and the realm of conditioned dharmas. See Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, 104 n. 43.

(*zhuangyan* 莊嚴) displayed by the Buddha Vairocana's dharma body, and these are perfect fullness and inexhaustibility and perfect integration without barriers. The perfection of this perfectly full, perfectly integrated dharma body is "perfection as it ought to be" (*dangran de yuan* 當然的圓) and decides nothing.³⁰ The theoretical foundation for Huayan doctrine is the *Awakening of Faith*, is taken from scriptures, and hence the Tiantai tradition calls it "crooked and tortuous" and "clumsy in what it takes as the basis" of buddhahood.³¹ The Huayan kind of "perfection" refers to the Buddha's dharma body. In view of this "clumsiness concerning the basis," it is not the perfect teaching. So its perfection is a separation teaching kind of perfection, for it builds its system using a transcendental analytic approach.

In the case of the Tiantai tradition's perfect teaching, we cannot put it on the same level as the other teachings and look at it from the same point of view. The Tiantai system comes from Nāgārjuna's *prajñā* learning, but it also has a special aspect that goes beyond that. And what is this special aspect, the one which sets Tiantai apart from the *prajñā* tradition's Madhyamaka?³² Although *prajñā* wisdom is an indisputable dharma, strictly speaking we cannot call Madhyamaka a sect (*zongpai* 宗派) of Buddhism, for *prajñā* wisdom is just a shared dharma,³³ a type of contemplation, rather than a true system. For in order to have a system, there must be discriminating explanation. So in that case, is Tiantai a system? Yes, it is. Very well then, we might say, but in that case, does that system use discriminating explanation or not? If it does use discriminating explanation, then surely it must be a disputable dharma, in which case it cannot be a perfect teaching. And if it does not use discriminating explanation, then surely it cannot be a system.

It is here that we can see that the difference between Madhyamaka and the Tiantai tradition is that Tiantai uses non-discriminating explanation to create a system. That makes it a system that does not have the determination of a system (*wu xitong xiang de xitong* 無系統相的系統). This is a paradox. A system

30 See Clower, *Unlikely Buddhologist*, 232–235.

31 *qujing yuhui suoyin chu zhao* 曲徑迂迴所因處拙 (T. 1716.33.737a). Cf. *FB*, 560. See Clower, *Unlikely Buddhologist*, 104 n. 43, 128 n. 117.

32 I have rendered Mou's '*kongzong*' 空宗 here as "Madhyamaka." The two words are not perfect equivalents, but to the English-speaking student of Buddhist studies "Madhyamaka" is the right word for what Mou has in mind here, viz. the tradition of scholastic commentary whose figurehead is Nāgārjuna.

33 That is, it forms part of the basis of all of the various forms of Buddhism. (Mou adds a qualification to this where the Hīnayāna is concerned, q.v. *Unlikely Buddhologist*, 95–96.)

that is unlike a system is precisely an indisputable system, whereas the *ālaya* system and the *tathāgatagarbha* system are typically system-like systems.

The Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra uses non-discriminating explanation. It is an indisputable dharma, saying nothing, and hence it is not a system. Nāgārjuna's *Verses on the Middle Way* teaches just a type of contemplation, hence it is not a system either. Tiantai also uses non-discriminating explanation, but it is still a system. The crucial difference here is the difference here in attitudes to questions about the existence of things (*fa zhi cunzai* 法之存在). The Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra gives no explanation of the origin (*genyuan* 根源) of all things, nor does Madhyamaka. But Tiantai does, and its explanation is that "one thought encompasses the dharmas of the three thousand worlds."³⁴ The 'encompass' here means "perfectly encompass or comprehend" (*yuanju* 圓具), a term of non-discrimination and hence of indisputability. Moreover, it is ontologically (*cunyoulun di* 存有論地) indisputable. In Tiantai, "one mind and three contemplations" (*yixin sanguan* 一心三觀) is indisputability in contemplation and the three thousand worlds in one thought is ontological indisputability. Tiantai uses *prajñā* learning's indisputability in contemplation as the horizontal "weft" (*wei* 緯) and the three thousand worlds in one thought is the vertical "warp" (*jing* 經). Together, the warp and the weft, the vertical and the horizontal, woven together, constitute the perfect teaching.

Even though the *ālaya* system and the *tathāgatagarbha* system also give fundamental explanations for the "existence of dharmas," those are discriminating explanations, system-like systems. In contrast, the Tiantai perfect teaching's explanation of the existence of things is non-discriminating, a system that is not like a system. Therefore explanation of the origin of the existence of things is an explanation that does not explain. This is a realm of attainment (*jingjie* 境界) unmatched in Western philosophy or religion. Western philosophy busies itself with constructing systems, whereas the system of the Tiantai perfect teaching is a system of an altogether higher level, one without the determination of a system. This is something that can stimulate Western philosophy and religion.

This has also made me think of another question. When we speak of "Chinese philosophy" or "Buddhist philosophy," we could express this idea of "philosophy" using a different phrase, one that I wrote about in *Talent and Xuan Principle*, what people in the Wei (220–265) and Jin (265–420) dynasties called the "theories of names" (*mingli* 名理). "Theories of names" come in two varieties, the "doctrinal" (*jiaoxia de* 教下的) theory of names and the

34 *yinian ji ju sanqian shijian fa* 一念即具三千法, or *yinian sanqian* 一念三千 for short.

“philosophical (*zhexue de* 哲學的) theory of names.” For example, the doctrines and the religion of Buddhism are based on the dharma taught by the Buddha Śākyamuni. And Buddhist monks and nuns believe in the Buddha’s doctrines and practice accordingly. All this is based on doctrinal theories of names. For my own part, I do not necessarily study Buddhism from the standpoint of doctrinal names and principles. Anything which is names and principles has its measure of objectivity and universality. Regardless of whether you believe in it, you can still discuss it. It is fine to discuss from the standpoint of doctrinal names and principles, and it also fine to do so from the standpoint of philosophical names and principles.

What I am doing right now is speaking about Buddhism from the standpoint of philosophical concepts and principles, where it does not matter whether one necessarily believes in Buddhism. When speaking from this standpoint, one can discuss any teaching (*jiao* 教) at all, whether Confucian or Buddhist or Christian or what have you. To discuss from the standpoint of doctrinal concepts and principles is to “stay put” or “be guarded” (*shou* 守), to stay within your own perspective.³⁵ To discuss from the philosophical perspective is to be open (*kai* 開), to open oneself. The only way for various religions’ theories to watch and learn from each other and improve one another is to interact with each other, and for this we need the philosophical approach to names and principles. Under this approach we can open ourselves up, but by itself it is not enough. In philosophical names and principles, the accent is on thinking (*sikao* 思考), but thinking still has to be translated into reality (*luoshi* 落實). For that to happen, one needs cultivation (*xiuxing* 修行), and cultivation has to be based on a doctrinal path. And for that, you must come back from philosophical names and principles to the doctrinal approach. Nevertheless, if you stay with the doctrinal approach for a long time, you can become closed (*fengbi* 封閉), and in time you can become stubborn and exclusionary. At this point you need the “openness” of philosophical names and principles. In this respect philosophy is independent. It is different from science and also from religion, and it transcends both science and religion.

All that I am doing now is sharing some thoughts about the position of the Tiantai perfect teaching, from the standpoint of philosophical names and principles, in Chinese Buddhism. None of what I have said today is about the *content* of Buddhism.³⁶ I have not undertaken to tell you what the content

35 This is a liberal rendering. Mou’s phrase is “守住自己.”

36 My emphasis. By “content” Mou means Buddhist teachings on life, karma, suffering, rebirth, and so on, which he observes are already thoroughly familiar to this audience of lay Buddhists.

of Buddhist doctrine is. You know a great deal about that. What I am saying belongs to a whole different level.

The scripture upon which Tiantai is based is the Lotus Sutra. The Lotus Sutra is different from other sutras, for it does not dispense content. It “reveals the partial truths [in the proper light] to bring into light the whole truth” (*kaiquan xianshi* 開權顯實). Thus it is not a discriminating explanation.

Both the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra and the Lotus Sutra are indisputable dharmas, but they are not the same. The Lotus Sutra is very poor indeed when it comes to content. So why did Zhiyi base his school on the Lotus Sutra? It is because he understood the special character of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra—the Lotus Sutra directly communicates the Buddha’s deepest intention.³⁷ If all of you can understand the character of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra, and also the character of the Lotus Sutra, then you will be able to go on to understand the Tiantai tradition.

37 This is a loose rendering of Mou’s phrase, which is *benhuai* 本懷. A more literal rendering would be “original wish,” but that could be taken to mean that the Buddha later changed his mind. Rather, Zhiyi’s idea is that the Buddha could not communicate his complete and unvarnished understanding to ordinary being, so deeply deluded were they, and so he had to start them off with a series of partial teachings and then only at the end, in the Lotus Sutra, did he reveal the fullness of what he had wanted to teach all along.

Appendix: The Emergence of the Understanding from Enlightened Knowing-in-Itself¹

Translator's Preface

Because none of the essays selected for this volume refer explicitly to Mou's famous concept of ziwo kanxian 自我坎陷 (self-negation or self-restriction), I have included this excerpt from Mou's book Appearance and Thing-in-Itself (completed in 1973, before most of the other selections) in order that this book not exclude any mention of the concept.

Scholars are currently divided between two ways of translating Mou's term ziwo kanxian, either as "self-negation" or "self-restriction." Mou has virtually guaranteed that they should disagree, because he has invented a single concept but given it two very different names, one put together from the visual imagery of the Book of Changes and the other borrowed from Hegel's dialectic. This is entirely typical of Mou: with his terrific range, he draws inspiration for a new concept from many traditions and retains all their nomenclatures, alternating among Confucian, Buddhist, Daoist, and Kantian vocabulary even in the same sentence. Using the Hegelian idiom, sometimes Mou speaks of enlightened intuition's "negating" (fouding 否定) itself, where the sense of "negate" is summed up neatly by Stephen Angle as "the limitation of one thing by something else of a fundamentally distinct kind."² But alongside "negate" Mou also uses the more famous word kanxian. It is one of Mou's many neologisms, and probably his most opaque, but he borrows his materials from the Book of Changes. Stephen Angle explains:

Contemporary scholar Richard Lynn gives "sink hole" as [the] basic meaning [of kan], and it is clear from a number of early commentaries that it has the connotation of water flowing through it. One such commentary also associates kan with the "rain, by which things are moistened (run)." Flowing water and moistening are both positive-sounding, despite the negative connotations of sink hole... [W]e should think of kanxian primarily as a lowering and limitation, like sinking into a pit. This justifies translating it as "restriction." However, its associations with water and

1 Excerpt from Mou's chapter of the same name ("You zhiti mingjue kai zhixing 由知體明覺開知性") in his book *Appearance and Thing-in-Itself* (*Xianxiang yu wu zishen* 現象與物自身) (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1990), 121–125.

2 *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy*, 25. Also see Serina Chan on the concept's Hegelian background in *The Thought of Mou Zongsan*, 113–115.

*especially with moistening are crucial, because Mou sees self-restriction ultimately to be a vital, positive stage in broader processes of cognition and moral growth.*³

In the Nineteen Lectures Mou illustrates, in Buddhist parlance, what it would mean to “negate” or “kanxian” enlightened intuition, namely to sacrifice some of its majesty and accept limitations in order to carry out good works in what we might call the real world:

*Moved by their great compassion, buddhas and bodhisattvas need to grasp [relative or empirical] truth, and hence they need to descend from dharma body (fashen 法身, dharmakāya) and make themselves like sentient beings through ziwo kanxian (self-negation). Only thus can they rescue sentient beings. To give an example: being a sage is different from being president. A sage who wanted to be president would have to shed his standing as a sage and obey the rules and laws that govern the president and his conduct of government business. That is, the sage would have to kanxian himself. . . . If bodhisattvas were too pure, they would be unable to live alongside sentient beings. How then would they rescue them? . . . This is what I have referred to in Appearance and Thing-in-Itself as ziwo kanxian, a self-conscious cratering (xianluo 陷落) or self-negation.*⁴

Though Mou treats ‘kanxian’ and the ‘negate’ as equivalents, notice how much they differ as words. To repeat the obvious, one is inspired by Bronze Age Chinese divinatory lore and the other comes from German systematic philosophy of the nineteenth century. And beyond that, ‘negate’ here is a denatured technical word with a precise and entirely abstract meaning. ‘Kanxian’ is just the opposite, a concrete metaphor and an obscure one at that, for the Book of Changes caters to no one’s desire for unambiguous clarity and Mou never does tell us just how he thinks the self-negation of enlightened knowing is like a wet hole in ground.

Given the alternative of two equivalent names, one nearly untranslatable and the other easily rendered into English (if a very wissenschaftlich sort of English), it is no surprise that many scholars set the nebulous imagery of the Book of Changes aside entirely, despairing of conjuring the right effect with any English phrase, and simply use the Hegelian “negation” exclusively. Until recently, most materials written in English have followed this tack.⁵ However, others have recently insisted on working with Mou’s made-up “kanxian,”

3 *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy*, 26.

4 *SJJ*, 278, 297.

5 E.g. Hans-Rudolf Kantor, “Ontological Indeterminacy and Its Soteriological Relevance: An Assessment of Mou Zongsan’s (1909–1995) Interpretation of Zhiyi’s (538–597)

perhaps because Mou uses that expression more frequently than “negation.” David Elstein and Stephen Angle have begun to translate *ziwo kanxian* as “self-restriction” to highlight the sense of limitation in *kanxian*, of interment that confines freedom of movement, and to avoid the misimpression that Mou is talking about “negating” intellectual intuition permanently, obliterating it.⁶

Conservative translators can defend their preference for “negation” by pointing out that that is, after all, the word that Mou himself repeatedly chose to represent his idea in English, and the only one. They can argue that (a) Mou should usually be taken as the authoritative interpreter of his own meanings, and (b) his understanding of English is good enough that we should be slow to second-guess his self-translations.

That should not mean that we are stuck with Mou’s English glosses and must adopt them for our own. Mou commands English technical vocabulary well but, lacking experience with English as a lived, natural language, he sometimes chooses misleading glosses that have connotations he is unaware of. An example is when he glosses “*genyuan de shuoming* 根源的說明,” an explanation of the origin of things, as “original interpretation.”⁷ It is a bizarre choice, and not because Mou was attempting something daring. He just forgot the difference between “explain” and “interpret” and did not understand that in colloquial English “original” means something entirely different from “having to do with origins.” It is just the sort of innocent mistranslation that we have all committed, but it should free us from a feeling of bondage to all of Mou’s English instincts.

Recognizing that Mou had to work within the limits of his English, I suspect the main reason that Mou consistently stuck with “negate” in English even though he used *kanxian* more in Chinese is not that refused to describe the concept in terms other than the Hegelian one—in that case he would always have used *fouding* in Chinese too—but just because he did not know what other word to use. It

Tiantai Buddhism,” *Philosophy East and West* 56.1 (January 2006): 16–68; Xiangjun Li, “A Reconstruction of Contemporary Confucianism as a Form of Knowledge,” *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 1.4 (December 2006): 561–567; Tang Refeng, “Mou Zongsan on Intellectual Intuition,” in Chung-Ying Cheng and Nicholas Bunnin, eds., *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002), 327–345; Wing-cheuk Chan, “On Mou Zongsan’s Idealist Confucianism,” in Qingsong Shen and Kwong-loi Shun, eds., *Confucian Ethics in Retrospect and Prospect* (Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), 171–184; Stefan Schmidt, “Mou Zongsan, Hegel, and Kant: The Quest for Confucian Modernity,” *Philosophy East and West* 61.2 (April 2011): 260–302; N. Serina Chan, *The Thought of Mou Zongsan* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Esther C. Su, *Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy* (forthcoming).

6 On this last point see David Elstein, “Mou Zongsan’s New Confucian Democracy,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 11.2 (August 2011): 198–199.

7 *SJJ*, 267.

was a simple choice: he could easily communicate the Hegelian part of his inspiration for his concept—there was a conventional translation for that—but he was not the sort of English wordsmith who could find *le mot juste* for something as elusive as *kanxian*. (In fact, when I translated it as “negate” in past writings, I was making the same calculation: “negate” was an easy choice, and easily defensible, and I had no better idea of my own.) So if Mou were to give any English gloss to the concept at all, as he loved to do, it had to be to call on the concept’s cut-and-dried Hegelian name, not the image from the Book of Changes.

In the following excerpt I have again retained “negate” for *kanxian*, this time in deference to the request of Mou’s literary executors, who kindly granted permission to include the excerpt in this book on that condition. Philosophically I am quite content to accede. I approve of Elstein and Angle’s choice of the picturesque “restrict” but do not prefer it so strongly that I feel obligated to use it here.

And as I deepen my study of Mou, I am persuaded that I should embrace his enthusiasm for using German-derived terminology as the philosophical lingua franca as much as is practical lest I miss or conceal important connections. For I find that if we attend closely when Mou translates from Chinese tradition into Kantian nomenclature—a technique easy to deride as naïve or ham-fisted if we misunderstand the purpose—we can see for ourselves just how Mou imagines Kant, Hegel, Yogācāra Buddhism, the Awakening of Faith, the Lu-Wang and Hu-Liu strands of Confucianism, and the Huayan and Tiantai traditions of Buddhism in dialogue with each other. If this means forcing ourselves to sit down to many unappetizing helpings of Kant’s books—I speak for myself—at least the dessert will make it worthwhile.

To give an example, Mou often speaks of the Buddhist and Confucian perfect teachings as “systems without the *xiang* of a system” (*wu xitong xiang de xitong* 無系統相的系統). *Xiang* is a Buddhist term with a range of meanings, but in Buddhist texts these are usually represented adequately by the conventional translations “mark” or “characteristic,” and so in the past I was content to translate Mou’s phrase as “a system without the characteristics of a system.” I say “content” but not “happy,” for it always seemed to me an awkward, unilluminating phrase—in Chinese as well as English—that lacked the heuristic power that Mou seemed to find in it. I was aware that Mou assimilates the concept of *xiang* to Kant’s “determination” (*Bestimmen*)⁸ but gave little thought to the matter and did not seriously consider re-translating any of Mou’s many uses of *xiang* as “determination.” Quite the contrary, in fact. To a letter from a fellow scholar who suggested such a rendering, I answered intemperately that it “would obscure rather than elucidate Mou’s meaning for most readers, if only because *xiang*’s many connotations are so strongly

8 See *sjj*, 271.

Buddhist that it would be misleading to conceal from the reader that Mou had used a distinctly Buddhist-sounding word and transform it into the almost equally alien (for most English speakers) idiom of the German Enlightenment” and that Mou had no intention of “obliterating Buddhist terminology’s distinct history and rendering it into undifferentiated Kantspeak.” Happily for me, my plucky interlocutor responded that I would benefit from a closer acquaintance with a Kantian dictionary, and when I obliged I was confronted with something that superficially I thought I knew but had not assimilated: “Determination gives a ground/reason not only for why something is, but also why it is in this and not any other way.”⁹ And indeed, for Mou, the notion of xiang does not just refer to the taking on of certain particular characteristics but also highlights just as strongly the exclusion of any further possibility of any contrary characteristics.

Becoming aware of that second emphasis proved especially illuminating for me. First, it neatly underscores what Mou is laboring to say in the second section of the present excerpt from Appearance and Thing-in-Itself and removes any lingering opacity from a statement such as this:

With the establishment of the understanding, the things (wu 物) in creative feeling are e-jected as “objects,” and these objects are henceforth appearances; no longer are they that suchness or the self-so “in itself;” that which is revealed and connected to by enlightenment’s creative feeling.

But I was even more impressed to find that taking seriously Mou’s gloss as “determination” made good sense for me for the first time of that clunky phrase “a system without the xiang of a system.” It had been clear all along that Mou must mean that the perfect teaching is unique as a “system” in that it does not consist of a set of doctrines intended to assert the facticity of one state of affairs to the exclusion of all alternatives; but now I had a satisfying and tidy interpretation of Mou’s choice of expressions. And I missed this insight for as long as I did because I did not respect the precision of Mou’s Kantian gloss enough to follow up on it.

Consequently, where before I have made a point of translating Mou into the most idiomatic English possible, I have stepped back to a more conservative posture and favored technical renderings such as “negation.”

9 Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 156. Emphasis mine.

1 The Necessity of Scientific Knowledge¹⁰

Enlightenment's creative feeling¹¹ (that is, intellectual intuition or moral nature's knowing)¹² can only know things in their suchness (*ruxiang* 如相), as the self-so (*zizai xiang* 自在相). That is to say, it can only intuit things as "things-in-themselves" and thus real-ize (*shixian* 實現) them. It cannot e-ject¹³ things, cannot externalize them as objects (*duixiang* 對象) and thereby investigate them in their diversity. When Cheng Mingdao says, "Look tranquilly at the ten thousand things and all are in repose,"¹⁴ this kind of "tranquil looking at the ten thousand things" cannot yield scientific knowledge. God does not make atomic bombs; though he be omniscient, he does not have scientific knowledge or, putting it differently, he does not know in the scientific fashion. Buddhas have perfect knowledge (*yiqie zhong zhi* 一切種智, *sarvajñā*) but they do not and cannot make an atomic bomb. The Lotus Sutra says, "Every form and fragrance is none other than the Middle Way,"¹⁵ but this knowing of the Middle Way knows things only in their true determination (*shixiang* 實相): the one true determination is no

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- 10 I have abbreviated this title. Mou's complete name for the chapter is quite a bit wordier in English than it is in Chinese: "The necessity of scientific knowledge: In China [a sage] lacks it yet is able to have it, and also has it but is able to do without it, whereas in the West He who is without it [viz. God] cannot have it and he who has it [i.e. man] cannot be without it." This is a reference to the idea which Mou develops below that the God of the Western tradition cannot have scientific knowledge whereas in the Chinese tradition the sage does not have it in his capacity as a sage but does in his role as a human individual. Mou explains the significance of this heading in the section below and also in *SJJ*, pp. 278–279.
- 11 *zhiti mingjue zhi ganying* 知體明覺之感應. As elsewhere, I contract this compound for the sake of readability. A fuller rendering would be "enlightened, creative feeling of knowing-in-itself." This is the same entity that Mou refers to elsewhere in this volume as *liangzhi mingjue zhi ganying* 良知明覺之感應 but here he focuses on intellectual intuition's nature as "knowing-in-itself" (*zhiti*) rather than its specifically moral character.
- 12 *dexing zhi zhi* 德性之知. Mou opposes this to the "knowledge of sounds and sights" (*wenjian zhi zhi* 聞見之知). For more on this distinction see "Confucian Moral Metaphysics" in this volume.
- 13 *tui chu qu* 推出去. Mou borrows the term from Heidegger. See his *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, 98–100, where he first presents the model that he is recapitulating here.
- 14 萬物靜觀皆自得. A quotation from Cheng's "Happenstance Verses of an Autumn Day" (*Qiuri oucheng* 秋日偶成). See Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚, ed., *Er Cheng ji* 二程集 (Collected Works of the Brothers Cheng) (Beijing: Zhonghuo, 1981), 482.
- 15 一色一香無非中道. The phrase actually belongs to Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顗 (538–597), Mou's favorite commentator on the Lotus Sutra.

determination at all; that is suchness.¹⁶ A buddha can only liberate you, not give you scientific knowledge.

What need is there then of scientific knowledge? God does not have it at all, nor has He any need of it. In the Western tradition, God is God and man is man; the two are separate. God neither has scientific knowledge nor can He have it; man has it and cannot be without it. In the Chinese tradition, by contrast, a person can be a sage and a sage is of course a person. As a person, he has and must have scientific knowledge;¹⁷ as a sage, he transcends scientific knowledge, is not stuck in scientific knowledge, and has no need of scientific knowledge. This is what I mean by saying that he has it but can be without it, but also lacks it and yet can have it.¹⁸ In Buddhism, “among the mind, the buddha, and sentient beings there is no difference,”¹⁹ so sentient beings can be buddhas and buddhas are sentient beings. Even though Buddhism focuses on “turning consciousness to *prajñā*”²⁰ and its discussions of consciousness stress afflictions in the psychological sense, it also deals with conventional truth (*su di* 俗諦), logical proof, and “unassociated *saṃskāras*,”²¹ and so in principle it can and must encompass scientific knowledge. Thus it too lacks scientific knowledge yet still can have it and has it but also can be without it. And even though Daoism focuses on *xuan* wisdom (*xuanzhi* 玄智) and looks down on the “established mind” (*chengxin* 成心), but it also speaks of “joining with the light and the dust” as well as “following the ways of heaven” and “following the ways of the human, so that the True Person (*zhenren* 真人) is both heavenly and human.”²² Thus in principle Daoism too lacks scientific knowledge yet still can have it and has it but also can dispense with it.

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- 16 實相一相，所謂無相，即是如相。On the translation of this slogan and its provenance, see note 18 in “The Place of the Tiantai Tradition in Chinese Buddhism.”
- 17 At this point Mou is using “scientific knowledge” to refer to empirical knowledge in general rather than knowledge arrived at specifically through methodical scientific inquiry.
- 18 有而能無，無而能有。A reference to the title of this section. See note 10 above.
- 19 心佛眾生，是三無差別。A reference to the Huayan Sutra. See *T.* 278.9.465c26–29.
- 20 *zhuan shi cheng zhi* 轉識成智. This model is specific to what Mou calls the “beginning separation theory” (*shi biejiao* 始別教) form of Buddhism. See Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhologist*, 103ff.
- 21 *bu xiangying xingfa* 不相應行法; Skt. *citta-viprayukta-saṃskāra*. This is an idea in Buddhist (and particularly Yogācāra Buddhist) epistemology which Mou believes is a direct counterpart to Kant’s notion of the forms and categories which structure our experience of appearances.
- 22 The first phrase, *he guang tong chen* 和光同塵, is an abbreviated quotation from the *Laozi*. See Wang Ka 王卡, ed., *Laozi Daodejing Heshang gong zhangju* 老子道德經河上公章句 (Heshang Gong’s Line by Line Commentary to Laozi’s *Daodejing*) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1993), 14–15. The following pair of terms, *yu tian wei tu* 與天為徒 and *yu ren wei tu* 與人為徒, are drawn from the fourth chapter of the *Zhuangzi*:

And so even though knowledge is compatible with all three families of Chinese philosophy (especially Confucianism), all three held “reaching upward”²³ in such high regard that they were unable to take this other domain seriously enough. We in our day need to open it up and develop it. Reaching upward and opening downward, joined together as one, is the only truly perfect teaching.²⁴ The question is how enlightenment’s creative feeling can give rise to understanding.

2 The Dialectical Emergence of the Understanding

This emergence is dialectical (in Hegel’s sense rather than Kant’s). We can describe it this way: (1) outwardly speaking, since people are human yet sagely and also sagely whilst human (or likewise humans yet buddhas and buddhas whilst human), scientific knowledge is necessary in principle and is also possible, for otherwise they would be impaired with respect to their duties as humans. (2) Inwardly speaking, in order to accomplish this task, knowing-in-itself cannot linger forever as enlightenment’s creative feeling. It must consciously negate itself and transform itself into “understanding.” This understanding is what confronts things (*wu* 物) and enables things to be constituted as “ob-jects” (*duixiang* 對象) and investigated in their diversity. It must undergo this self-negation in order to fully realize itself, and this is what is meant by dialectical emergence (*bianzheng de kaixian* 辯證的開顯). Its transformation into understanding by going through self-negation is the only way for it to solve all the special problems of humankind, and it is also the only way for its moral aspirations to flow unimpeded. Otherwise, with no perils and travails to overcome, its

“Yan Hui said, ‘Then I shall be internally upright but externally adaptable . . . To be internally upright is to be a follower of the ways of Heaven. Such a one knows that Heaven looks upon both himself and the ‘Son of Heaven’ equally as sons. Would he then care whether his words were pleasing or displeasing to others? . . . To be externally adaptable, on the other hand, means to be a follower of the ways of man. To bow and salute is the ceremony that goes with being someone’s underling. Others do it, so would I dare not to?’” (Ziporyn, *Zhuangzi*, 26).

- 23 *shang da* 上達. Mou is contrasting the higher, pre-empirical processes of the mind as intellectual intuition with the “downward opening” (*xia kai* 下開), empirical functioning of the mind as understanding. He makes the same distinction in slightly different vocabulary (*xiaxue* 下學 instead of *xiakai* 下開) in Chapter 18 of *SJJ*.
- 24 *yuanman zhi jiao* 圓滿之教. Mou is not using the term in the full technical sense that he gives it elsewhere in his writings, where he contrasts the “perfect teaching” systematically with “separation teachings” (*biejiao* 別教).

moral aspirations would wither and recede. As it says in the Great Commentary to the *Book of Changes*:

Qian is the strongest thing in the entire world, so it should always be easy to put its virtue into practice. Thus one knows whether or not there is going to be danger. *Kun* is the most compliant thing in the entire world, so it should always be simple to put its virtue into practice. Thus one knows whether or not there are going to be obstacles.²⁵

Moral knowing and moral ability (*liangzhi liangneng* 良知良能) is supremely simple and unlabored but it could never fail to know that there exist dangers and obstacles. Knowing that and wishing to overcome them, it must necessarily transform into understanding. Thus in knowing dangers and obstacles, there is implied a dialectical unfolding. And so its self-negation takes the formation of the epistemic subject (the understanding) as the self-conscious demand of its moral aspirations. This zig-zagging is necessary, for it is only by this roundabout way that it is possible to arrive, and hence it is called “roundabout arrival” (*quda* 曲達). This necessity is a dialectical necessity; and this roundabout arrival is a dialectically roundabout arrival, not a straight line from enlightenment’s creative feeling or an arrival by “sudden awakening”²⁶ or a “round and numinous” arrival.²⁷ And so this emergence of the understanding is called a dialectical emergence. In this way, there is a dialectical necessity to the emergence of the understanding. It is not something that can be derived by logical analysis from enlightened knowing-in-itself.

With the establishment of the understanding, the things (*wu* 物) in creative feeling are e-jected as “objects,” and these objects are henceforth appearances; no longer are they that suchness or the self-so “in itself,” that which is revealed and connected to by enlightenment’s creative feeling.

25 夫乾天下之至健也，德行恆易以知險。夫坤天下之至順也，德行恆簡以知阻。 *Xici* 2.12. Translation by Richard John Lynn (*Classic of Changes*, 93–94).

26 *dunwu* 頓悟. See note 15 to “Philosophy and the Perfect Teaching.”

27 *yuan er shen* 圓而神. An allusion to the Great Commentary: “蓍之德，圓而神。卦之德，方以知” (*Xici* 1.11). Lynn translates the passage thus: “... [T]he virtue of the yarrow stalks resides in their being round and thus numinous, and that of the hexagrams resides in their being square and thus laden with wisdom” (*Classic of Changes*, 63–64).

3 Self-negation, Grasping, and the Epistemic Subject

The self-conscious self-negation by enlightened knowing-in-itself is its self-conscious turn from non-grasping (*wuzhi* 無執) to grasping (*zhi* 執). Self-negation is precisely grasping. “Negation” (*kanxian* 坎陷) here means to fall and become ensnared (*xian* 陷) in grasping. Without such a negation, there would be just unending non-grasping and no way for the understanding (that is, the epistemic subject) (*renzhi zhuti* 認知主體) to arise. Its consciously wanting to negate itself is a conscious wanting this grasping. This is not a grasping on account of beginningless ignorance²⁸ but rather a deliberate choice to grasp; thus it is an enlightened grasping, the sort of grasping where one “smiles at another, feeling complete concord.”²⁹

This grasping happens when enlightened knowing-in-itself stops and holds onto itself. This “stopping” means that it ceases from its numinous creative feeling (*shenggan shenyi* 神感神應) and manifests the form of stopping. Its numinous creative feeling is originally without any determination whatsoever, and so its knowing is without the form of knowing, its intention is without the form of intention, and its things (*wu* 物) are without the form of things. But as soon as it stops (*tingzhu* 停住), it manifests the form of becoming stopped up (*tingzhi* 停滯), and therefore it is grasping. Grasping amounts to stopping, and holding onto itself (*zi chi qi ziji* 自持其自己) is precisely grasping itself. Yet it cannot truly grasp itself, for as soon as it grasps, it is no longer itself. Rather, it is the congealing (*ningzhi* 凝滯) and limiting of its enlightened knowing, and hence it is not itself but a shadow of itself. Put differently, it becomes the “epistemic subject.” Thus the epistemic subject is what enlightened awareness becomes after going through a stopping up and then a projection (*touying* 投映), or enlightened awareness transformed into the activity of epistemic discrimination (*liaobie* 了別) or discursive understanding (*sijie* 思解).

This epistemic self (understanding) that is formed by grasping is a logical self, a formal self, a constructed self, a self with the determination of a self, and not the “true self” (*zhenwo* 真我) (the self without the form of a self) of enlightened knowing-in-itself. At the same time, it is also not the conventional self of psychology fabricated from flickering sequences of momentary mental states. Its essential function is thinking,

28 *wushi wuming* 無始無明. In Buddhist epistemology, the ultimate reason that an unenlightened being remains mired involuntarily in suffering.

29 A reference to the *Zhuangzi*: (Cao, *Zhuangzi qianzhu*, 98). Translation adapted from Ziporyn (*Zhuangzi*, 45):

Ziji, Ziyu, Zili, and Zilai were talking. One of them said, “Who can see nothingness as his own head, life as his own spine, and death as his own ass? Who knows the single body formed by life and death, existence and nonexistence? I will be his friend!” The four looked at one another and laughed, feeling complete concord, and became friends.

wherefore it is called a “thinking being,” “thinking subject,” or “thinking self.” It comes about from the stopping of enlightened knowing-in-itself. Thereupon, in keeping with its natural disposition, it retains its nature and hence grasps itself and is a “thinking self.” At this moment its essential function is thinking, which is to say a grasping kind of thinking, so its essential function is precisely “grasping.” We no longer need to say that it comes about from the self-conscious desire of enlightened knowing-in-itself to grasp. That latter sentence describes the genesis of the thinking self whereas the former sentence is a description of it in itself. In the self-conscious desire of enlightened knowing-in-itself to grasp, this grasping is transformed into nothing other than the “thinking self” itself, and so the essential function of the “thinking self” is grasping, for it takes grasping as its very nature.

This “thinking self” that takes grasping thought as its very nature lacks any content whatsoever, and it is constant (*dingchang* 定常) and hence is a formal self or formal being (*xingshi de wo*, *xingshi de you* 形式的我, 形式的有). The reason it is formal is that its “grasping as thinking” cannot help but be logical; and because it is logical, it cannot help but use concepts (of which the fundamental and primary ones are either logical or ontological concepts), and hence it is a constructive (*jiagou* 架構) self. The reason for calling it constructive is that it uses concepts to prop itself up and become an objective, formal self. This is not to say that it itself is a structure or construction (on the conventional self or fabricated self of psychology as a structure or construction, see below). Nor is it to speak of its formative or constitutive function. Rather, we are only saying that it itself becomes a formal self by means of its using concepts to prop itself up. As a “formal self,” it is simple and unique³⁰ and constant (*dingchang* 定常), an abiding and unchanging self.³¹ The reason it is simple and unique is that it is just the stopping up of enlightened awareness, with nothing added, and therefore it is not a structure or construction. The reason it is constant is that as soon as it takes form (*xingcheng* 形成), it is abiding and unchanging; it is that which remains itself.³² That is, it can just as well be dissolved (meaning reversion to non-grasping) or be formed (where grasping amounts to taking form), but once it is formed, it itself does not undergo changes. The only point of all these locutions is to explain that it is

30 *chunyi* 純一. Mou glosses this in English parenthetically as “one and the same, simple and unique.” I have contracted this for clarity: whereas “one and the same” is generally taken to denote identity between nominally or apparently different things, Mou makes it very clear that what he is referring to is the formal self’s simplicity, its homogeneity and lack of any complexity, and not its identity with something else. However, the idea of the formal self’s one-and-the-same-ness does find a home in Mou’s remarks about the formal self as “constant.” See note 32 below.

31 *changzhu bubian de wo* 常住不變的我. Mou glosses this in English as just “abiding self.”

32 *zishen tongyi zhe* 自身同一者. This seems to be what Mou had in mind in his parenthetical remark above about the formal self as “one and the same.”

a “formal being” and absolutely must not be confused with that true self without the form of a self which is enlightened knowing. All of this is derivable *a priori* analytically from that act of grasping.

On account of this “formal self” that stops and grasps itself, the thing (*wu* 物) in creative feeling is e-jected and becomes an object of understanding, which object is an object in the sense of an appearance. The duality of self and object takes form simultaneously with the act of grasping and is the basic duality of epistemology.

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